MEMAYU HAYUNING BAWONO AS JAVANESE ETHICAL COSMOLOGY IN THE ISLAMIC ROYAL COURT TRADITION OF YOGYAKARTA

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Article received January 26th, 2026; Article revised October 11st, 2026; Article approved November 16th, 2026

Abstract

This article examines how Memayu Hayuning Bawono connects ethical conduct with a wider cosmological order in the Islamic royal court tradition of Yogyakarta. It considers the relationship between Javanese moral concepts, Islamic ethical interpretation, and the organization of ritual participation. The qualitative analysis combines three sessions of participant observation among Kondur Gangsa spectators in Yogyakarta in 2024, 2025, and 2026 with document analysis and museum documentation. Labuhan, Grebeg, and the wider Sekaten cycle are discussed through documentary sources within the broader category of Hajad Dalem. The analysis draws on habitus and embodiment and uses an intra-agent lens to interpret conduct within ritual episodes. Its central finding is that prescribed sequences, spatial arrangements, ceremonial roles, and the handling of ritual objects make responsibility and restraint publicly recognizable. These practices provide settings in which ethical orientations may be learned and renewed. Documented recurrence supports an interpretation of embodied ethics, but it does not establish changes in individual belief or prove that all participants have internalized the same values. Qur'anic and hadith references clarify ethical parallels with humility and accountability; they are not treated as evidence of the historical origin of the rituals. Memayu Hayuning Bawono is therefore interpreted as an ethical cosmology sustained through institutional practice and contextual religious interpretation.

The article contributes a bounded account of how royal court ritual can connect a local moral vocabulary with publicly enacted obligations while preserving the distinction between observed conduct and inferred disposition.

Keywords: *Ethical Cosmology, Javanese Islam, Embodied Ethics, Memayu Hayuning Bawono, Yogyakarta Royal Court Ritual*

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INTRODUCTION

Memayu Hayuning Bawono links the quality of human conduct with the well-being of a world shared with others. The expression is commonly discussed as a Javanese principle of harmony, environmental responsibility, or local wisdom. Recent research applies it to sustainable practice and cultural tourism (Rachmadi, Afif, and Ramadhan, 2025; Sumarmi et al., 2024). These applications show its continuing relevance, but an ethical vocabulary also needs examination where people encounter and enact it. This article approaches *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* as an ethical cosmology: a framework for understanding obligations in human life in relation to a wider social, natural, and metaphysical order.

The Yogyakarta royal court provides a setting in which this relationship takes recognizable forms. Ceremonies organize movement, participation, object handling, and the responsibilities of particular roles. Afifah (2025) describes the Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat as an institutional setting for the interaction of Islam and Javanese culture, while Jafar (2022) shows how Javanese-Islamic understandings of time relate worldly activity to spiritual life. This study asks how these understandings shape conduct in ceremonial settings, rather than simply serving as statements about cultural identity.

Religion and local tradition interact in diverse ways across Indonesia. Muliadi, Wahyudi AR, and bin Mahsyar (2024) distinguish between changes in ritual intentions and changes in ritual procedures within a Mandar maritime context. Noviani et al. (2023) analyze religious and cultural elements in a Javanese court-related funeral. These studies caution against assuming a singular trajectory of religious change. Accordingly, the Yogyakarta material is examined within its specific institutional context, with particular attention to the practices that connect Javanese concepts and Islamic ethical references.

This article examines how *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* structures an ethical understanding of the relationship between the human sphere and the broader world, how Islamic moral references can interpret this understanding, and what ritual participation reveals about its practical application. The objective is to connect cosmological meaning with publicly enacted obligations. The contribution is an account of the institutional conditions that make ethical orientations recognizable in practice, together with a clear statement of the limits of inferring internal dispositions from ceremonial behavior.

Terminology is standardized for clarity, without treating spelling differences as evidence of different doctrines. *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* names the principle discussed here; Kraton denotes the Yogyakarta Sultanate's royal court as a cultural and ceremonial institution, not a court of law or merely its palace buildings; and *bawono alit* and *bawono ageng* refer to the microcosmic human sphere and the wider cosmic order. These terms are analytical glosses rather than verbatim translations from a particular classical manuscript. Established spelling variants, including bawana, keraton, Karaton, and Garebeg, are retained in source titles and official designations; they are not treated as typographical errors. The spelling of the analytical terms follows Sumarmi et al. (2024) for consistency; *bawono* is therefore used for both the principle and the paired terms *bawono alit* and *bawono ageng*, and the commemoration of the Sultan's accession is written Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem, following Kraton usage and Purwati (2025). *Hajad Dalem* is the broader category of court ceremonial observances, not an additional independent ritual alongside all the others.

