

## THE LEADERSHIP VALUES OF SULTAN AGUNG IN THE *BABAD SULTAN AGUNG*: A LEVI-STRAUSS STRUCTURALISM STUDY

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### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini menganalisis model kepemimpinan tradisional Jawa yang sarat nilai-nilai moral dan spiritual melalui telaah terhadap Babad Sultan Agung. Babad sebagai teks historiografis tidak hanya merekam peristiwa sejarah, tetapi juga membentuk konstruksi mitos kepemimpinan yang ideal. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis nilai-nilai kepemimpinan Sultan Agung yang tercermin dalam struktur naratif dan simbolik Babad Sultan Agung. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan strukturalisme Lévi-Strauss. Objek utama penelitian adalah teks Babad Sultan Agung yang telah ditransliterasi dan diterjemahkan. Data dikumpulkan melalui studi kepustakaan dan pembacaan mendalam terhadap teks. Teknik analisis dilakukan dengan mengidentifikasi struktur oposisi biner dan alur naratif transformasi tokoh berdasarkan model inisiasi (pemisahan, transisi, dan pengukuhan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan Sultan Agung dikonstruksikan melalui nilai-nilai seperti legitimasi spiritual-ilahiah, kecerdasan strategis, asketisme, keadilan moral, dan otoritas keagamaan. Figur Sultan Agung diposisikan sebagai raja ideal yang bukan hanya pewaris tahta, tetapi juga tokoh yang terpilih secara spiritual dan simbolik. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Babad Sultan Agung berfungsi sebagai teks mitologis yang memperkuat ideologi kepemimpinan Jawa, dan relevan sebagai rujukan nilai kepemimpinan dalam konteks budaya dan pendidikan karakter saat ini.*

**Kata Kunci:** Sultan Agung, kepemimpinan, babad, strukturalisme, oposisi biner

### Abstract

This study analyzes the traditional Javanese leadership model, which is rich in moral and spiritual values, through an examination of the *Babad Sultan Agung*. As a historiographical text, the Babad not only records historical events but also shapes the construction of an ideal leadership myth. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the leadership values of Sultan Agung as reflected in the narrative and symbolic structure of the *Babad Sultan Agung*. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a Lévi-Strauss structuralist approach. The main object of this research is the *Babad Sultan Agung* text, which has been transliterated and translated. Data was collected through literature study and in-depth reading of the text. The analysis technique was carried out by identifying binary oppositions and the narrative flow of character transformation based on the initiation model (separation, transition, and confirmation). The results of the study show that Sultan Agung's leadership was constructed through values such as spiritual-divine legitimacy, strategic intelligence, asceticism, moral justice, and religious authority. The figure of Sultan Agung is positioned as an ideal king who is not only an heir to the throne but also a spiritually and symbolically chosen figure. This study demonstrates that the *Babad Sultan Agung* functions as a mythological text that reinforces Javanese leadership ideology and remains relevant as a reference for leadership values in the context of contemporary culture and character education.

**Keywords:** Sultan Agung, leadership, babad, structuralism, binary opposition

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma was one of the most important figures in the history of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. He was the king of Islamic Mataram who was known for his efforts to unite the archipelago and his resistance against the VOC (Susilo, 2020). He was not only known as a king who wielded military and political power, but also as a cultural figure who passed down a distinctive Javanese leadership vision that was religious, spiritual, and rich in symbolism. His leadership was not only documented in official historical records but also recorded through traditional literary works such as babads.

Babad is a historiographical literary work that combines elements of history, mythology, and legend into a single narrative (Ricklefs, 1993). In Javanese writing tradition, babad serves as a medium for recording history wrapped in elements of myth, symbolism, and noble cultural values. The historical stories in babad not only serve as records of past events but also contain ideological and educational purposes for society.

*Babad Sultan Agung*, as one of the historical manuscripts, describes the life and leadership of Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma from his birth until he ascended the throne. The *Babad Sultan Agung* does not merely convey historical chronology, but frames Sultan Agung's leadership journey as a spiritual process rich in symbols, myths, and supernatural legitimacy. The figure of Sultan Agung in the *Babad Sultan Agung* is portrayed as a spiritual traveler who obtained his legitimacy of power from divine revelation and the blessing of his ancestors.

