"Deddih jen Nyaman" (It's More Pleasurable)

The Meanings of Madurese Muslim Rituals prior to Sexual Intercourse

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SUMMARY

This study is inspired by my story. I was curious about my uncle and my Madurese friend's statements related to rituals prior to sexual intercourse. Two of my children were sick in the same month and it made my uncle wonder whether I ever practiced the ritual before having sex. My friend, on the other hand, instructed me frequently to practice certain Madurese rituals before sex. I then thought that it would be interesting to find out how and why the people perform rituals prior to sexual intercourse. For this study, I chose Madurese people as participants.

Madura island is located near the north coast of Java. It is separated from Java by the Madura strait. The biggest population in Madura is Muslim and since they have their own beliefs and traditions, they incorporated them into Islamic teachings. There are many stereotypes about the Madurese; one of them is that they are rude people. The Madurese are also known as people who talk openly about sex, while some Indonesian societies regard it as taboo.

The fact that they talk openly about sex and they produce ramuan madura, herbs used to enhance sexual pleasure, was one of the reasons that I chose to do my fieldwork in Madura. Accordingly, this exploratory study is designed to explore Madurese Muslim perceptions of and experiences with the rituals prior to sexual intercourse and how they relate to their perceptions of marriage, sexuality, gender, and well being, and to the larger Madurese Muslim culture.

The study is based, mainly, on in-depth interviews, where Madurese men and women described the rituals that they perform every time they want to 'have sex'. Besides interviews, Focus Group Discussions and informal conversations were also used to enrich the data.

The results of the study show the complexity of the topic. They show that there are many layers to Madurese Muslims rituals prior to sexual intercourse. They are related to their perception on religion, gender relation, sexuality and well-being. However, religion is the core layer which is a basis for other layers. The religiosity and spirituality of the Madurese are reflected in almost every aspect of their life.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

"Perhaps the current generation never practiced the ritual before they 'make love', that's why their children are more vulnerable to get sick than the children of the previous generation"

- my uncle Mahmoud, a pious Muslim who has married a Madurese woman.

"Just use this herb, put it inside your vagina before you 'make love' and then 'enjoy your life'"

- my friend, Ina, a Madurese woman.

My uncle visited me when I was taking care of my sick child in the hospital last year, and my Madurese friend frequently instructs me in the 'ritual' related above. I am involved in a NGO which runs a reproductive health and sex education program, and we give special attention to the negative impact of certain diseases such as STD's, HIV, etc. on health. However, we never take such rituals into consideration in our programs, and that is why these two views struck me.

There are several rules regarding sexual intercourse in Islam. One of the rules is that a woman in a menstrual\(^1\) or nifas\(^2\) state is prohibited from having sexual intercourse. Both menstruation and nifas are regarded as impure states while coitus requires cleanliness and purity for both men and women. An impure person is closer to the devil. Bouhdiba (1998: 55), accordingly, writes that "cleanliness is part of faith. Dirt is the work of the devil". Thus, the idea of purity can not be attributed to mere hygiene, but goes beyond it and symbolises a connection between this world and the spiritual realm. Sexual intercourse, then, is not only about physical or psychological intimacy, but it attaches one to the spiritual, i.e. there are many layers of meaning involved in this activity.

\(^1\) The Qur'an explicitly mentions this prohibition. See the Qur'an (2:222).

\(^2\) Nifas is a period after childbirth in which blood continuously flows from the womb. In Islam, it is regarded as impure and thus the woman is prohibited from sexual intercourse, performing prayers, etc.
In this respect, Khudratullah (1987: 48-49) writes that sexual intercourse should take place at least three hours after meals, because it is good for the health (but he does not explore it further). He also emphasizes that a couple should use perfume before they 'make love'. Furthermore, al-Ghazali (quoted by Farah, 1984:31) mentions that "coitus should take place at least once in every three days". Nevertheless, Aqiel (1997: 5) emphasizes that a couple should not perform sexual intercourse on Tuesday night because there is Hadis which mentions this prohibition. The most important rule is that satisfaction should be achieved by both the woman and the man.

Beside these rules, there are guidelines for rituals which are practiced prior to sexual intercourse. The rituals for everyday practice are distinguished from the ritual on the wedding night, which is more complicated since it is assumed that both the groom and the bride meet and are involved in halal (allowed and blessed by God) intimacy for the first time. According to Javanese beliefs, in the ethnic group that I belong to, for instance, taking a bath before sexual intercourse enables a couple to 'make love' longer (Sukatno, 2003).

There are Muslim literatures which explain that the ritual on the wedding night should be practiced by both the groom and bride (Aqiel, 1997; al-Hasani: no year; al-Ghazali: no year, Khudratullah, 1987). This ritual of sexual consummation involves certain steps. First, both the bride and the groom must take a special bath. It should be accompanied with niyat (a strong intention that s/he takes a bath as part of rituals before having sex) while addressing God's name in order to get God's blessing (Aqiel, 1997: 5, al-Hasani, no year: 30). Secondly, they must perform wudlu' (ritual ablution) (Aqiel, 1997: 5); i.e. purify their body through cleansing of their face, hands, head, ears, and feet, and recite a certain doa (prayer to God). This ritual is aimed at purifying small hadas (a little impure state, which it does not include menstruation, whereas mfas, jinabat, are considered big hadas).

The third step concerns performing shalat (a kind of prayer) which consists of two-rakaaat (a kind of body movement). It is possible for a husband and wife to do this

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3 Hadis is the traditional collection of stories relating words or deeds of the prophet Muhammad and it is the second source of guidance -after the Qur'an- for understanding religious matters.
4 Jinabat is a state for both men and women after they 'make love' or for the men after they have a 'wet dream' or anytime whenever they found themselves 'wet' (because of sperm which came out).
ritual individually, but it is better to perform this prayer together. Fourth, after shalat, both a husband and wife must recite a particular doa, that is: "O God, please unite us in the best unity and full of affection, (because) you like the halal (permitted things) and the haram (forbidden things) (Aqiel, 1997: 5). Fifth, a husband should clean his wife's hands and feet with water in the bowl while reciting God's name and addressing regards to the prophet. Then he has to splash the water in the direction of all the home's corners. As mentioned in Hadis, the splashed water is to avoid bad things and to prevent the devil from entering the house, while letting good things and God's mercy fulfill the couple's house (al-Hasani, no year:33). The last step is when a husband put his hands on and touches his wife's forelock while reading a certain doa.

The rituals that precede everyday sexual intercourse should be observed regularly by husband and wife -anytime they need to 'make love'-. These are simpler than on the wedding night. First, they should take a special bath -as on the wedding night. Secondly, both of them should take wudlu' (ritual ablution as on the wedding night) (Khudratullah, 1987: 49). Then, lastly they should pray Audzubillahi minasysyaithan ar-rajim (I ask God's protection from the cursed devil) and read a doa: Bismillah, Allahumma jannibna wa jannib as-Syaithana ma razaqtana (in the name of God, O God, please protect us from the devil and protect (a child) that you might give us from the devil) (Bukbordi, 1994: 70, Thalib, 1997: 153).

Since the research was conducted in Madura, I chose Madurese as participants. Madura is an island near the north coast of Java, Indonesia, about 7° south and between 112° and 114° degrees east longitude. This island is separated by the Madura strait and administratively it is a part of East Java province. The island consists of four regions: Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. The Madurese language is very different from Javanese in that province. Madura is known as an Islamic island because the biggest population is Muslim, although Madurese people have their own beliefs and traditions that are incorporated into Islamic teachings. They have developed a kind of Madurese Muslim faith (Jordaan, 1985; Kusumah, 1992). For example, after delivering a baby, a woman is regarded as impure for 40 days, which in

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5 The full text of Hadis can be read in al-Hasani, no year: 33.
6 Muslim scholars have different opinion which doa the bride and groom should be read.
7 For further information about Madura geographically, see Muthmainnah (1998) and Wiyata (2002)
Islam is called *nifas*. After the nifas period, according to Islam, she privately has to purify herself by taking a certain bath. There is no particular purification for the baby. Madurese people do this ritual publicly i.e. the woman "is bathed with 'flower water' and the baby's hair is shaved off completely": the latter is intended "to get rid of all impure elements from the mother's belly" (Jordaan, 1985: 82). This ritual is thus public and both for mother and child.