Literature Review

Research on *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* first establishes the breadth of its ethical meanings. Isnaini (2021) interprets its connection to balance and human responsibility through the poetry of Sapardi Djoko Damono. Daryono et al. (2024), working with the writings of Mangkunegara IV, discuss a Javanese Muslim ethos of religious harmony. These studies differ in their objects: literary expression is not equivalent to observed ritual conduct, and a text concerning Mangkunegara IV cannot serve as evidence for every Yogyakarta ceremony. Their value here is to establish the range of moral questions that Javanese cultural concepts can address.

Environmental studies make the practical implications more explicit. Sumarmi et al. (2024) examine *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* in relation to environmental management, while Yardan et al. (2024) develop a literature-based account of its ecological and spiritual meanings. Vitrianto (2023) considers local wisdom in a Yogyakarta tourism community, and Rachmadi et al. (2025) connect Javanese philosophy with cultural tourism and its governance challenges. These works help situate responsibility in relation to the surrounding world. Their findings do not establish that the court rituals examined here produce measurable environmental benefits; that would require a separate assessment.

Studies on Islam and Javanese practice offer an additional comparative framework. Suroyo and Bima (2023) analyze Kejawen cultural beliefs from an Islamic theological perspective. Nursolehah, Noor, and Rizky (2022) investigate Sekaten and the evolving relationships among religious meaning, entertainment, and economic activity. Ariyadi (2025) explores Qur'anic interpretation within the context of Suro slametan. Together with Afifah (2025), these studies show that a single ceremonial form can support multiple interpretations. They also highlight the importance of distinguishing between the presentation of a ritual institution and an individual participant's understanding or experience.

Recent Al-Qalam articles offer useful comparisons of public expressions of moral commitments. Suroyo et al. (2024) discuss environmental responsibility through Riau songket production; Baskoro (2026) considers the educational potential of ecological rituals; Latif et al. (2026) examine religious outreach and community participation at Jogokariyan Mosque; and Nurdin et al. (2026) analyze cultural *da'wah* in a To Dakka tradition. These are comparative settings, not additional field sites of the present study. They suggest that religious and ethical meanings are carried through activities and institutions, but that each setting must demonstrate the specific forms of that relationship. Research on court space and manuscript traditions helps locate those forms. Syahdani and Kardanardi (2022) link Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis to the founder's readings and cultural background. Surjono, Antariksa, and Titisari (2023) examine cosmology in social tradition and the built environment. Purwati (2025) uses manuscript materials to explain procedures and meanings associated with Labuhan Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem. Woodward (2011:137–198) provides an earlier ethnographic reading of the symbolic order of the Kraton and of Grebeg Mulud as a veneration of the Prophet enacted as court ritual. These sources support the analysis of spatial, temporal, and material organization; they are not substitutes for a documented account of the field observations used in this article.

The analytical gap within this literature concerns the link between an ethical proposition and the organization of action. Work on symbolism explains what an object or ceremony may signify, while the study of religious accommodation explains how meanings are reinterpreted. An account of embodied ethics must also

ask what participants are required to do, how those requirements are coordinated, and how far their performance supports an inference about moral learning. Pradana, Tertibi, and Tohari (2024) approach related questions through an ethnography of collective compliance in Sedekah Bumi. Khairani and Hendra (2025) examine the communicative role of symbols and adaptation in *kenduri*. The present article brings these questions to the Yogyakarta court without assuming that compliance alone establishes a shared inner conviction.

Conceptual Framework

Ethical cosmology describes a view in which conduct matters beyond an individual's immediate interests. The relation between bawono alit and bawono ageng places human action within a larger order. *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* expresses an obligation to care for that order through one's relations with other people and the surrounding world. This definition is an interpretive synthesis informed by the literature, particularly Isnaini (2021) and Surjono et al. (2023), as well as by Magnis-Suseno's (1997) account of Javanese ethics, which grounds the principles of harmony (rukun) and respect (hormat) in a worldview that links social order with cosmic order. It is not presented as a quotation from a classical Javanese text; claims about manuscript traditions are drawn only from named scholarly studies (Purwati 2025).