Sultan Agung is depicted not only as the heir to the throne, but also as a figure who “*ngambah wana wasa*” (wanders in the wilderness) in order to obtain spiritual guidance. He meets figures such as Sunan Kalijaga and Raden Janaka, who then acknowledge his suitability to become king. This is expressed by Raden Janaka in the following excerpt from *Babad Sultan Agung*:

“*Jeneng sira iku bakal ratu Jawa ing sabanjure sarta lajering ratu tanah Jawa kang bisa nurunake ratu jawa ing sabanjure.*”

Translation:

“Know that your name will become the next king of Java, and from your descendants will come the subsequent kings of Java.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 13)

This quote shows that in Javanese cosmology, leadership is not solely the result of lineage, but rather through spiritual validation and unity with the universe (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009; Zoetmulder, 1983). The story of Sultan Agung in this chronicle reveals a narrative structure that is not only centered on political power struggles, but also highlights the importance of spiritual processes, moral legitimacy, and personal perfection as absolute prerequisites for leadership. His presence in the chronicle not only marks the importance of political leadership but also shows the effort to pass on the values of ideal leadership in Javanese cultural imagination (Pigeaud, 1967; Ricklefs, 1993).

In the context of Javanese culture, leadership is not merely a product of lineage or political power, but rather the result of harmony between destiny, spiritual practice (*tapa*), and cosmic blessing. An ideal leader must be united with spiritual values and sacredness (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009; Zoetmulder, 1983). This reflects the Javanese worldview that the king is a cosmic leader who maintains harmony between the human world, ancestors, and the supernatural realm.

The narrative in *Babad Sultan Agung* is not without issues. There is a conflict between blood legitimacy and spiritual legitimacy, as shown in the opposition between biological rights and the *sabda pandhita ratu* (Riyadi, 2011). This narrative complexity reflects how Javanese society constructs a leadership structure that is not linear

but dialectical between the earthly and the divine, the center and the periphery, and tradition and innovation. In this context, myths function as a means to articulate social, symbolic, and ideological tensions (Lévi-Strauss in Ahimsa-Putra, 2009).

Previous studies have examined these aspects partially. Slamet Riyadi (2011) in his article "*Titah Baginda versus Hak Putra Mahkota*" highlights the legitimacy of Sultan Agung's power as the son of Panembahan Senapati and Ratu Retna Dumilah, not the son of Hanyakrawati as in the Babad Tanah Jawi version. Based on the *Babad Nitik sarta Cabolek* manuscript, Riyadi emphasizes the importance of spiritual decree as a form of sacred legitimacy (*sabda pandhita ratu*) that creates an opposition between biological rights and spiritual rights to the Mataram throne. This study uses Wellek and Warren's structural theory developed by Teeuw and analyzes the narrative structure of the babad through the opposition between tradition and innovation.

Another study was conducted by Ghulamudin (2021) in his thesis "*The Reflection of Sultan Agung's Leadership Attitude Toward Literary Education in the Film Sultan Agung*," which highlights how Sultan Agung is not only understood as a military and political leader but also as a cultural preservator and educator. Through the film *Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan dan Cinta* (2018), it is shown that Sultan Agung reopened the educational center as a form of reflection and atonement for the people who died in the war against the VOC. This study uses a humanistic psychology and phenomenology approach to interpret leadership attitudes in moral, philosophical, and educational dimensions.

Both studies emphasize that the figure of Sultan Agung was shaped through a complex narrative: between political legacy, bloodline, spirituality, and cultural values. Riyadi's research focuses on the structure of power conflicts and succession myths in the chronicles, while Mirza

emphasizes Sultan Agung's cultural role in education through film media. This study takes a position between the two, examining the *Babad Sultan Agung* narrative as a mythological-structural text that shapes the construction of Javanese leadership values.

Based on this, Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach is used in this study. Lévi-Strauss views myths not as literal interpretations of their content but as structures and binary oppositions that form them. He states that myths provide models for resolving social and symbolic conflicts through collective narratives (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009). Therefore, the figure of Sultan Agung in the chronicle does not merely function as a historical figure but also as a symbol of ideal leadership values in Javanese culture.