Another example: the Madurese produce a lot of herbs, the famous *ramuan madura*-which are usually used by men and women before sexual intercourse. These herbs are either taken orally or inserted into the vagina in order to produce dryness and/or tightness as desired. One of the popular herbs for this practice is *tongkat wasiyat*, "a phallus-like stick to which a mixture of specific herbs is applied" (Niehof, 1985: 217). This herb is inserted into vagina "just before coitus".

A characteristic of Madurese people is that they openly discuss intercourse. Unlike the Javanese, who regard sexuality as a taboo topic for discussion, the Madurese include it in their everyday conversation, especially amongst married people. This kind of openness is also found in Islamic teaching and one of the reasons why I wanted to study sexuality among Madurese Muslims is that verses in the Qur'an specifically mention sexual intercourse. Unlike Java, on which a great deal of literature is available, there is little information on record on Madurese beliefs and practices. As indicated by van Dijk et al (1995) and Niehof (1985), the lack of literature is partly because of geographical reasons; since Madura is so close to Java, Madura is neglected. Perhaps I also felt a challenge to study the Madurese because they are stereotyped as rude people, impolite, etc., which makes outsiders reluctant to study this community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background above, and keeping in mind the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) concept of reproductive health which includes sexual health; viz. "...people are able to have a satisfying and safe

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8 In Islam, as soon as there is no longer blood, the *nifas* woman has to purify herself, although it may take less or more than 40 days.

9 Before doing her fieldwork, Niehof (1985) had been warned about those stereotypes.
sex life” (UN ICPD 1994, quoted by Abdullah, 2000), I assume that for Madurese Muslim people, expectations concerning sexual intercourse involves more than merely satisfying sexual relations. The rituals prior to sexual intimacy are, perhaps, also related to the concept of well-being. This concept may or may not be different for men and women, assuming that they experience such rituals differently. Therefore, it is interesting to try to understand how they practice and experience the rituals conducted prior to sexual intercourse.

Besides, since Islamic teachings and the Madurese have their own rules regarding rituals prior to sexual intercourse, it is interesting to know how they apply those rules in everyday situations. Pragmatically, this study could help the government or NGO to formulate sex education programs more comprehensively, by considering local cultural values.

1.3 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

There are several studies on ritual and sexuality, which are mainly concerned with male and female initiation (Herdt & Stoller, 1990; Paige & Paige, 1981; Beidelman, 1997; Geisler, 2000; Narayan, et.al, 2001, etc.) and marriage (such as Niehof, 1978 & 1985; Combs-Schilling, 1989; Popenoe, 2004; etc.). These literatures demonstrate that initiation and marriage rituals are part of rites of passages; the concept that is initiated by van Gennep (1960). Rites of passages are transitions marking individual movement from one social status or role to another and therefore, are usually performed "publicly and ceremonially" (Nanda&Warms, 2002: 132). However, to the best of my knowledge, there are no studies that have been conducted on private rituals that are performed prior to sexual intercourse, in the area that I have selected.

Ritual and Meaning

Literally, ritual is defined as:

(1) "a series of actions that are always carried out in the same way, especially as part of religious ceremony" and

(2) "something that is done regularly and always in the same way" (Hornby, 2000: 1106).
Terminologically, on the other hand, as acknowledged by Lewis (1980, cited by Hastorf, 2001: 4), ritual is difficult to define. Hence, there are many definitions given to ritual. Turner (1977: 183) writes that ritual is

"a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interest"

As contended by Leach (1999) the definition is fairly narrow because it requires such preternatural condition. Leach, then, gives a broader definition of ritual which includes any regular activities, such as Chinese using chopstick every time they eat (Leach, 1999: 179). Following this argument, Lewis (cited by Hastorf, 2001: 4) says that "ritual can become 'the expressive aspect of any action'". Nevertheless, both Leach and Lewis agree that not all actions can be considered as ritual. It requires repetition and as Bloch (2004: 69) adds, rituals are "acts of repetition or quotation".

Leach furthermore emphasizes that ritual is primarily a medium of communication. He explains that the act of ritual says or conveys something. Accordingly, ritual symbols which are viewed as "the smallest unit of ritual" are often used to help the ritual performer to communicate something (Turner, 1977: 184). The symbols themselves are complicated because each symbol can be interpreted in many ways depending on the context. Thus, it is difficult is to discover the meaning of the ritual because one ritual can consist of symbols, whereas "every symbolic detail must be seen as part of complex meanings" (Lawson & MacCauley, 1990: 55). Based on this explanation, Leach (1999: 180-182) then, proposes that ritual should be understood as follows:

1. **Ritual as social communication**: Ritual as a language which communicates through sets of behaviours.

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10 This narrow definition of ritual is also given by Durkheim, Malinowski and Parsons who confine ritual to religious and magical rituals only (see Paige & Paige, 1987: 46-47 and Leach in Hicks, 1999: 177-178).

11 In this respect, Goody (1961) also states that the term ritual can be applied to "a variety of customary behaviors, whether they be magical, religious, scientific, or daily social customs" (in Paige&Paige, 1987: 47).

12 Regarding ritual he gives the example that when people were asked why they observed certain rituals, they sometimes answered: "we do this because it is what one does at these events" (Bloch, 2004: 68).
2. **Ritual as power**: Ritual contains metaphysical force so it can change the state of the world. In this respect, Turner (1977: 189-190) also says that ritual symbols are experienced by the actors as power.

3. **Ritual as belief**: based on Leach's argument that "the rite is prior to the explanatory belief", ritual acts have to be "interpreted in the context of belief: they mean what the actors say they mean" (Leach, 1999: 181).

The above ways to understand rituals can help us to grasp the meaning of rituals which are observed prior to sexual intercourse by Madurese Muslims, and to ascertain how they experience it themselves.

**Marriage and Sexual Intercourse**

**a. Islamic Concept**

Nanda & Warms (2002: 196) writes that:

"marriage refers to the customs, rules, and obligations that establish a special relationship between a sexually cohabiting adult male and female, between them and any children they produce, and between the kin of the bride and groom".

This definition emphasizes that marriage does not involve only a man and a woman, but also a whole family. In this sense, it is clear why "marriage in Islam is regarded as a contract" (Farah, 1984:11) because it needs the mutual consent of both man and woman and it can fall apart when one or both of them do not fulfil their duties and rights. As a contract, marriage has requirements or conditions: the permission of the guardian –father, grandfather, etc.- of the woman¹³, the presence of two witnesses and *ijab-qabul*¹⁴ (*ijab* is the declaration from the representative of the woman and *qabul* is the acceptance said by the man). Nevertheless, it is different from Nanda & Warms' definition, in that there is a strong argument that marriage is not merely a contract, but also is an "act of worship" (al-Ghazali, quoted by Farah, 1984: 11; Umar, 1999). The

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¹³ Some scholars argue that this condition is optional, especially scholars from Hanafi's school. Some progressive Muslim activists now try to promote this view, since there is discrimination against women; in that the women need to get permission to marry men, but not reverse.

