

ISLAMIC VALUES IN *MOTTAINAI* PHILOSOPHY AND *OSAGARI* TRADITION IN JAPAN

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Abstract: Prices of goods in Japan are relatively expensive. Meanwhile, to dispose of used or second hand goods is often difficult even people have to pay for it. The Philosophy of *mottainai* and *osagari* tradition are a solution for Japanese people to deal with, so these items are not wasteful. The aim of the study was to analyze Islamic values in the *mottainai* philosophy and *osagari* tradition in Japan. This research uses a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques are with observation and in-depth interviews of 3 Japanese and 5 Indonesian people living in Japan as research informants. Secondary data were from books, journals, and articles that are relevant to the research theme. The results of this study show that in the tradition of *mottainai* and *osagari*, there are Islamic values that benefit human life and protect the environment. Islamic values include preventing wasteful goods with the principles of 3R (Re-use, Reduce, and Recycle) and *osagari* by giving second hand goods to those who need them. The *osagari* tradition is a medium of communication, helping each other, and maintaining friendship. The tradition takes place across cultures, which is carried out not only by fellow Japanese, but also Japanese with non-Japanese and even among non-Japanese people living in Japan.

Keywords: *Mottainai*, *osagari*, Islamic values, intercultural communication

Abstract: Harga barang di Jepang relatif mahal. Sementara itu, membuang barang bekas atau bekas seringkali sulit bahkan orang harus membayarnya. Filsafat tradisi *mottainai* dan *osagari* adalah solusi bagi orang Jepang untuk berurusan sehingga barang-barang ini tidak sia-sia. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis nilai-nilai Islam dalam filsafat *mottainai* dan tradisi *osagari* di Jepang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan observasi dan wawancara mendalam terhadap 3 orang Jepang dan 5 orang Indonesia yang

tinggal di Jepang sebagai informan penelitian. Data sekunder berasal dari buku, jurnal, dan artikel yang relevan dengan tema penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam tradisi *mottainai* dan *osagari*, ada nilai-nilai Islam yang bermanfaat bagi kehidupan manusia dan melindungi lingkungan. Nilai-nilai Islam termasuk mencegah barang-barang boros dengan prinsip 3R (*Re-use, Reduce, and Recycle*) dan *osagari* dengan memberikan barang-barang bekas kepada mereka yang membutuhkannya. Tradisi *osagari* adalah media komunikasi, saling membantu, dan menjaga persahabatan. Tradisi berlangsung lintas budaya, yang dilakukan tidak hanya oleh sesama Jepang, tetapi juga Jepang dengan non-Jepang dan bahkan di antara orang non-Jepang yang tinggal di Jepang.

Kata kunci: *Mottainai*, *osagari*, nilai-nilai Islam, komunikasi antar budaya.

A. INTRODUCTION

Japan is a developed and modern country. Japanese people are known as a producer and users of high technology. However, they still keep their culture. Culture is a liquid concept that is always changing, part of life and reflects what we learn, traditions and lifestyles that are socially acquired (Hybels & Weaver, 2009). The philosophy of *mottainai* and *osagari* tradition are Japanese culture that are still maintained by the Japanese people from generation to generation.

Mottainai is an ancient term repeated by grandmas for generations which means “too good to waste”. Its origins lie on Buddhist traditions, the *mottainai* philosophy relates to many aspects of Japanese culture. It carries the message that every object has an inherent value and that should be taken care of until the end of its lifespan. It resonates with the culture of respect and care that is cherished by Japanese tradition, but it also answers to the demands of their modern society for a more sustainable economy.

The Japanese expression ‘*Mottainai!*’ can be translated as ‘What a waste!’ or ‘Don’t be wasteful!’ However, *mottainai* expresses a sense of concern or regret for whatever is wasted because its intrinsic value is not properly used (Sato, 2017). *Mottainai* in Japanese refers both to physical waste and to wasteful action. MacQuillan and Preston propose a more elaborate translation that conveys a sense of value and worthiness as “do not destroy (or lay waste to) that which is worthy” (MacQuillan & Preston, 1998).