This study aims to understand the chronicle not only as a literary text but also as a vehicle for transmitting leadership values in Javanese culture that are still relevant today. The leadership values of Sultan Agung in the *Babad Sultan Agung* will be elaborated through the identification of narrative structures, binary oppositions, and mythical transformations that shape the myth of the ideal king in Javanese cosmology.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with Lévi-Strauss' structuralist framework. This approach was chosen because it is relevant for unraveling the narrative structure, myths, and symbolic systems contained in traditional literary texts, especially babads, which are rich in values, symbols, and binary oppositions. According to Ratna (2011), the structural approach in literary studies focuses on the relationships between elements in a text and how these elements form collective meaning. Lévi-Strauss states that myths are not interpreted based on their literal content, but rather through the structures and oppositional relationships that form them (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009).

The main object of this study is the *Babad Sultan Agung* text stored at the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia with the manuscript code NB105, which has been transliterated and translated. This manuscript contains a narrative about the life journey of Raden Mas Rangsang (Sultan Agung) from the womb to receiving the revelation of leadership.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through library research that focused on close reading of the *Babad Sultan Agung* text. This process included identifying important narrative segments that represent leadership values, character transformation processes, and mythological symbols in the text. Additionally, the researcher collected supporting data from various scientific articles, journals, and books on structuralism theory, as well as studies on Javanese leadership, to serve as contextual and comparative materials.

Data analysis techniques were carried out using Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach, which emphasizes reading patterns and oppositional relationships in the text. The initial step of the analysis involved compiling a narrative sequence based on the transformation of the character of Sultan Agung, starting from his childhood, exile, spiritual encounter, to his coronation as king. Then, the researcher identified the binary oppositions that emerged, such as center-periphery, political-spiritual, or older brother-younger brother, which form the basis of the narrative structure in the myth. Each element was analyzed symbolically to reveal the values contained within it, including the values of leadership, piety, and the ethics of power.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within Lévi-Strauss' structuralist framework, mythical structures are formed through oppositional relationships and patterns of transformation (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009). The character of Sultan Agung (Raden Mas Rangsang) is positioned as the center of narrative

transformation, moving from ordinary circumstances to an extraordinary position through a series of symbolic trials. The following table summarizes the binary oppositions and main narrative structures based on the text analysis:

**Table 1. Binary Oppositions in the *Babad Sultan Agung***

Binary Opposition	Symbolic Meaning	Leadership Values
Descent vs. Spiritual Legitimacy	The succession to the throne is perfected by supernatural validation	Divinely Destined and Chosen Leadership
Older Brother vs. Younger Brother	The struggle for power is not based on seniority	Wisdom, Intelligence, and Strategic Acumen
Center vs Periphery	A journey of self-discovery beyond formal power	Spiritual Greatness and Asceticism
Politics vs Spirituality	Legitimacy is not only structural but also divine	Justice and Upholding the Principle of Truth
Worldly vs Divine	Power is two-dimensional: worldly and otherworldly	Religious Authority and Protection

**Tabel 1. Narrative Structure of Sultan Agung**

Initiation Stage	Events in the Narrative	Meaning and Function
Separation	Abandoned, slandered, expelled from the palace	Disconnection from comfort zone and old status
Transition	Meditation, religious study, meeting spiritual figures (Sunan Kalijaga, Raden Janaka)	Spiritual and moral testing and refinement
Incorporation	Receiving the warangka randhan, recognition as king by the ancestors	Symbolic legitimization and integration into the power structure

Based on the two previous tables—which map out the binary opposition and narrative structure of the initiation rite—the values of Sultan Agung's leadership as constructed in the *Babad Sultan Agung* can be analyzed in depth. These values are not only revealed through the actions or dialogues of the characters, but also through a symbolic structural system that demonstrates how Javanese culture shapes the ideal figure of a king. Using Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach, these values can be analyzed as follows:

### Divinely Destined and Chosen Leadership

One important dimension of Sultan Agung's leadership was the divine legitimacy that accompanied his ascension to the throne. This legitimacy was not only political, but also spiritual and symbolic, showing that his power was believed to come from a higher power. This is reflected in the narrative in the *Babad Sultan Agung*, which implies that Sultan Agung's leadership was predestined even before his birth.