¹⁴ There are some scholars who explain that a woman can do *ijab* by herself. For further explanation, see Abu Ishaq (no year).
Qur'anic verses regarding marriage support this argument\textsuperscript{15}. Thus, as an "act of worship", every activity within marriage is considered as sacred and transcendent, including the rituals prior to sexual intercourse.

In Islam, the marriage term, nikah\textsuperscript{16}, refers to sexual intercourse. Since nikah is strongly suggested by the Qur'an and the Hadis\textsuperscript{17}, it can be said that nikah is coitus 'transcended', as Bouhdiba (1998: 18) says:

".....nikah is as much a magical operation. It implies a sacralization of man, who has become conscious of his body and of his soul and of the mystical links that unite him, beyond the human community, with nature and with God".

Since nikah is legalized by the Qur'an and Hadis (both are legal sources for Muslims), it is a legal institution. Accordingly, al-Hasani (no year: 8-9) explains that there are five hukm (legalities) referring to nikah. Firstly, wajib (an obligation) for those who have a very strong desire to have sexual intercourse and to have children. Secondly, sunnah (an activity which is a merit to whoever performs it but is not sinful if she/he avoids it) for those who are psychologically ready to have children. Thirdly, mubah (optional) is addressed to those who do not have a strong desire to have sexual intercourse. Fourthly, makruh (the avoidance of which yields merit but the performance of which is not sinful), when marriage is contracted by two people who do not want to have children and do not like to have sexual intercourse. Fifth, haram (prohibition), is addressed to those who intend to sexually abuse their spouse.

From the explanation above, it can be seen how important sexual intercourse and having children is in marriage. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) writes (translated by Farah, 1984) that two of five advantages of marriage are procreation and satisfying sexual desire. His statement is partly in line with most Islamic scholars who argue that the aim of marriage is procreation. Marriage is aimed to "propagate life, to multiply

\textsuperscript{15} There are verses related to marriage, which are addressed to the men/women directly or to the parents who are responsible with their children. See the Qur'an, 4:3, 24:32-33, and 30:21.

\textsuperscript{16} "Nikah is the legal term for marriage, the literal meaning of the word being sexual intercourse" (Farah, 1984: 14; Bouhdiba, 1998: 18).

\textsuperscript{17} In one of hadis', the prophet says "he who marries fortifies half of his religion, so let him taqwa (pious and virtuous) for the second half" (al-Hasani, no year: 11).
existence" (Bouhdiba, 1998:13). However, it is argued that neither procreation nor 
satisfying sexual desire are the main and the only objectives of marriage, as the 
Qur'an mentions (30:21):

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates (wives or 
husbands) from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, 
and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily, in that are Signs 
for those who reflect"

This verse highlights another objective of marriage, i.e. to achieve a happy and 
peaceful life (well being).

Another issue related to marriage and sexuality is virginity, especially women's 
virginity. Female virginity is not a requirement for marriage in Islam. Otherwise, 
there would be a rule to discourage a man from marrying a divorced or widowed 
woman. On the contrary, there are many Hadis that demonstrate how a divorced or 
widowed woman has the right to marry a man\(^{18}\). Muhammad –the Islamic prophet-
himself married a widowed woman in his first marriage.

It is not denied that Islam forbids sexual intercourse before marriage but it is not 
forbidden to marry men or women who are not virgin, even before the first marriage. 
A man or woman who has sexual intercourse before marriage is regarded a sinned\(\text{i}\) 
person, but it is not a hindrance for him or her to be married.

\textbf{b. Madurese Concept of Marriage and Sexual Intercourse}

For Madurese people, marriage is considered to be "the natural state for an adult" 
(Niehof, 1978:1). It is socially and culturally unacceptable for an adult to be 
unmarried. An unmarried woman, primarily, would be stigmatized as a spinster. 
Being a spinster is not always the woman's 'fault', but more often it happens because 
her parents refuse the proposal of the first man who comes to ask their daughter's 
hand, and consequently, other men would be reluctant to ask (Niehof, 1985). 
Therefore, it is taboo for the woman's parents to refuse the first man's proposal.

\(^{18}\) One of the Hadis says that "a divorced or widowed woman has right to marry without necessarily 
getting permission from her parents or guardian…" (Abu Ishaq, no year: 2:37).
An arranged marriage can be seen as one strategy to avoid that stigma, although there are reasons behind the marriage arrangement i.e. to protect the family's property as well as the social status (Niehof, 1978). Very often, the engagement happens in the couple's youth when they are babies, or even they are still in their mother's womb (by guessing the sex of the baby but if —after delivery— it is known the babies are the same sexes so the engagement is cancelled).

For the Madurese, virginity is essential for a girl before she gets married. As Niehof (1985) states, to Madurese people, "the essential part of marriage as a rite of passage is the loss of the girl's virginity". The loss of virginity is marked by a broken hymen. To symbolize the loss of her daughter's virginity, a bride's mother cooks yellow sticky rice and distributes it to the neighbours. In many areas in Madura, when virginity is disproven, a groom can divorce his bride immediately. A groom is offended because the bride has affected his honour. It is similar to what Lindisfarne (1994) has written concerning honour and shame related to virginity and how virginity is constructed. She writes that "virgins are made, not born" (Lindisfarne, 1994: 88). Therefore, the stigmatization of a divorced or widowed woman, in Madura, is also based on the importance attached to the female virginity. This idea, unlike the Islamic concept, discourages a Madurese man to marry either a divorced or a widowed woman.

Having children is one of the aims of marriage among the Madurese. For this objective, female fertility is very important (Niehof, 1985). As soon as a girl has her first menstruation, it is a sign that she is able to become pregnant. Regular menstruation is mostly expected as a sign of her fertility. There are some cases —one of them is my friend19— where the man divorces his wife, just because she is assumed to be infertile. The reverse does not happen. A wife is vulnerable to being blamed when the couple does not have children and she has to seek therapy.

Regarding sexuality, sexual intercourse within marriage is very important for the Madurese (Kusumah, 1992; Niehof, 1985). There are many famous jokes around their sexual life. Procreation as well as satisfying sex is highly expected.

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19 My friend, she is a Javanese, had married a Madurese man. Two years after her wedding party, she was divorced because she was —assumed— not able to get pregnant.
1.4 Objectives and Research Questions

Main Research Objective

The objective of this research was to explore Madurese Muslim perceptions of and experiences with the rituals prior to sexual intercourse and how they relate to their perceptions of marriage, sexuality, gender, and well being, and to the larger Madurese Muslim culture.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To explore Madurese Muslim perception and meaning of rituals prior to sexual intercourse within marriage.
2. To gain understanding of gendered Madurese Muslim experiences of such rituals.
3. To find out how Madurese Muslim experience sexual intimacy after performing those rituals.
4. To explore Madurese Muslim perception of well being in their marriage.

Research Questions

From the research objectives above, the research questions can be formulated as:
- What are the actual rituals prior to sexual intercourse which are practised by Madurese Muslim?
- How do Madurese Muslim –men and women– perceive and experience those rituals? Do men and women have similar or different experiences?
- How and where do they learn those rituals?
- How Madurese Muslim interpret sexual intimacy and well being in their marriage?
- How Madurese Muslim –men and women– experience sexual intercourse after doing those rituals?

1.5 Research Themes

- Religion (Islam). In this study, I am going to explore Islamic concepts of marriage, sexuality and gender. This concept also includes the guideline for rituals done by Muslim prior to sexual intercourse. It is important, therefore, to understand how the Madurese Muslim perceive and practice those concepts.
- Indigenous Concept and Meaning (Madurese). Just like the first theme, this second theme involves Madurese concepts and meaning of marriage, sexuality and gender, including the rituals prior to sexual intercourse.
- **Sexuality.** The rituals before 'having sex' are based on Madurese Muslim interpretation of sexual intimacy within marriage.