In essence, the *mottainai* concept is a way to discourage people from wasting food and other resources. The term can be defined as a way the Japanese reflects their strong sense of regret and dislike in wasting food, time, etc.; a concept that has been deeply rooted in their culture. Nobuyuki stated that the Japanese recycled almost everything and wasted almost nothing, which captured the late Wangari Maathai's attention, founder of Africa's Green Belt Movement and the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. In 2005, Wangari went on to promote the *mottainai* concept to the wider world to inspire people to protect their environment. (Faculty of Sustainable Agriculture, 2015).

The philosophy of *mottainai* also applies not only to objects but also to people's abilities. For example, if a job can be done by a worker or an employee, we do not need to use more than one person. The number of employees can be a waste.

Osagari can be translated as "hands-down" or in Javanese language is known as "lungsuran". Previously it started from a situation where clothes belonging to an older brother or sister were passed down to a younger sister or a younger brother. This tradition is a reuse of goods that are still possible and can be used. Kimono, a traditional Japanese clothing is a material that can be recycled. Kimono is usually made of a very good material. It is a very valuable thing, because it can be passed down to the next several generations.

Toilets in Japan can be flushed in two ways. One uses less water, for certain considerations, so that water is not wasted. Small rooms all over the world might have this double function. Guest rooms in Japan usually have large south facing windows so that when they read a book or newspaper, or perhaps write a letter, they can use that window for lighting.

This research aims to find out how the implementation of the *mottainai* philosophy and *osagari* tradition in daily life in Japan. Next, the researcher analyzes the Islamic values that can be found in the practice of the *mottainai* philosophy and *osagari* tradition.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method. Qualitative method is a research method that seeks to collect, present and analyze data so that it can provide an adequate picture of the object under study. The characteristic of qualitative

research is that it involves naturalistic data. Qualitative research often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of personal participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and the method of analysis also primarily qualitative. This often involves an inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories (Nassaji, 2015).

This research involves 8 informants: 3 Japanese and 5 Indonesian people living in Japan. The informants of this study were selected purposively based on established criteria, namely experiencing the situation or incident directly related to the research topic; able to explore and explain the understanding of the *mottainai* philosophy and the process of carrying out *osagari* tradition in Japan. The researcher uses primary and secondary data in this study. Primary data is data obtained from the first source of the informant based on the results of in-depth interviews. Secondary data is primary data that has been processed and presented by primary data collectors or other parties, namely in the form of documents, articles, or tables.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Japanese society that live in big cities and in the regions still hold the *mottainai* philosophy. One form of action of *mottainai* is by doing *osagari* tradition. That was as stated by Kaori.

“Osagari is most likely something of second handed items, such as clothes. Mottainai is a spirit that we traditionally have. You don’t throw away the thing that could still be used or eaten. Such as leaves of Daikon radish. Or you just don’t throw away the left overs, you rearrange the dish into something new. Osagari is represented as one of the mottainai spirit (Kaori, Psychologist).

According to Masako, the philosophy of *mottainai* has been introduced since childhood. Children follow the habits of their parents. The environment at home and school has a strong influence on children’s attitudes and behavior. When children are grown up, they do what their parents did. With the philosophy of *mottainai*, they carry out the *osagari* tradition.

“*Osagari* such as hand me downs usually clothes or shoes from their brother or sisters. *Mottainai* is the ideas of not throwing away the things which can be used more.” (Masako, Japanese teacher for Foreigners).

In general, foreigners who live in Japan feel that items such as clothes,

shoes, school bags and household goods are expensive. The foreigners live in Japan temporarily due to continuing college, work internships in Japanese companies, or temporary assignments in Japanese companies. The *osagari* tradition is very helpful.