Bourdieu's (1990) account of *habitus* helps explain how structured practice can shape dispositions over time. Csordas (1990) centers bodily experience in cultural analysis. These approaches provide a conceptual basis for examining movement, timing, attention, and the practical handling of objects. They do not authorize a researcher to read a participant's belief directly from posture. Institutional rules can organize a performance even when participants attach different meanings to it or comply for different reasons.

The intra-agent lens is a study-specific way of examining how an actor regulates conduct within a ritual episode. It focuses on publicly observable adjustments, such as waiting for a designated stage, coordinating with others, or handling an object according to a prescribed procedure. Its conceptual genealogy lies in practice theory and the anthropology of embodiment rather than in an independent psychological theory. Mauss (1973) treated socially transmitted techniques of the body as a means of learning a collective order, and Bourdieu (1990) developed this insight into *habitus*, the durable dispositions produced by regulated practice. Csordas (1990) shifted attention to the body as the existential ground of culture. In the study of religion, Asad (1993) analyzed ritual as disciplined practice that cultivates moral capacities, and Mahmood (2005) showed how participants in an Egyptian mosque movement treated repeated bodily acts as means of forming pious dispositions.

Among studies of Indonesian ritual, Pradana et al. (2024) differentiate habituation from other bases of collective compliance. The intra-agent lens assumes that ethical formation can be analyzed through regulated action, but it refines this claim by showing how an actor modifies behavior to align with a shared procedure in a single episode, without assuming that this adjustment constitutes a lasting disposition. Since the analytical unit is an episode of action, this lens alone does not demonstrate that an individual develops a stable disposition across multiple events.

Internalization is consequently treated as a possible interpretation of sustained learning, not a measured outcome. A persuasive inference would require recurrent conduct, evidence that the pattern is socially prescribed, and contextual accounts explaining its ethical meaning. Alternative explanations, including technical necessity, deference to authority, professional training, or situational compliance, must also be

considered. Cross-source convergence can strengthen an interpretation of the practice, but it cannot replace longitudinal evidence or participants' own accounts of change.

Islamic ethics provides a further interpretive reference. The article compares particular orientations, especially humility and responsibility, with identifiable Qur'anic and hadith passages. Similarity at this level is distinguished from historical derivation and theological approval. A moral parallel does not establish that a ritual originated in scripture or that every Muslim regards it in the same way. This distinction lets scholars examine local concepts on their own terms while identifying how they can be understood within a Muslim social setting.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study uses a qualitative socio-cultural design focused on ethical cosmology. Fieldwork comprised three observation sessions at Kondur Gangsa: the closing ceremony of Sekaten, held in Mulud Je 1958 (September 2024), Mulud Dal 1959 (September 2025), and Mulud Be 1960 (August 2026). The fieldwork period therefore ran from September 2024 to August 2026, with one session in each annual Sekaten cycle. The author conducted observations while standing among other spectators. Each session lasted one evening and covered the sequence visible from the public area, from the opening of the proceedings at Masjid Gedhe Kauman to the gamelan procession's departure toward the Kraton. The ritual episode and its organization of collective action constitute the unit of analysis. Scholarly and official documents on Labuhan, Grebeg, the wider Sekaten cycle, and Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem provide the broader *Hajad Dalem* context. Kondur Gangsa is part of Sekaten, so the ceremonies are not treated as independent statistical samples.

The field notes were written retrospectively after each session and organized by ceremonial stage: the opening at the mosque, the reading of the Prophet's life, the Sultan's departure, and the gamelan's return. Each entry recorded the order of activities, the positions of ceremonial actors and spectators, and the handling of ritual objects as described in the observation account and attributed documentary sources. The record is therefore a structured descriptive account rather than an hour-by-hour log, and it contains no transcripts of private conversations. The analysis concerns the order of activities, spatial arrangements, ceremonial roles, movement, and the handling of ritual objects as described in the observation account and attributed documentary sources. Descriptions of actions are distinguished from ethical interpretations: a sequence or posture concerns visible conduct, whereas restraint or responsibility expresses an interpretation. The same visible act may have several meanings. The analysis concentrates on the organization of practice and does not estimate the prevalence of particular beliefs among participants.