- **Gender.** The assumption that men and women may experience those rituals differently can be understood through Madurese Muslim perception of gender. This gender perception can also be seen through gender relation among them.

- **Well-being.** Madurese Muslim rituals prior to sexual intimacy are possibly related to their perception of well being within marriage.
2.1 Location of the Study

I chose Burneh sub-district to do my fieldwork. This is mainly for practical reasons, as I have a relative who helped me to find participants for my research and - especially - to get permission from the sub-district head. It was strategic because I would otherwise have spent much time just to get research permission.

Burneh sub-district is one of 18 sub-districts in Bangkalan regency, while Bangkalan is one of the four regencies in Madura. Administratively, Burneh sub-district is divided into 12 villages. The width of this sub-district is 66,10 km² or 6610 Ha (BPS Bangkalan, 2003). The population of Burneh sub-district is 56,189 people and consists of 27,910 men and 28,279 women, according to the data per June, 2005 (Monografi Kecamatan, 2005: 22). In this fieldwork, I stayed in Burneh village, one of villages in Burneh sub-district. The participants of this study come from three villages; namely, Burneh, Banangka and Langkap. The selection of the participants was not based on the location where they live - because Burneh community is quite similar - but on the willingness of the participants to talk about this topic.

Generally, Madura island is one of the poor areas in Indonesia. De Jonge (1989b) as cited by Wiyata (2002: 35) explains that the average income of the Madurese is one-third of the average income of Indonesian people. Most Madurese people are farmers. In this respect, agriculture is their basic livelihood. Likewise Burneh, 85% of the population depends on the agricultural sector (Monografi Kecamatan, 2005: 24). Unfortunately, agricultural activities do not continue throughout the year. The Madurese plant rice in the rainy season and they plant others like cassava, peanut, etc in the dry season (Wiyata, 2002: 35). The income generated from agriculture is thus seasonal.

The poor economic condition forces the Madurese to find jobs outside Madura. Accordingly, they can be found almost in every area in Indonesia. Some of them permanently move elsewhere even abroad. Some people say that they are like Chinese who like to go everywhere to find a job and they send their money to their family in
When I did an interview with one of the participants, I discovered that she took care of her little niece. When I asked her where the parents are, she said that the parents are in Saudi Arabia. They are working there as the housekeepers.

The marriage system of the Madurese, as I found in Burneh, is matrilocal; that is "a system under which a husband lives with his wife's family after marriage" (Nanda & Warms, 2002). All Madurese parents want their daughters to live with them even though they already have husbands. Wealthy parents usually build a house for their daughters to settle in with their husbands while poor parents give their own room to their daughter and husband. In this respect, one of the participants in this study explained to me that the matrilocal tradition is related to the Madurese characteristic as perantau (finding a job outside Madura) people. Because men usually work outside Madura (perantau), accordingly, when they have son/brother in-law, their son/brother in-law has to live with their daughter/sister and their wife/mother (or other family members) in their house. The existence of son/brother in-law in their house is as a representative of them. Biar ada laki-lakinya (there is supposed to be a man within a house, interview with Mr. Badrun), he explained in Bahasa Indonesia to me.

Even though the Madurese is a matrilocal society, the kinship system of the Madurese is not completely matrilineal. This is because in Madura, the husband has the authority within his wife's family while in matrilineal society men only have authoritative roles within their descent group, but not in their wives' (Schneider & Gough, 1961). Basically, the children of the Madurese belong to both the father's and mother's descent group but kinship ties of the father often dominates over the mother's (Wiyata, 2002: 51-53).

The housing model in Burneh sub-district, as in the rest of Madura, is called kampong meiji; that is a group of houses which one group is isolated from another. The boundary of each kampong meiji is bamboo or cement fence. Traditionally, the distance between one kampong meiji and another is one to two kilometer (Wiyata, 2002: 38-41). However, I found the distance is less than one kilometer, particularly in

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20 Some participants admitted their similarities with Chinese even though they dislike them.
Burneh village. One kampong meji consists of four to eight houses and each house contains one (nuclear\textsuperscript{21}) family or more. If there are two or more (nuclear) families in a house, it is their daughter (or daughters) and her husband (and her children if any) in that house.

Beside kampong meji, there is another housing model; that is taneyan lanjang. Similar to kampong meji, taneyan lanjang is also a group of houses. Differently, kampong meji where there are different families live in it, taneyan lanjang is built by one family who has many daughters. In this case, the parents build houses for their daughters (Wiyata, 2002: 42-45). These houses are for their daughters when they get married. Only wealthy family is able to build such taneyan lanjang.

Interestingly, most of the houses face the south direction. It is because the Madurese want their sleeping position is similar when they are buried (when they die). When they sleep, they face kiblat (kiblat is a certain direction when they perform prayer. In the case of Indonesia country, kiblat is on the west), while their head on the south and their feet on the north. It is suggested that every Muslim should sleep in the position just as when they are dead and buried. However, other Muslim societies, such as Javanese, apply this Islamic norm only in their sleeping position, not in their house. In this respect, Javanese houses face any direction.

Most of Burneh people or 65% of the population have graduated from secondary school while 30% of the population have completed high school. The rest, or 5% of the population are divided into four groups; those who have a diploma degree, those who have graduated from elementary school, those who dropped out from elementary school, and those who cannot write and read (Monografi Kecamatan, 2005: 25). Economical issues influence this educational background. Girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys.

\section*{2.2 Study Type and Design}

\textsuperscript{21} Nuclear family is a family which contains a father, a mother and their children.
Since very little information is available about this topic, this study is descriptive and exploratory. It was on a small scale and qualitative study. This study was conducted within six weeks, from May 28 to July 7, 2005.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Focus Group Discussions

Even though the research topic is sensitive, it was possible to do Focus Group Discussions (FGD) because the Madurese talk openly about sexuality. This technique was also helpful for getting data in a very limited time (six weeks). The participants for the FGDs were Madurese Muslim women and men—but I separated women's group and men's groups because I found that although they can talk openly about sex, they were more comfortable to share their experience with their own gender group. Since I explored sexuality within marriage, the participants for these FGDs were those who were already married.

To enhance the diversity of data, I conducted both "formal" and "informal" FGDs. The formal FGD was conducted in the kindergarten's meeting room. The participants in the formal FGD were mothers of kindergarten students who come from different villages and backgrounds. Those mothers are usually accompanying their children in that school. They usually gathered in front of their children's classrooms. Two of my informants for the in-depth interview are mothers of these kindergarten students. Therefore, they helped me to prepare this FGD such as asking permission to the kindergarten principal to use the meeting room, etc. This FGD was conducted during school time when the children were in their classroom.

The informal FGDs were done in natural settings. Beside the formal FGD, I was involved in an informal discussion with mothers of kindergarten students. When their children were studying in the classroom, the mothers were gossiping in the waiting room. I discussed the topic with mothers who participated in the formal FGD. Another informal FGD was conducted among men who regularly—every evening—

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22 It is not really a waiting room. In front of the kindergarten's classroom, there is a long chair made of cement which is attached to the sport hall.
gather in gerdu. Since I stayed among Madurese community, I was involved in their everyday life conversation or discussion to get deeper insight about the topic.

**In-depth Interviews**

It is not sufficient to only depend on FGDs to get data is not enough, especially when one needs to get deeper insight about the topic. In-depth interviews are very useful; particularly to further probe the answers of participants. For this purpose, I interviewed some women and men. To get as much data and widen array of insights as possible, I used open-ended questions. Most of these in-depth interviews were conducted in the house of participants while two interviews were done in a place which the participants chose.