“I was greatly helped by the *osagari* tradition. When I was about to give birth, the wife of my Japanese husband’s friend, offered me some baby second hand items such as clothes, shoes, and baby’s stroller. She said I do not need to buy such good in the store. I can get them for free. These items are still good and worth using.” (Iman, Egyptian housewife).

The *osagari* tradition does not only occur between Japanese, Japanese and foreigners, but also fellow foreign nationals or nationalities living in Japan, for example it happens among Indonesian students. Students who have finished their studies and will soon return to Indonesia offering their goods to new comers. This practice actually benefits both parties. For those who run out of goods, they do not have to throw things to rubbish bin (*gomi*) which sometimes for certain items to dispose of goods must pay like electronic goods. For the recipient, items that have been functioned as long as they are suitable can be used and not having to buy new ones which are quite expensive.

Second hand cars are very expensive to throw. The cars used by Indonesian people in Japan have generally been functioned several times. For example, the car that were used by Rum’s family is 30 years old but the quality of the engine is still good. The car was obtained from an Indonesian student who had returned to Indonesia.

“At first I did not want to have my own car because public transportation in Japan such as buses and trains are comfortable and the schedule is reliable. Riding a bicycle is also comfortable and safe. However, my friend who had to go back to Indonesia gave her car to me for free. So, finally I received it happily. The car is useful not only for our family but also for escorting friends who need transportation.” (Rum, Indonesian student).

Based on observations, most Japanese people give away goods, give/sell goods at the *risaikuru* (recycle) store not because the goods are damaged or cannot be used anymore. They “throw” the goods because they are bored or the goods are not up to date anymore. Instead of piling up items at home and not being useful, it is better to get them out of the house. Japanese people usually get rid of items they don’t use before the New Year. In addition to

throwing away “trash”, they also change their items or change the layout of the house at the end of the year so that at the beginning of the New Year, everything is completely new, including the atmosphere of the house.

D. ISLAMIC VALUES IN *MOTTAINAI* PHILOSOPHY AND OSAGARI TRADITION

Value is a belief and trust that is the basis for a person or group to choose their actions, or assess something that is meaningful for their lives. Bagus (2002) stated that 1) Value (English), *valere* (Latin) means useful, capable, empowered, valid, strong. 2) Value is the quality of a thing making it likeable, desirable, useful, or can be an object interests. 3) Value in terms of privileges is what is valued, assessed high or valued as something good. Opposite of a positive value is “worthless” or “negative value”. Good will be a value and the opponent (bad, bad) will be a “negative value” or “worthless”. 4) Values are reviewed from the perspective of economics that deals with the use and exchange value of material objects (Bagus, 2002).

Mulyana defines that value is a reference and confidence in determining choices. The definition stated by Mulyana which explicitly included the value judgment process, not just the address to which the word “yes” is addressed (R. Mulyana, 2004). Regarding the meaning of values, Kattsoff said that values have some kind of meaning. In line with that, the meaning of value also varies. The formulation that the author can say about the meaning of value is that something must contain value (useful), is value (good, right, or beautiful), has a meaning is the object of desire, have qualities that can cause people to take a stand ‘Approve’ or have certain value properties, and give value, meaning respond to something as desired or as a thing describe a certain value (Kattsoff, 2004).

The meaning of Islam comes from Arabic, which is *salama* which means safe and peaceful. The origin of the word is formed from the words *aslama*, *yuslimu*, *Islaman*, which means to keep up in a state of security, and also means to surrender, submit, and obey. Islam essentially carries teachings that are not only about one aspect, but about various aspects of human life.

There are two values in Islam, namely the value of God and the value of *Insaniyah* (human). Divine value is a value that is closely related to God. The value of *insaniyah* is related to humanity, both are related to human behavior. Islamic values are essentially a collection of the principles of life, the teachings

about how humans should live their lives in this world, which are interrelated with one principle to form a unified whole that cannot be separated.