Sultan Agung's future as king was predicted by his father, Panembahan Senapati, even before he was born.

*“Leh Purbaya, dadiya kawruhamu besuk kang bisa anurunake ratu ing tanah jawa sak banjure, yaiku ari nira kang isih dikandhut ing ibu nira yayi Ratu Retna Dumilah.”*

Translation :

“Leh Purbaya, know that the one who will be able to establish kings in the land of Java in the future is your younger sibling who is still in your mother's womb, Ratu Retna Dumilah.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 1)

This explicitly affirms the existence of a predetermined destiny of leadership even from within the womb. This shows that the concept of a “divine king” or a leader chosen from heaven has become a strong narrative framework in

shaping Sultan Agung's identity as a legitimate leader.

His sacred mandate was reaffirmed through meetings with spiritual figures such as Sunan Kalijaga, who recognized him as “the future king of Java and the progenitor of future kings.”

*“Mangertiya menawa jeneng sira iku bakal ratu Jawa ing sabanjure sarta lajering ratu tanah Jawa kang bisa nurunake ratu jawa ing sabanjure.”*

Translation :

“Know that your name will become the next king of Java, and from your lineage will be born the subsequent kings of Java.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 13)

He also met Raden Janaka, who confirmed his destiny to “produce the future kings of Java.”

*“...poma welingku sapa wonge sing bisa tekan sangareping gilang iki, iya iku isih tedhak turunku dhewe lan mratandhakake manawa iku lajer ing tanah Jawa, ya kang bisa nurunake ratu Jawa ing sabanjure,”*

Translation :

“...whoever is able to reach this place, he is certainly still part of my lineage and a sign that he is the successor of the land of Java. He is the one who will bring forth the kings of Java in the future.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 14)

Raden Janaka's advice states that only his descendants can reach “sangareping gilang,” a sacred place that marks the acceptance of the revelation of leadership. The quote also emphasizes that Sultan Agung's leadership is not only a bloodline inheritance but also a divine revelation that can only be received by those who are spiritually entitled.

The pinnacle of this divine legitimacy was the descent of the royal revelation to Sultan Agung



after forty days of meditation, explicitly signifying divine approval of his authority.

*“Kyai Ageng waspada ing tingel yen wahyu ning karaton sampun dhumawah lajeng amurugi Barama Rangsang.”*

Translation :

“Kyai Ageng, with full awareness, realized that the royal revelation had descended and entered the body of Barama Rangsang.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 27)

This revelation symbolically and spiritually declared that Sultan Agung had received divine blessing to lead. This process not only signified the king's mental and spiritual readiness, but also demonstrated that his leadership had a transcendental dimension that ordinary leaders did not possess. The concept of a “destined” and “divinely chosen” king is part of the traditional Javanese narrative structure, which aims to strengthen the king's authority and political stability by emphasizing the sacred aspects of his leadership.

### **Wisdom, Intelligence, and Strategic Acumen**

Sultan Agung is described as a leader who was not only great in politics and military affairs, but also excelled in wisdom, intelligence, and strategic thinking. In the *Babad Sultan Agung*, this character has been portrayed since childhood and became the foundation of his legitimacy and leadership success later on.

From infancy, Prince Arya Purbaya considered him to be “a great and wise future king.”

*“Kala samanten Bapa Apurubaya amriksani mandeng dhateng ingkang rayi jabang bayi. Karaos anyhet salebeting panggalih, pancen ingkang rayi sampun maca pratondha manawi calon ratu gung binathara.”*

Translation :

“At that time, Prince Arya Purbaya looked at his younger brother, who was

still a baby. In his heart, he sensed that his younger brother had already shown signs of being a great and wise king.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 2)

Prince Arya Purbaya's recognition of his infant brother (who would later become Sultan Agung) shows that this figure's wisdom and greatness had been recognized from an early age. In Javanese culture, this recognition was not merely a personal observation, but a form of early spiritual legitimization, that a person's leadership had been evident from natural and spiritual signs since birth.