**Interviews**

The interviews were aimed at gaining more comprehensive information of this topic. Since the topic is related to Islamic and Madurese concepts, I interviewed both religious (Islamic) leaders and community leaders who have adequate knowledge about it. These interviews were conducted before and after the core participants' in-depth interview. To get as much data as possible, open-ended questions were used. I conducted the interviews in the house of both community and religious leaders. Besides them, I also interviewed jhamo (herbs) maker who produce tongkat wasiyat and other jhamo which are related to sexual intimacy.

For all those techniques, I was trying to find participants who speak or at least understand bahasa Indonesia, our national language because of my limitation with Madurese language (I can speak their language but not fluently). In the field, I found that fifty percent of my participants understand and speak bahasa Indonesia fluently while I had to use Madurese language for the rest. The participants of male FGD's for instance, preferred to speak Madurese rather than bahasa Indonesia because they felt that they could express their feeling easier.

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23 Gerdu is a place made from bamboo and is usually a place for men. This place can contain ten people. Almost every village has gerdu. This place is built for protecting village from a thief and other crimes, especially at night. However, men usually gather to gamble, play chess, or just gossip in gerdu in the evening.
However, I was also working with a translator for the first two weeks to help me when I interviewed the participants who felt uncomfortable to speak or can not speak *bahasa Indonesia*. Nevertheless, I asked the translator to only translate my *bahasa Indonesia* into Madurese when the participant did not understand me because I can understand well when she/he spoke Madurese.

Almost all of the interviews and FGDs were recorded by using a tape recorder except two interviews were not; they refused implicitly to be tape recorded, so I made extensive notes while talking with them. Honestly, it was not easy to do two activities at the same time but because they speak *bahasa Indonesia*, I could handle it. Besides recording, I tried to type the process of the formal FGD directly when the FGD took place. For this formal FGD, I asked my friend to be the FGD facilitator after I gave her a briefing about the topic.

### 2.4 Sample

Participants for this study were married men and women. I also tried to find participant with different background of Islamic knowledge. Realizing that most Madurese people learn Islam from *pesantren*\(^\text{24}\), I tried to find the people who had graduated from *pesantren* and some who had not. Through snowball sampling, I got seven women and five men who were willing to be participants in this study. Six of twelve participants are married couples. They are Mr. Kadir (21) and Mrs. Bariyah (15); Mr. Zainal (39) and Mrs. Romlah (36); and Mr. Rozak and Mrs. Zulfa. Two of those couple preferred to be interviewed at the same time while I interviewed Mr. Rozak and Mrs. Zulfa at different times. Six participants had graduated from *pesantren*. I also interviewed two religious leaders, a man and a woman, two community leaders (a man and a woman) and a *jhamo* maker (*jhamo* is Madurese herbs. In this case, I interviewed a *jhamo* woman who produced *jhamo* for sexual intercourse).

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\(^\text{24}\) *Pesantren* is an Islamic educational institution. It is a boarding school for those who want to learn Islam deeply. The leader of *pesantren* is called *keyae*. Historically, *pesantren* was a traditional educational system in Java and Madura. Accordingly, there are a lot of *pesantren* both in Java and Madura. In Burneh sub-district, my fieldwork site, there are 18 *pesantren* and almost every village have this educational institution (*Monografi Kecamatan, 2005: 19*)
Nine women participated in the Focus Group Discussions. All of them have been married women for various period of time. Seven men were involved in the informal FGD.

2.5 Data Processing and Analysis
Data from this research was processed manually. Analysis is based on research questions, which I addressed to the participants, in order to look for similarities and variations. The analysis of this study is intended to get the emic view of Madurese Muslim about rituals prior to sexual intercourse. Thus, I try to explore their perception by using their own way of talking as much as possible. Local terms related to this study are maintained and typed in Italics. Because some participants mixed Madurese and Arabic words, I typed both in Italics.

Since I could not find a research assistant, I did the transcriptions by myself. Due to the limited time, I transcribed all of the interviews and Focus Group Discussions into English. Sometimes —when I could not find the right word in English or I thought that I would miss the meaning— I mixed them with bahasa Indonesia or Madurese. Manually, the transcriptions were coded and then classified and grouped into categories.

2.6 Brief Profiles of Participants
To get a clear description of the participants, I explore their profiles briefly below excluding the religious and community leaders, and a jhamo maker. As my promise to participants, all of the names in this study are pseudonyms.

**Bu’ Shofiyyah**
She (37) is a housewife and part-time trader in the traditional market. She sells things such as rice, sugar, oil, etc every two days. She was studying in a pesantren for seven years, after she had graduated from elementary school. In this pesantren, she also finished her studies in secondary school and she continued on to high school. Unfortunately, when she was in the last year of high school, her parents forced her to go back home and to get married. She married twice. Her first husband was a

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25 *Bu’,* acronym from *ibu’,* is a common predicate for women who are already married or have children. This predicate is widely used in Indonesia.
bindereh\textsuperscript{26}. She was divorced by her first husband after she had a daughter, "my first husband was not a good person", she said. After five years to be a widow, she married the second time, to a government employee. He is the same age as she is. Within nine years of her marriage with her second husband, she had two sons—but one of them died—with her second husband. Among the female participants, she had the most extensive knowledge about Islam; she always cited \textit{Al-Qur'an} verses and \textit{Hadis}.

\textit{Bu'Talbiyah}

She (32) is a teacher in the elementary school and an activist in the big social organization which runs programs for empowering women in Madura. In her leisure time, she sells jewellery that is made of pearls to her friends or her neighbours. She got a diploma degree from one of the Islamic Universities. During 11 years of her marriage, she has three children (one son and two daughters). She married when she was 21 years old and at that time, her husband was 30 years old. Her husband is a government employee. He used to be an activist in the same organization with his wife but now "my husband 'mengalah' (backed down) to me because he thinks if both of us are activists who will take care of our children?", Mrs. Talbiyah explained it to me.

\textit{Bu' Zulfa}

When I asked her how old she is, she said she does not know. She just said that her first son had graduated from secondary school two years ago (her son dropped out from high school because there is no money to pay school fees). Mrs. Zulfa is a farmer, but she does not have a farm, she works and the harvest is shared with the owner of the farm. Besides, she is also a housewife and sometimes she works for her neighbours. She has one son and three daughters. Because she was an orphan—her mother died when she was a child—and her father ignored her, her sisters were then, responsible for her such as arranging her marriage. Mrs. Zulfa never studied at school because she was very poor. She has been married for 18 years and she married when she was very young, even before she started to menstruate yet. During the interviews, we spoke Madurese because she cannot speak \textit{bahasa Indonesia}.

\textsuperscript{26} There are two meanings of \textit{bindereh}. First, he is a son or a relative of \textit{keyae}. Second, it is addressed to a man who has adequate knowledge of Islam but he is still below \textit{keyae}. In this case, Mrs. Shofiyiah husband was a relative of \textit{keyae}.
Nyih Robi’ah
This (37) woman activist and housewife is a participant who was reluctant to be tape recorded. Perhaps her background as a daughter of a keyae and her husband is a bindereh (a son of keyae) made her careful of a stranger like me. Unlike other participants, she was a closed person. After graduating from high school, she studied in a pesantren for a while. She was engaged when she was in the pesantren. Then, she studied in the one of the Islamic Universities to obtain a diploma. But, in the second year of her study, she was 23 years old- she married and did not continue her study. Her husband is an engineer and runs a NGO. During 14 years of her marriage, she has five children (one son and four daughters), and currently she is pregnant from her sixth child.