Document analysis contextualized those descriptions. Materials were selected for their relevance to the ethical concept or ceremony, identifiable authorship or institutional provenance, and bibliographic information that permits retrieval. Peer-reviewed articles provided scholarly interpretation. Official Kraton accounts established publicly documented procedures and institutional explanations. Qur'anic passages were checked against the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs edition (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019) and an English translation (Quran.com n.d.), and hadith were checked by collection and canonical number (Sunnah.com n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c). Manuscript traditions are accessed only through named scholarly studies, chiefly Purwati (2025); the article does not undertake its own philological examination of classical Javanese texts.

Official accounts of Grebeg and Kondur Gangsa published in 2024, Kondur Gangsa and Labuhan in 2025, and Kondur Gangsa in 2026 provide contextual records (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b, 2026). Publication dates identify institutional records and are kept separate from the researcher's attendance. Figure 1 was photographed at the Sonobudoyo Museum in September 2025, within the fieldwork period, as supplementary documentation. It shows a museum display rather than a performed ceremony and is used only to contextualize ritual objects, not as evidence of participants' behavior or beliefs.

Analysis moved from descriptions of action to contextual interpretation. Spatial ordering, sequencing, role allocation, and object handling formed the descriptive categories. These were examined alongside ethical themes in the documentary literature and then interpreted through the relation between *bawono alit* and *bawono ageng*. The intra-agent lens directed attention to regulation within an episode. This movement from descriptive categories to concepts is informed by Naeem et al. (2023); it does not imply that the entire six-step procedure was followed as a separate research protocol.

Internalization is not a measurement but an interpretive inference in four steps corresponding to Figure 2. First, we described an episode based only on conduct visible from the audience position, such as waiting for a designated stage or moving ritual objects in a prescribed order. Second, we checked that conduct against institutional accounts to determine whether it was prescribed rather than incidental (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2024b, 2025a, 2026). Third, an ethical reading, such as restraint or responsibility, was proposed only when the pattern recurred across sessions and when scholarly or institutional sources attached that meaning to the practice; alternative explanations, including technical necessity, deference to authority, professional training, and situational compliance, were weighed at this step. Fourth, the claim was stated at the level the evidence allowed: as a description of public duty and possible learning, while individual internalization, which would require participants' own accounts or repeated observation of the same persons, was retained as a hypothesis.

Triangulation consisted of comparing field descriptions from the three sessions with one another and with institutional accounts and scholarly interpretations. Institutional publications establish how the court explains a practice, while scholarly studies supply contextual readings. Agreement across these sources supports an interpretation's plausibility but does not make the sources independent witnesses to every observed event. Where ethical language goes beyond what an action alone can show, the discussion identifies it as interpretation. Table 1 summarizes this distinction so readers can assess the move from conduct to ethical meaning.

The researcher's position among the spectators locates the observation within the public audience's perspective. This position provides access to public ceremonial activity while limiting knowledge of preparation and participants' intentions. Reflexivity therefore concerns how the authors assign moral meaning to regulated behavior. Familiarity with Javanese or Islamic ethical terms can make a gesture seem self-explanatory. Descriptions of participation are distinguished from judgments about personal piety, and alternative reasons for compliance remain part of the interpretation. Any member of the public could access the ceremonies. Ethical safeguards followed from the public character of the ceremonies: observation was confined to areas open to the public, no private interview statements or personal data are reproduced, no identifiable

individual is named or pictured, and no claim of individual psychological measurement is made.

Table 1. Observable Practices and Interpretive Limits

Ritual context	Conduct and interpretive limit
Hajad Dalem	Prescribed roles and sequences provide a setting for ordered participation; they do not establish personal agreement.
Labuhan	Preparation and transfer of *uborampe* are consistent with care and limitation; intention requires additional evidence.
Grebeg	Procession and distribution represent public obligation; equitable welfare outcomes are not measured.
Sekaten / Kondur Gangsa	Coordinated timing and object handling make attentiveness visible; coordination alone does not prove ethical internalization.
Ceremonial recurrence	Renewed procedures support continuity of institutional practice; an individual learning trajectory is not established.