His extraordinary intelligence was evident when Sultan Agung became a Santri Adi, mastering and memorizing religious texts quickly, prompting Kyai Paker to acknowledge him as “no ordinary child.”

*“Sak lebetipun dipun mulang, punapa ingkang dipun mulangaken sanalika lajeng apal. Kitab punapa kemawon pundi ingkang dipun mulangaken sadaya lajeng saged.”*

Translation :

“When taught, Santri Adi could immediately memorize what was taught. Any book that was taught to him, he could master immediately.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 18)

This quote indicates that Sultan Agung did not only learn passively, but also had a deep understanding of spiritual and religious teachings. This intelligence does not merely demonstrate academic ability, but also symbolizes mastery of knowledge, which in the traditional Javanese context is closely related to supernatural powers and clairvoyance.

His ability to solve the riddle of the “warangka randhan” demonstrated his deep insight into the hidden “flaws” of his brother, Amangkurat Adi, and validated his own claim to the throne.

*“Santri Adi : “Nuwun inggih kang mas, pambatang kula makaten, sangking karsa dalem kula kakarsakaken anutupi wawadon dalem awit panjengan dalem sapunika boten kakung, dene bibit saka witipun nalika perang mengsah kaliyan paman Adipati Pragola ing Pathi.”*

Translation :

“Santri Adi: Please excuse me, Sir. My guess is this: from my innermost desire, I wish to conceal the innermost secret, for you are not a man at this time. Meanwhile, the seed from that tree originated from the war against Uncle Adipati Pragola in Pati.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 24)

He cunningly devised a strategy involving his “disappearance” and a staged “contest” (riddle) to ascend the throne, demonstrating political acumen and a compassionate approach to his brother’s difficulties.

*“Santri Adi : “Yen marengi karsa dalem kakang bok ratu garawa dalem angenipun bobot athik etikan punika lajeng kadhawuhan ana ambucal sarta panjengan dalem...”*

Translation :

“Santri Adi: “If it pleases you, Kakang. Kakang Bok Ratu, who is pregnant, pretends to have had a miscarriage. Then you announce a contest that the baby in Kakang Bok Ratu's womb has disappeared without cause...”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 24)

By using a riddle contest as a selection tool, Sultan Agung placed the process of power transfer in a spiritual and intellectual context, not merely a political one. He did not seize power, but allowed a cultural and symbolic process to declare himself the most worthy to lead.

The above data shows that Sultan Agung's wisdom, intelligence, and strategic acumen were not only present in his actions, but also constructed symbolically in the narrative of

*Babad Sultan Agung.* Sultan Agung's leadership was built on a strong foundation of intellectual intelligence, moral integrity, and the ability to manage conflicts wisely. Thus, he was not only a king in the political sense but also a cultural and spiritual leader for his people.

### **Spiritual Greatness and Asceticism**

His extraordinary spiritual strength and asceticism are among the most prominent aspects of Sultan Agung's character, as reflected in the narrative of *Babad Sultan Agung*. His period of wandering and his long life in the wild for “almost two years,” seeking “justice from the Almighty,” underscore his devotion and spiritual endurance.

*“Salebeting ngambah wana wasa ingkang kadhahar, namung pisang wana utawi wowowan waras sanesipun. Sareng Sampun angsal tiga tengah tahun laminipun ing ngriku lajeng kesasar dumugi wana Ketongga.”*

Translation :

“During his journey in the forest, his food consisted only of bananas or occasionally other food found there. After nearly three and a half years of walking, he became lost and eventually arrived at the Ketongga forest.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 12)

During his journey, Sultan Agung finally arrived at the Ketongga Forest, a place considered sacred and an important point in achieving high spiritual power. He obtained “high-level mystical knowledge” (high spiritual power) which included self-control and soul union, important attributes for a leader.