Bu’ Rina
This 35 years old woman is a wife of klebun (a village head). She got married when she was studying Psychology in the one of private Universities. Her husband did not allow her to continue her studying, so she does not have a diploma degree. When I asked her why she accepted her husband decision, she said: "I understand and accept his decision, maybe he does not want that my educational background is higher than his" (her husband was graduated from high school). Even though she worked before marriage, she decided to be a housewife. Sometimes, she admitted, the desire to work appears, but her husband does not give her permission to do so. After seven years of her marriage, she did not get pregnant yet. In order to mancing (to get) her own child, she adopted a son.

mBa’ Bariyah
She is (15.5 years old) a teenager. She just got married for six months. Mrs. Bariyah graduated from elementary school and then she continued her study in pesantren for six months. She lives with her grandmother. Her parents live in Malaysia. They have

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27 In Madura, a keyae place the highest position of social stratification within community. This ascribed status supports polygamous practices. It is because many parents wish to be achieve that status, they often offer their daughter to be married by keyae even though they know that the keyae has already have a wife.

28 Mancing is a widespread tradition in Indonesia. A couple who do not have a child certain time, they are supposed to adopt a child in order to get (mancing) their own child.

29 mBa’ is basically a predicate for women who are not married yet, but in this case, she preferred to be called with mBa’ because she is younger than me. This predicate is used in Java and Madura.
been working there for years. Her parents did not attend her wedding ceremony. However, they already gave permission by phone. Mrs. Bariyah married after meeting her husband during one week and having a date for one day. She always bent her head down during interview showing her shyness.

**Bu' Romlah**

She is 36 years old. She graduated from teacher school and then continued her study at the university. Now, she is a teacher in an elementary school. She participates actively in the PKK (Family Welfare Guidance) in her village because she is a good cook. When I met her for the first time, she had just finished making cakes, and during the interview her neighbour came to ask her cake recipe. She met her husband when she was teaching in the same school with him. Then, she was engaged for one year before getting married. During 13 years of her marriage, she has one daughter and two sons.

**Pak Zainal**

This 39 year-old man is Mrs. Romlah's husband. Like his wife, he is also a teacher of elementary school but in a different place. He graduated from the Islamic teacher school in 1985 and continued her study in the university after he got children. He and his wife now live in the house, which is built by government to teachers. Previously, like other Madurese men, he lived with his wife's family. He and his wife then moved to this house because it is a closer to their work place. During the interviews, he was quieter than his wife was.

**Ca' Kadir**

He is Mrs. Bariyah's husband and he is 21 years old. He graduated from secondary school. His parents worked in Malaysia since he was a child. He had been living in Malaysia for two years after completing his secondary school. Similar to his wife, his

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30 PKK is a woman organization which has been found in the new order era. This organization can be found in all villages and cities in Indonesia. However, most Indonesian women activist criticize the activities of organization because they think that instead of empowering women, this such organization do the reverse.

31 Pak, acronym from Bapak, is a common predicate for a married man. It is a predicate which is used in entire Indonesia.

32 Ca' is an acronym from caca'. It is a predicate for young men, and it is used in Madura and East Java.
parents did not attend the wedding ceremony. He asked permission from his parents in-law by phone. Since his parents are not in Madura, he is adopted by an old woman who is his neighbour. Now, he and his wife live with his surrogate mother. When I asked him why he got married at a very young age, he said that he does not want to have sexual intercourse before marriage. However, he admits that he was too young to get married, so sometimes he was regret a little bit.

Pak Rozak
He is Mrs. Zulfa's husband and like his wife, he is also not sure about his exact age. When I asked him how long he has been married, he gave me his marriage certificate. Unfortunately, I did not find the data which mentions the date he was born. He is a driver of the public transportation which is Kamal-Bangkalan destination and also a farmer. He has been a driver for almost 24 years. Unlike his wife, he graduated from elementary school and studied in Madrasah (Islamic school) for a while. Regarding their educational background, he said: "My wife and I are stupid people because we did not study at school, so we pray to God that our children are able to reach a higher education than us".

Pak Karim
This 38 year-old man is a teacher in an Islamic High School in a pesantren in Burneh. He graduated from one of the pesantrens in East Java. His marriage was arranged; his nyaeh\(^{33}\) forced him to marry one of his students. At first, he was reluctant to fulfill his nyaeh expectation but after he consulted his kiai\(^{34}\) in his previous pesantren, he accepted the marriage arrangement\(^{35}\). During eight years of his marriage, he had three children but the second child passed away. Besides teaching in a formal school, he also often gives religious speeches (pengajian) in villages. Now, he lives with his parents-in-law.

Pak Badrun

\(^{33}\) Nyaeh or nyih can be understood as a keyae's wife or his relative, as well as a woman who has adequate Islamic knowledge.

\(^{34}\) A Javanese address for keyae.

\(^{35}\) It is a common tradition in pesantren that keyae or nyaeh arranges marriages for the santri (the student of pesantren). A santri deserves to refuse if he/she does not want it. The purpose of the arrangement is to keep the bond between keyae/nyaeh and santri.
He is 33 years old. He is a teacher in an Islamic Secondary School. He graduated from a *pesantren* in Madura. Like Mr. Karim, he has also married his student. He just got married for six months and his wife is pregnant now. He got married after he asked for his wife's hand for one year. However, he admitted that at that time he was not brave to ask if she was willing to be his wife directly, so he asked his friend to be his mediator. Similar to Mr. Karim, he now lives with his parents-in-law.

*Nyih Aisyah* (43). She is a religious leader (*nyaeh/nyih*).

*Keyae Syukri* (45). He is a religious leader.

*Bu' Buryan* (64). She is a community leader.

*Pak Sapei* (64), a community leader.

*Mak Um* (65), a *jahmo* (herbs) maker.

### 2.7 Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study was on a voluntary basis. Before conducting the interviews, I explained my research objectives to the participants and asked for their informed consent verbally (at first I asked a written informed consent but the participants preferred to give it verbally). I ensured them that their stories would be used for the academic purpose and not for anything else. I promised confidentiality of the participants. Therefore, pseudonyms are used in the research report. I also promised to erase the interview recorded on cassette as soon as my thesis is finished.

Regarding the language, I always asked the participants if they were willing to speak in *bahasa Indonesia*. When they preferred to talk in Madurese language, I asked permission to involve the translator in the first two weeks. I also always asked permission for using a tape recorder during interviews and when one of them refused it, I respected it. I pay full respect to the local beliefs, values and norms, and pay attention what is considered taboo in the society. For instance, when I interviewed men, I always asked someone to accompany me. If I could not find anyone, I did the interview in a public space like in the terrace of the participants' house. I did it intentionally to avoid bad gossip because it is not good for a woman to speak with a man alone without another person accompanying her.

### 2.8 Limitation of the Study
My being married is an advantage for conducting interview about this sensitive topic. At first, most participants were reluctant to talk to me because they thought that I am not married yet. Their responses were different when they knew I am already married, so they were very enthusiastic to tell their story. However, I realize that there are limitations. Because of the impact of snowball sampling, nearly a half of the number of participants (five participants) has the same job as a teacher although from different schools. Besides, most of them are homogenous in terms of the length of marriage time; which is more than ten years. Another obstacle was the limited time. If I had more time, I think I would be able to explore wider and deeper Madurese culture which is related to this study.
CHAPTER THREE
MARRIAGE, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE AND WELL BEING

In this chapter, I will explore Madurese perceptions and experiences regarding marriage, sexual intercourse and well being. These three topics are as context of my thesis topic. It will be easier to understand the rituals prior to sexual intercourse through these topics.

3.1 Marriage
3.1.1 The Meaning of Marriage

"I do it as sunnatullah (God's order -Arabic) and tero keturunan (to have children). If I have children, I will be happy when I am getting old, they will help me, they will pray for me", Pak Rozak explained it to me when I asked him why he is married. He defines marriage as two things: as God's order and as a way to have children. As an order of God, it implies that marriage is an act of worship, as also confirmed by Pak Sapei, a Madurese community leader. Another participant, Pak Badrun, who is a pious Muslim, said: "(...) my intention to get married is ubudiyah (worship -Arabic)".