Source: Authors' synthesis of observation focused on Kondur Gangsa and documentary descriptions of court ritual

DISCUSSION

Hajad Dalem and the Organization of Ethical Conduct

Hajad Dalem provides an institutional frame for ceremonies in which individual action is coordinated with collective requirements. Spatial positions and prescribed stages give participants a recognizable way to take part. The ethical interpretation concerns the relationship between these requirements and the obligations attached to a role. Waiting, moving at an appropriate stage, and caring for objects can make attentiveness visible. Their significance rests on the context in which they occur, rather than on an assumption that a particular posture always expresses the same moral intention.

The court's role is therefore organizational and symbolic. It defines occasions, routes, procedures, and responsibilities through which an inherited vocabulary can acquire practical form. Work on cosmology and spatial organization helps explain why these arrangements matter (Surjono et al. 2023), while research on Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis connects built form with broader cultural readings (Syahdani and Kardanardi 2022). The interpretation advanced here is that a ceremonial setting can make relations between the human sphere and the wider order perceptible through the organization of participation.

This does not mean that hierarchy automatically creates ethical agreement. Participants may act from commitment, familiarity, obligation, curiosity, or respect for procedure. An institutional interpretation of harmony should not silence these possibilities. The *Hajad Dalem* perspective contributes by identifying the shared conditions of action while leaving the meanings of individual participation open to further investigation. Ethical cosmology, on this reading, describes the obligations a ceremonial order makes available; it does not assign an identical moral experience to everyone present.

Labuhan and Responsibility within a Wider World

Labuhan connects the handling of ritual materials to places beyond the court. The official account of the 2025 observance describes the transfer of *uborampe* and their movement to designated sites, presenting the ceremony as prayer and remembrance (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2025b). These descriptions help contextualize preparation, transfer, and release as actions that situate human agency within a world beyond personal control.

Purwati (2025) links manuscript accounts of Labuhan Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem to remembrance of origin and *Memayu Hayuning Bawono*. Her study concerns a historically described Labuhan Ageng, including its ceremonial supplies and sites. It provides a scholarly basis for a cosmological reading grounded

in named manuscript research. The preparation and handling of materials can then be interpreted through responsibility and the limits of human control within a wider world.

The Islamic comparison is specific. Qur'an 25:63 (al-Furqān) describes humble conduct and a peaceful response to provocation (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia 2019; Quran.com n.d.). *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* no. 2588 associate's humility before God with elevation in status (Sunnah.com n.d.-b). Both passages are paraphrased from the cited translations. They clarify an ethical parallel with restrained agency.

Figure 1 presents ritual objects in a museum display. The display makes material culture accessible to visitors while separating the objects from the movement and timing of a performed ceremony.

Figure 1. *Ritual Objects in a Museum Display*



Source: *Authors' documentation, Sonobudoyo Museum, Yogyakarta, September 2025*

Grebeg and Public Responsibility

Grebeg relates court authority to public provision through the circulation of *gunungan*. The official account of Grebeg Mulud in 2024 describes an ordered procession, prayer, and distribution, and presents agricultural produce as an expression of the ruler's giving to the people (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2024a). Woodward (2011:169–198) likewise reads Grebeg Mulud as a veneration of the Prophet enacted as court ritual, linking the ceremony's Islamic occasion with royal authority. This documented explanation supports a reading of the ceremony as a public representation of obligation. It does not by itself demonstrate equal access to the distributed materials or a lasting improvement in participants' welfare.

The ethical issue is how abundance and authority become visible through relationships with others. Preparations and designated stages place distribution within a collective occasion rather than a private act. The *gunungan* offers a material focus through which responsibility can be represented. Whether participants interpret the event as generosity, blessing, heritage, or another form of belonging requires their own accounts. The institutional reading is nonetheless significant because it presents the ruler's position alongside a duty to the community.

An Islamic ethical parallel appears in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* no. 893 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* no. 1829a, which teach that each person entrusted with a charge is accountable for those placed under it (Sunnah.com n.d.-a, n.d.-c). Scholarship on religious adaptation in Mandar and To Dakka settings offers a wider comparison (Muliadi et al. 2024; Nurdin et al. 2026), but those cases remain distinct from Yogyakarta. Grebeg contributes a particular example of how a ceremony can place a moral relationship before a public audience through the organized movement of material resources.