1. Helping Each Other

In the *mottainai* philosophy and *osagari* tradition in Japan, many human values related to humanity and human behavior. *Insaniyah* values include activities that help in kindness and mutual benefit, caring for others. In the context of *osagari* in the form of goods, it means displaying goods (reuse and recycle).

Helping each other is a noble habit that they must develop as a form of caring for their fellow human beings. A number of verses in the Qur'an also teaches us to make this mutual help as part of our daily lives. Here is the Qur'anic verse about helping one another:

وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” (al-Maidah: 2).

As social beings, humans who cannot meet their own needs always need the help of others. This is where the role of helping one another is needed help ease the burden on one another. Because human beings need one another, there is no human being on this earth who does not need help from others. So it is very inappropriate if someone maintains the arrogant nature and looks down on others because they feel themselves nobler. Because in essence we are all creatures that are weak.

Islam strongly emphasizes its people to always help others, no matter what one's ethnicity, race, or religion. There have been many examples from Rasulullah SAW about how he helped people who needed help regardless of ethnic background, race, or religion. For example, the story of the kindness of the Prophet to the blind Jewish woman who every day always berates the Prophet.

If only non-Muslims are ordered to do well, especially with our fellow Muslims, of course it should be emphasized even more. In some traditions, the Prophet gave an illustration of how the unity of fellow Muslims was built with mutual help. Among other things, the hadith that portrays Muslims is like a building with one part to another must strengthen each other. Also, other

traditions about the parable of fellow Muslims are like one body where if one member of the body hurts then the whole body will also feel the pain. All of that suggests the importance of building a helping attitude. *From the verse that needs to be underlined is help in doing good works and do not help in doing sin and hostility.*

2. Media of Maintaining Intercultural Communication

The Sociology view states that society is formed because of communication. The fact that society is formed through interaction and interaction starts through communication (Muhtadi, 2019). Hall in (D. Mulyana, 2011) states that culture is communication and communication is culture. Talking about communication means talking also about culture.

Communication and culture are two entities that are closely related. The formation of a culture that is through the process of information exchange in society. Culture is a national identity that should be preserved. The osagari tradition that represent the mottainai philosophy is media of intercultural communication.

Intercultural communication is communication between members from different cultures both in race, ethnicity and socioeconomic (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). In the process of intercultural communication, culture should not be seen merely as customs and traditions. Culture includes the exchange of perceptions about oneself and others, perceptions and attitudes towards an object such as space, time, environment, people or relationships with others. (Liliweri, 2013).

Osagari practice is generally carried out among internal family members, then develops among geographically close friends (neighbors), work colleagues, classmates, and so on. In the digital age osagari practice is also carried out through social media applications such as a closed group in Facebook. Intercultural communication is unavoidable.

This intercultural communication becomes a means for people who give and receive second hand goods to get acquainted and strengthen friendships.

“When my child enters elementary school, my child needs to carry a randoseru bag to carry his school equipment. The school bag (randoseru) is very expensive for me. While I need only 2-3 years while I continue studying. Alhamdulillah, my friend offered her child’s bag which was still suitable to use. Besides bags, he also offered me a school uniform in the form of a winter

suit. The existence of this gift makes us close friends as well as my child and his children who go to the same school.” (X, Malaysian Student).

The situation makes them know each other and relate well even though they are different cultures. In Al-Quran Surat Al Hujurat Verse 13 stated, Yusuf Ali translated:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”

In the digital era, helping each other in the form of *osagari* practice is not only done face-to-face but also through social media applications such as Facebook. For example the “Japanese Lungsuran” Group. The group is specifically dedicated to Indonesian citizens living in Japan to share free items, both new and used items but are still suitable for use. Examples of items for baby and children equipment: clothes, shoes, pampers, stroller, toys, blankets, etc; kitchen appliances: microwaves, ovens, refrigerators, plates, cups, pans, etc.; household appliances: tables, chairs, carpets, mattresses, clothes hangers, cabinets, etc; electronic equipment: lamps, cables, heaters, TVs, etc; books; food & beverage: Instant baby food, seasonings, dry food, etc. (not expired); music equipment: piano, guitar, etc.; car, used bicycle and other items.