This is how Pak Rozak explained it to me when I asked him why he is married. He defines marriage as two things: as God's order and as a way to have children. As an order of God, it implies that marriage is an act of worship, as also confirmed by Pak Sapei, a Madurese community leader. Another participant, Pak Badrun, who is a pious Muslim, said: "(...) my intention to get married is ubudiyah (worship -Arabic)".

Some participants interpret sunnatullah as God's destiny for them and they cannot reject it. A destiny here, includes when, where, how, and with whom a person gets married. mBa' Bariyah for instance, told me "I am sure that it is my takdir (destiny -Arabic)" when I asked her why she married so young. When they talk about destiny, it implies God's secret\textsuperscript{36} plan for human beings as Bu'Shofiyyah said:

"you know, I wished I have a husband from the same educational background. I am santre, I should marry santre. My first husband was my type; he was smart and expert in religion. He was studying in pesantren like me. Sometimes we spoke Arabic as our everyday conversation. But, he had bad attitude. Conversely, my second husband is not my type at all because he does not have adequate Islamic knowledge. But, he is so nice. I am thinking God's secret over my life. I remember one Qur'anic verse: ...'asaa an takrahu syai'an

\textsuperscript{36} Madurese and other Muslim societies believe that God has a secret plan for human being. The secret plan of God --as mention in Hadis- is about rizqi (livelihood), jodoh (spouse (husband/wife), and ajal (death).
wahuwa khairun lakum wa 'asaa an tuhibbu syai'an fahuwa syarrun lakum\(^{37}\) (perhaps what you dislike, it is good for you and perhaps what you like, it is not good for you). So, I have to accept this destiny"

Marriage equally is a way to have children, as cited by Pak Rozak above. This was also emphasized by Pak Sapei and Keyae Syukri. Almost all participants in the male Focus Group Discussions said the same. Furthermore, Keyae Syukri, a religious leader, explained that:

"through marriage, the status of children will be clear and there will not be a hesitation whose the children are and consequently, there will be no doubt of the children social status within community ".

He meant that a child who is born outside marriage will be stigmatized as anak haram\(^{38}\). To be anak haram is difficult because it is assumed that their parents' marital status is not clear. Meanwhile, in Madurese culture, the clearness of a person's status is a determining factor when someone is getting married. Someone –man or woman– will only marry a person who is not anak haram. In this respect, Bu' Buryan, a Madurese community leader, gave the criteria to be fulfilled to become a candidate as potential husband or wife candidate. One of them is that bibite (the parents or ancestor) has to be clear. Both Pak Karim and Pak Badrun said that they had 'investigated' their wife's bibite before they decided to get married.

Bu' Romlah and Pak Zainal (a couple) viewed marriage as a way to build a sakinah (harmony, peaceful, and nice -Arabic) family. They explained that a sakinah family will be achieved if the age when the person gets married is reasonable; and not too old. Pak Zainal feels that his decision to get married when he was 26 years old was the correct decision because: "if I have not married at that time, how to take care of my children in the future", he argued. To support his argument, his wife, Bu' Romlah, added: "If our age is rather old (to get married), the way we educate and take care of our children will be different". It implies that if a person is too 'old' to get married, it will be a pity for children because they will not get the best care from their parents. However, Nyih Aisyah, a religious leader, emphasized that 'age' rather means a psychological state of maturity. It means that when a person is regarded as physically

\(^{37}\) When I check in al-Quran, she read Al-Qur'an 2:216

\(^{38}\) Literally it means forbidden child because s/he is born from forbidden sexual intercourse. Hence, s/he is considered as a child who is not blessed by God.
an adult (he/she has reached certain age), but he/she is still childish, he/she should rather delay getting married.

Furthermore, Nyih Aisyah said to achieve *sakinah* (harmony, peaceful, and nice - Arabic) both husband and wife have to develop five behaviours; these are *ta'aruf* (to know each other), *tahabbub* (to love each other), *ta'affuf* (to forgive each other); *tasyawur* (to discuss all the time); *ta'awun* (to help each other)\(^{39}\). These criteria are based on Islamic teaching. Bu' Shofiyah also mentioned these five criteria when she illustrated what a *thoyyibah* (nice - Arabic) family should be like. Bu' Shofiyah then told me that she experiences these five criteria with her second husband.

Two other participants, Bu' Talbiyah and Bu' Rina experience having a *sakinah* family by developing tolerance and mutual understanding between a married couple. For example, "If we (she often used the word 'we' instead of 'I') are tired, we have to speak up and understand each other", Bu' Rina argued. Through mutual understanding, Bu' Talbiyah said: "none of us will feel lost".

Another perception regarding the meaning of marriage is what Nyih' Robi'ah defined as "a process of being *tuah* (mature) for human as member of family and community". When I asked her what she meant with being mature, she explained:

"Before *kabhin* (married), we don't know how to behave within community, what is the culture of the community. Before married, we, as a daughter, just follow our parents. But after married, we are demanded to be independent, *tuah* (mature)".

In line with Nyih' Robi'ah's perception, Bu' Buryan said that basically, marriage turns one into an adult. However, she realized that this meaning of marriage is "never explained explicitly". Ca' Kadir also referred to maturity by saying "I realize that I am too young to get married. But, I want to try step by step- to be a mature person". In this respect, it is reasonable that marriage is celebrated publicly because it is a part of rites of passage\(^{39}\) (van Gennep, 1961); that is a transition from a childhood state to an adult state. Marriage, according to van Gennep (1961: 116), is a process of "the founding of a family". A married person will experience a new family –and

\(^{39}\) She mentioned those five criteria in Arabic words, as she gets from Islamic text.
sometimes new village, ethnic, and social relations that follows on marriage as a process of adjustment. For Nyih Robi'ah for instance, her adaptation to the norms, values, and traditions within the community is also a process of becoming mature. She thinks she had no obligation to do so before she was married. Thus, an adult state, for her, is marked by a better understanding of and adherence to cultural notions and practices in the setting where she and her husband settle for their married life.

Another perception of marriage is given by Pak Karim: "A togetherness of a man and a woman to do sexual intercourse with halal (not forbidden by God and it is blessed by God) based on the rules". It implies that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is only allowed within marriage. It shows that marriage is primarily to menghalalkan (permit) sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.

The Madurese hold this view strongly—especially in relation to girls. As Nyih Robi'ah contends:

"(...) many parents are worried if their daughters are not married as soon as possible, the daughters will be trapped in to sex before marriage".

It is not surprising because for girls, virginity is very important in Madura, as I have explained in chapter one. As a result a widow is not always easily accepted in Madura. Bu' Shofiyyah, who had been a widow for five years, said that the family of her second husband had hard time accepting her as an in-law because of her low status as a widow. She also said that she had had the hardest life as a widow: "(...) at that time, it was a lot of obstacles I had to face. Many men teased me because they knew I was a widow. It was very hard time for me"(...).

3.1.2 Gender Relations
Experiences of sexual intercourse cannot be separated from the social and cultural construction and practices of gender relations in society. According to Helman (2000), there are sets of guidelines which are learned and internalized by both males and females—within one society. These norms direct both men and women on how to think, perceive, feel, and act based on their gendered identity. Thus, as Vance (1980: 129) emphasizes, gender is "the product of culture". It is not biological, although biological (and anatomical) markers are used to "assign individuals to gender groups".
Her argument strengthens Rubin's (1975, cited by Vance, 1980: 129) definition that gender is "a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality". In the Madurese context, my findings below illustrate how gender relations are constructed in this society.