Sekaten and Kondur Gangsa as Coordinated Practice

Sekaten organizes instruments, performance, movement, and ceremonial roles within a shared sequence. Kondur Gangsa closes the cycle by returning the two Gamelan Sekati ensembles, Kanjeng Kiai Gunturmadu and Kanjeng Kiai Nagawilaga, from the *pagongan* at Masjid Gedhe Kauman to Bangsal Trajumas in the Srimanganti complex (Kraton

Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2025a). Participants attend to successive stages and others' actions, creating opportunities to practice care and responsiveness.

Official accounts of Kondur Gangsa in 2024, 2025, and 2026 place the reading of the Prophet Muhammad's life and the Sultan's presence in the sequence before the instruments return (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2024b, 2025a, 2026). The 2026 account specifies that the instruments return immediately after the Sultan leaves the mosque, indicating a change from earlier arrangements. Recurrence therefore includes procedural variation. The combination of an Islamic narrative and Javanese court protocols supports an account of religious and cultural articulation in a public event, while individual interpretations remain a separate question.

Nursolehah et al. (2022) also show why the analysis must allow for changing and mixed meanings: their discussion of Sekaten includes shifts toward entertainment and economic activity. Such changes complicate any account of unbroken ethical transmission. A participant's attendance can have several purposes, and a familiar sequence may be encountered as devotion, skilled work, cultural obligation, or public spectacle. The article therefore locates ethical continuity in the availability of regulated practices and interpretive vocabularies, while acknowledging that their reception can vary.

Comparison with *kenduri* helps interpret this variability. Khairani and Hendra (2025) describe how ritual symbols communicate meanings while adapting to a diaspora setting. Their findings concern a different community, but they show that material and procedural continuity need not entail a single fixed experience. In Yogyakarta, the recurring arrangement of Sekaten supplies an occasion for moral and religious interpretation.

Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem and Ceremonial Time

Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem places court authority within a recurring commemoration of accession. Repeating a ceremonial occasion can renew publicly recognized responsibilities, but different ceremonial cycles must be distinguished. Purwati (2025) describes Labuhan Ageng in an eight-year cycle. The official 2025 account describes that year's Labuhan and anticipates the expanded observance in a Dal year (Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat 2025b). These accounts should not be collapsed into a claim that all annual and eight-year observances follow identical procedures.

Jafar's (2022) discussion of Javanese-Islamic time helps interpret recurrence as more than calendar repetition. A scheduled occasion connects present conduct to an inherited understanding of obligation and origin. For *Memayu Hayuning Bawono,* this offers an opportunity to restate and perform responsibility at recognized times. The present material supports this institutional interpretation of renewal rather than a claim about any particular person's ethical development.

Islamic Ethical Interpretation in Context

Across these ceremonies, Islamic references and Javanese cosmological concepts connect through specific interpretive relationships. Some Islamic elements, such as the reading of the Prophet's life during Kondur Gangsa, are documented parts of a ceremonial sequence. Other connections, including the comparison of Labuhan with scriptural humility, are the researchers' ethical interpretations. These forms of evidence have different implications. The presence of a religious narrative is an institutional fact; a thematic parallel is an analytical argument.

Afifah (2025), Suroyo and Bima (2023), and Ariyadi (2025) provide

contextual accounts of Islam and Javanese practice. Together, they support attending to local forms of interpretation without treating Javanese religion as a uniform experience. The present article makes the narrower claim that *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* can be discussed alongside Islamic responsibilities while retaining its cosmological vocabulary. It does not determine which ceremonies are acceptable within every Islamic theological position.

The comparative Al-Qalam literature also prevents an overly simple account. Muliadi et al. (2024) identify changes in intentions and procedures, whereas Noviani et al. (2023) examine adaptation within a court-related funeral. Latif et al. (2026) focus on community participation in a mosque setting. These examples support contextual analysis, not a universal mechanism applicable without further evidence. The Yogyakarta argument is strongest where a named procedure, institutional explanation, or identifiable ethical reference makes the connection assessable.