*“Raden Janaka : “Putuku ger, aja wa sumelang maneh rasaning ati sira jawata yen pengupas lelakon, mula mangkono nanging titah yamu kudu anlakoni awit manawa ora mangkonomu ndak ilang utamaning ratu ...”*

Translation :

“Raden Janaka: My grandson, do not let your heart feel anxious or doubtful. Know that if the gods have determined a person’s path in life, then they must follow it. For if they do not, the honor of a king will be lost...”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 15)

Sultan Agung gained the strength that the suffering and spiritual practices he underwent were an integral part of the path of leadership. Raden Janaka emphasized that to become a true king, one must first be able to overcome worldly temptations and unite with spiritual practices. This advice indicates that the supernatural powers obtained are not merely supernatural abilities, but rather the manifestation of self-control, spiritual unity, and steadfastness in pursuing the sacred path.

Sultan Agung's asceticism was evident from his youth when he studied at Kyai Paker's hermitage as a Santri Adi. During his education, he demonstrated high spiritual discipline. Not only did he quickly master the religious teachings, but he also lived a life of inner silence and avoided physical pleasures, including never eating while studying.

*“Kyai Paker sadangunipun dipun ngengeri Santri Adi namung tansah ngunguning panggalih. Dene punapa ingkang dipun wulangaken sadaya katampi lajeng saged lan apal sarta salebetipun tidak akan Paker boten nate purun nedha.”*

Translation :

“... Kyai Paker, after teaching Santri Adi for a long time, was always amazed. Because whatever he taught was always well received, quickly memorized, and perfectly understood by Santri Adi. In fact, during his stay at Paker, he never wanted to eat.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 21)

This quote shows that from a young age, he had demonstrated deep spiritual maturity and

steadfastness in living a simple life. This discipline affirms that leadership, in Sultan Agung’s view, is formed through purity of heart, patience in suffering, and the ability to detach oneself from worldly pleasures.

Thus, Sultan Agung's asceticism and spiritual strength were not only personal foundations, but also important aspects of the legitimacy of his leadership. His character was shaped through a long process of contemplation, voluntary seclusion, and deep self-denial. He was not merely a king by virtue of his lineage, but because of his ability to subdue himself and draw closer to the Almighty.

### **Justice and Upholding the Principle of Truth**

Another leadership trait reflected in the *Babad Sultan Agung* is steadfastness in the principles of justice and morality that transcend blind obedience to power. This is clearly seen in the attitude of Prince Arya Purbaya, who refused the order to kill his younger brother, Raden Mas Rangsang.

*“Yen aku nuruti karsane ingkang sinuwun nyuwit lalakone Dhimas Rangsang utawa aku ora nuhoni dhawuhe Kangjeng Rama kang wus suwarga.”*

Translation :

“If I follow the Sultan’s wish to kill my younger brother, Rangsang, it means I am disobeying the command of my late father.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 3)

The above quote demonstrates a high level of ethical awareness that not all commands of authority are worthy of obedience, especially if they conflict with moral values and ancestral teachings. This refusal indicates that within the palace environment, there was room for moral consideration and that loyalty did not have to be synonymous with absolute obedience, but could also mean the courage to reject injustice.



Sultan Agung's principle of justice is also evident in his decision regarding royal burials. Sultan Agung's decision to hold royal funerals in Pajimatan (Imogiri) emphasized that even a prince who "wronged his king" would not be allowed to be buried there, setting a clear standard of justice and accountability within his own lineage.

*"Inkang Sinuwun : 'Kangmas Purubaya dalah kadang kula para pangeran, ing tembe wingking samiya sumare ing siti suci, inggih ing pajimatan. Dene inkang kagungan kersa boten sumare ing pajimatan inggih boten dados punapa, sanadyan putra ning panjenengan nata manawi lepat ing ratu boten kenging sumare ing pajimatan.'"*

Translation :

"Inkang Sinuwun: 'Kangmas Purubaya, along with all the princes, we will all be buried in the sacred land, namely Pajimatan. However, for those who do not wish to be buried here, it is not a problem. Nevertheless, even if someone is the son of a king, if he commits an offense against his king, he is not permitted to be buried in Pajimatan.'"