The admin group selects member requests one by one by looking at the location of residence, real name, etc. In order to avoid having fake or spam accounts, they hope that all members of the group: 1) Can get to know each other. 2) While maintaining ethics in posting and responding to posts. No offending SARA, Not containing politics, Not violating ITE Law, Not triggering debate. Don’t conflict with the norms of decency. The admin will delete posts that are not in accordance with the rules. The admin has the right to remove (also block) members who violate the rules of the group. (“Lungsuran Jepang”).

3. Competing in Goodness Al Baqarah verse 148

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيٰهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ
اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“For each [religious following] is a direction toward which it faces. So race to [all that is] good. Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you forth [for judgement] all together. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent. (Sahih International).” (<http://www.alquranenglish.com>).

The contents of the above paragraph are: Every people have Qibla. The people of the Prophet Ibrahim and the Prophet Ismail faced the Kaaba, the Children of Israel and the Jews faced the Baitul Maqdis, and Allah had ordered the Muslims to face the Kaaba in prayer. Therefore, Muslims should unite, work diligently, do good deeds, repent and compete in doing good deeds and not become slander or ridicule of those who deny as inhibitors..

Allah will gather all mankind to be counted and rewarded for all his deeds. God is all-powerful over everything and nothing can weaken him to gather all people on the Day of Judgment. We can understand human glory from faith and good deeds or goodness in behaving and behaving wherever he is and in whatever circumstances the circumstances. That is why the more good deeds he does, the more noble his dignity and dignity before Allah SWT.

Among the people of faith there are three groups, the first group is those who compete in goodness (*fastabiqul khoirot*), the second group is the group of people who are *muqtasidun* (moderate), the third group is class of people who *dholimu linafsih* (self-molesting). Fortunately for those who fall into the first group, hopefully they can enter it amienn. Ideally, a believer can be like a mirror for other believers so that when someone knows and pays attention to himself he will feel so many shortcomings including in the case of doing good. Understanding the Science of Good For a Muslim, every charity he does must be based on knowledge. The more knowledge he has is understood and controlled by God willing, the more deeds he can do while the less understanding or knowledge a person will have, the less he can do, especially not necessarily people who have knowledge can automatically practice it. This means that someone will be increasingly aroused to do good when he under-

stands the science of goodness. Goodness Received Every good that a person does must naturally produce a positive judgment from Allah SWT.

There are at least two criteria about the good received by Allah SWT. First sincere in charity that is to do a charity with the intention solely sincere because Allah SWT or not happy in the sense of expecting praise from other than Allah SWT. Therefore, in the famous hadith, the Messenger of Allah said, which means "Verily, charity is very dependent on his intentions." Both do good that is true this because even though one's intention is good when doing charity in a bad way then it still cannot accepted by Allah SWT because this is part of looking for other than Islam as the religion of his life which will clearly be rejected by Allah SWT as mentioned in QS 2: 148 above.

Finally, it becomes clear to us that we must live this life to serve Allah SWT which manifests one of them in the form of doing good and each person must try to do good as much as possible as a concrete form of the manifestation of a good life in the world and this will also be become a provision for humans to live their lives in the hereafter *alfatawy*. (<https://steemit.com>).

E. CONCLUSION

The *mottainai* philosophy is still strongly held by Japanese society. The *mottanai* philosophy is implemented in the form of the *osagari* tradition. In this context, *osagari* in the form of handing down of goods is still carried out by Japanese people, Japanese and foreigners, and fellow foreigners living in Japan. The *osagari* tradition is beneficial to both parties, the giver and the recipient.

The *mottainai* philosophy and the *osagari* tradition contain Islamic values that are human values. It is not redundant in terms of both goods and actions; attitudes and behaviors helping each other; intercultural communication media to get to know people, enhance and maintain friendship.

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