Embodiment and the Limits of Inference

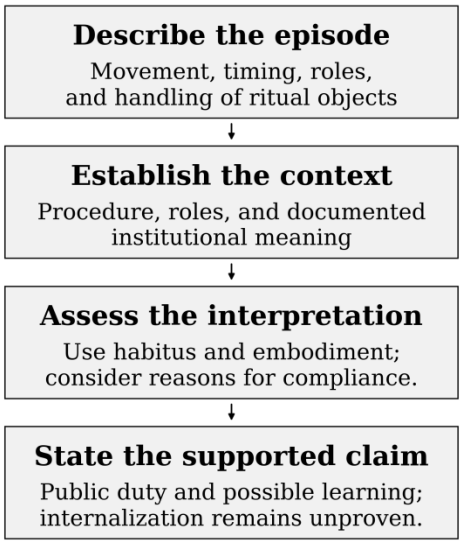
The intra-agent lens identifies regulation within an action episode. It asks how a participant adjusts movement or timing to a shared procedure and what contextual evidence supports calling that adjustment ethically meaningful. In this sense, embodiment directs attention to the practical requirements of participation. Bourdieu (1990) and Csordas (1990) make such requirements analytically important, and Mahmood (2005) shows how comparable requirements can serve as means of ethical self-formation in a Muslim setting, while the available material limits what can be claimed about the development of durable dispositions.

Regulated conduct, repeated institutional procedures, and convergence between documentary interpretations provide distinct forms of evidence. They allow the analysis to identify practices consistent with responsibility or restraint and to explain their institutional framing.

Pradana et al. (2024) provide a relevant comparison by identifying several grounds for collective compliance in Sedekah Bumi, including habituation and group identification. Their evidence includes participants' accounts, offering a different basis for explaining participation than an interpretation centered on publicly visible action. This comparison clarifies what further evidence would strengthen the Yogyakarta argument. Accounts of how a person learned a role, responded to correction, or interpreted repeated participation would make the proposed link between practice and disposition assessable.

Figure 2 summarizes the move from action, through institutional context, to a qualified ethical interpretation. It highlights the supporting evidence and the points where alternative explanations or further data are needed. Internalization remains a hypothesis about learning, beyond what these observations can establish.

Figure 2. From Ritual Conduct to a Bounded Ethical Interpretation



Source: Authors' analytical synthesis informed by Bourdieu (1990) and Csordas (1990)

Implications of the Analysis

The analysis gives *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* a practical setting: ethical obligations become recognizable through roles, schedules, procedures, and material relations. The court can maintain that setting even as participants encounter it for different reasons. This helps explain continuity at the institutional level without assuming that an unchanged phrase preserves an unchanged experience. Ethical cosmology is renewed through opportunities to perform and interpret responsibility, while the depth and direction of individual learning remain empirical questions.

Baskoro (2026) discusses educational possibilities within ecological ritual, while Suroyo et al. (2024) examine environmental relations through cultural production. These comparisons suggest further investigation of how ceremonial obligations relate to everyday conduct and environmental outcomes. The present article addresses the ceremonial and documentary setting of ethical interpretation.

The framework examines ceremonial discipline without ranking participants by presumed piety or moral development. It explains how institutional practice makes a cosmological ethic publicly available while keeping interpretation proportionate to the evidence.

CLOSING

In the Yogyakarta court context, *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* can be understood as an ethical cosmology that links human responsibility to a wider order. In documented accounts of Labuhan, Grebeg, and Sekaten, and in observed Kondur Gangsa ceremonies, this relation takes practical form through the organization of participation, objects, and ceremonial time. Drawing on three Kondur Gangsa observation sessions in 2024, 2025, and 2026, along with documentary accounts of the wider ceremonial context, the analysis identifies publicly recognizable obligations and the institutional explanations through which they become meaningful. It supports an interpretation of embodied ethics at the level of practice, rather than a finding that all participants have internalized identical values.

The Qur'anic and hadith passages cited clarify ethical parallels with humility and accountability. The article distinguishes documented religious elements from the researchers' scriptural comparisons, so ethical correspondence is not mistaken for historical derivation or theological consensus. The article's contribution is this bounded connection between cosmological meaning, institutional practice, and religious interpretation. Its scope is the Yogyakarta court setting. Longitudinal observation and participants' own accounts are needed to examine whether, and how, the obligations performed in ceremonies shape conduct beyond them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat for documenting court ceremonial traditions. They also thank the reviewers for their constructive comments. This research received no funding.

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