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 66)

This stance demonstrates that Sultan Agung prioritized the principles of accountability and responsibility, both in life and after death. Thus, moral values are placed as the main foundation of the power system. There is no room for deviation, even if the perpetrator is a member of the royal family. This also reflects the understanding that power is not an unlimited privilege, but a mandate that is subject to the norms of justice.

### **Religious Authority and Protection**

Sultan Agung's leadership not only encompassed political and military dimensions, but was also very prominent in religious aspects. He was awarded the title "Panetepana agama kalipat tolah kang kaping 1 ing nagara Mataram"

(founder of religion and first caliph of Allah in Mataram), recognizing him as a prominent religious leader.

*"...panetepana agama kalipat tolah kang kaping 1 di nagara Mataram"*

Translation :

"...His Majesty Sultan Agung, the founder of religion and the first caliph in the Mataram Kingdom."

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 48)

This title was not merely a symbol of status, but a form of recognition of Sultan Agung's religious authority, which was equivalent to the function of caliph in Islamic tradition. He not only performed administrative duties as king, but also acted as a moral guide and guardian of Sharia law in his realm.

The strengthening of Sultan Agung's spiritual position was also symbolized concretely through the acceptance of Tunggul Wulung, a sacred black banner believed to be a relic of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The acceptance of Tunggul Wulung symbolized his legitimacy as an Islamic ruler and a candidate for the banner of the Javanese kings.

*"...dene inkang minongka panebusing dosa kalepatan kula kangjeng sultan kula caosi pusaka agem dalem swargi kangjeng nabi awujud serban sutra cemeng, punika lajeng kaparingna ing wayah paduka."*

Translation :

"...As atonement for my mistakes, I will present to him the heirloom that once belonged to the Prophet, a black silk turban. Please convey this turban to your grandson."

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 55)

Sultan Agung's commitment to Islam extended beyond symbolic gestures; he demonstrated a strong focus on the practical implementation of Islamic teachings within

society. He encouraged the congregation to perform the Hajj pilgrimage and endowed a waqf house in Mecca for their residence, demonstrating his support for religious practices and the welfare of his people.

*“Kajawi punika saking panuwun kula wontena karsa dalem dan hawuhaken dhumateng para kawula dalem sadaya samiya minggah kaji dhateng Mekah yen kuwasa.”*

Translation :

“Additionally, we also request your permission to issue a decree to all your subjects that, if they are able, they should perform the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.”

(Babad Sultan Agung, p. 67)

This action was not only an expression of concern for the spiritual well-being of his people but also reflected an integrative strategy between political power and religious service. This action shows that Sultan Agung understood the role of a king not only as a ruler of the state, but also as a protector of the faith and worship of his people.

Sultan Agung's religious authority was built through a combination of symbolic legitimacy, acceptance of spiritual heritage, and concrete attention to the needs of the people. His leadership reflected the model of an Islamic-Javanese kingdom that combined elements of political power with moral-religious leadership, in which the king acted as both caliph and servant of the people. This legacy became one of the important foundations in the formation of the Mataram kingdom's identity as a major power based on Islamic values within the framework of Javanese culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Sultan Agung's leadership, as constructed in the *Babad Sultan Agung*, was not only based on political power and lineage, but more deeply rooted in spiritual

processes, divine legitimacy, and symbolic transformations rich in cultural meaning. Through Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach, it was found that the values of Sultan Agung's leadership were shaped through the narrative structure of initiation (separation–transition–incorporation) as well as binary oppositions such as political–spiritual, worldly–divine, and center–periphery. The ideal and complete leadership model in Javanese culture is a leader who is wise, sacred, fair, intelligent, and morally and spiritually responsible.

This study has a number of important contributions as well as several weaknesses. In terms of contributions, this study successfully unravels the construction of leadership in Javanese culture through Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach, which highlights binary oppositions and initiation rites in the *Babad Sultan Agung*, thus showing that Javanese leadership is not only political but also symbolic, spiritual, and moral. However, this study has several limitations, including the scarcity of sources, as it relies solely on one version of the *Babad Sultan Agung* manuscript, the lack of integration between real historical context and visual symbolism to support the narrative, and the failure to explicitly elaborate on the applicability of the findings in contemporary contexts, such as in education, politics, or organizational culture.

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