Since I stayed in the house of a family during my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to observe gender relations within the family, especially between husband and wife. It helped me to understand and contextualize gender perceptions revealed to me during in-depth interviews. In this family, I found the stereotypical gender roles between husband and wife. The husband, Pak Rokhim, is a breadwinner and his wife takes care of the house and their little baby. To assist Bu' Rokhimah (Pak Rokhim's wife) with domestic tasks, they hire a part-time housekeeper. Pak Rokhim never did domestic tasks, including taking care of the baby. It is also admitted by Bu' Rokhimah that Pak Rokhim (her husband) will never do domestic tasks because it is uncommon in his family for a man to be involved in a woman's domain.

As I explained in the previous chapter that housing in Burnah is based on kampong meji model, I found that stereotypical gender relations are reinforced and reproduced in families within the kampong meji where Pak Rokhim lives. In one family, the married daughter works outside the house and is in some sense a second breadwinner besides her husband. This working woman is constantly criticized by her own mother for her 'inappropriate' behaviour as a working woman. Thus, it indicates that women, as well as men, preserve and reproduce such gender role which—as Me Donald (2000) explains—"requires the man to be the provider and protector and the woman to be the carer and reproducer".

Interviews with participants corresponded with what I observed in the family I was living with; husbands are breadwinners and wives are homemakers - responsible for domestic tasks, such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing clothes, taking care of children, etc. The community leaders whom I interviewed considered this as 'the right thing' for husbands and wives. Some men and women adhere strictly to such gendered behaviour, for instance, Bu' Rina who is a wife of klebun (a village head), is not even allowed by her husband to participate in social activities outside the house. She described:
"Sometimes I have that desire (working outside the house). But, every time I tell my husband that I want to work outside, he will say: If you go to work, I will not (work). My husband always emphasizes that being a breadwinner is an obligation of husband. Sometimes I join pengajian. My husband always tells me: If you are bored, just sholat (pray) and ngaji (read al-Qur'an). If you are involved in pengajian, hadrah\(^4\), or other social activities, it is only temporarily. When you back home, you will feel bored again. So, just pray for me. If you also go to work, who will pray for me?"

In this respect, \textit{Bu'} Rina obeys her husband because it is in accordance with what her parents and old women advised her before she married. Old women told her to obey her husband, not to leave the house without his permission, and she has to pray for her husband (of his well being) every time after sholat (daily prayer). However, gender relations are never as stereotypical as they seem. \textit{Bu'} Rina says that her husband sometime helps her with certain domestic tasks, such as cooking. But he must not be seen by people or their neighbours. Otherwise, he is ashamed to do so.

Conversely, \textit{Nyih} Robi'ah's husband -who is bindereh- was reluctant to help his wife to take care of their children, but \textit{Nyih} Robi'ah explained: "He does not want to because he prefers to hire a baby-sitter to help me". His preference is based on religious precepts, according to which, a husband is obliged to do domestic tasks such as cooking, taking care of children, etc, otherwise, the husband has to provide a house keeper or a baby sitter to fulfil his role.

Where participants did not strictly follow these gender roles, it was mostly the result of economic imperatives. According to \textit{Bu'} Shofiyyah, she only works part-time because her husband cannot cover their living expenses as well as the children's school fees. Similarly, \textit{Pak} Rozak also lets his wife work because his salary as a driver is very small. Because both of them are working full-time, \textit{Pak} Rozak voluntarily helps his wife to do domestic tasks, as admitted by \textit{Bu'} Zulfa (his wife): "my husband also cooks for us when I am in the farm. Pelak tang lakeh\(^3\) (my husband is very nice)".

\(^4\) Hadrah is social gathering where men or women play music using rebana (one of Arabic music instrument) and they sing sholawat (praise to prophet).

\(^3\) I am very impressed that she praised her husband by saying this sentence many times.
The husband is nevertheless the leader in his family while a wife is subservient. A husband is expected to lead, advise, and teach his wife. She, in turn, has to obey and devote herself to her husband. All the women participants agreed that their husbands are their leaders in the house and accordingly, the husband is 'the first person' within the family. Bu’ Talbiyah, for example, is a woman activist who promotes gender equity, yet she:

"For me, husband is the head of family. Even though we (women) can handle everything without husband, principally, husband is backbone of family. I feel weak when my husband is not beside me (I am not strong enough), at least people call me by my husband's name. I feel that my husband is number one, first, and I am number two, the second. Even though I support gender equity but I am still thinking there are differences between husband and wife".

This story reinforces de Beauvoir's (as cited by Othman, 2000), argument that men dominate over women and consequently, the women are subordinated. The women, then, are reduced to the status of the second sex. De Beauvoir's theory is based on the assumption that "men viewed women as fundamentally different from themselves" (Othman, 2000: 80); in that men are regarded 'the autonomous being' while women are regarded as 'the dependent being'. This patriarchal ideology, in Madura and elsewhere in the world, is constantly reinforced and reproduced by both men and women within society.

However, one of the religious leaders, Keyae Syukri, emphasized that a woman or a wife can be a leader if a husband does not have the capability to do so. He supported his argument using one of the Qur'anic verses; that is Al-Qur'an 4: 34 which says: "men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support the women from their means (to be bread winners)" (al-Qur'an; an-Nisa', 4:34). Keyae Syukri interprets this verse that God expects men to be a leader—instead of a mere protector—because God has given some of them 'fadhal' (strength, special thing) and because—naturally—men are bread-willers. In the case that men do not get 'fadhal' from God or are not able to be breadwinners, they are regarded incapable to be leaders (of women), and it enables women to replace them (as leaders). It is—as admitted by Keyae Syukri—nevertheless very unusual for a wife to have the authority in the home.
The idea that men are leaders and women followers are incorporated into local notions of the characteristics of a good wife or husband. One of the examples is what Ca’ Kadir who said:

"For me, a good wife is a wife who *torok ocah tang lakeh* (obey her husband). I tell her something, she wants to listen. If I ask her to do something, she will do it. She does what I say".

These examples showed that Madurese husbands dominate over their wives. However, Madurese wives do have some agency, e.g. all women participants agreed to be interviewed without asking their husband's permission. As agents Madurese women behaved intentionally 'against the rule', namely they did something without necessarily asking permission from their husband. It is as Giddens (1976) says that agency implies 'causal power' where an agent is engaged in the exercise of power. The agents, in the case Madurese women, are aware of what they do and they have choice to do so or not. Madurese women also use their agency as a kind of resistance to the men's power, as Foucault (1978, cited by Hirschmann, 2000) says "wherever there is power, there is resistance". At the same time, it is unlikely that women will ever be able to exercise more agency than the wider patriarchal structure will allow them. It is unlikely that they will, e.g., be commonly accepted as breadwinners and leaders in their homes or in the community on the same level as men. They are only able to do so if there is no man. Even so, they would still not be equal to men.

I did not see such agency in the wives of polygamous men; I never succeeded in interviewing them. Those women refused to talk to me because their husbands did not give them permission. Unlike Yemen's women (Clark, 1997) who used their agency in their polygamous marriages, Madurese wives in polygamous marriages did not seem so strong. The polygamous men likewise, did not want to talk to me either.

### 3.2 Sexual Intercourse

#### 3.2.1 The Aim of Sexual Intercourse within Marriage

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42 A study in Yemen showed that most women in polygamous marriage are activists in some organization. They are outspoken women. They themselves proposed other women—who are also women activists or career women—to be married by their husbands. Within polygamous marriage, these wives did some agency, i.e. negotiate their positions and roles with their husband and accordingly, they have freedom to work or to be socially active outside the house (Clark, 1997).
Since sexual intercourse before or outside marriage is regarded as taboo in Madura, I collected data about participants' experience with sexual intercourse during their marriage. Smiling and laughing were part of our (participants and I) conversation about this 'sensitive' topic. By laughing, our relationship became closer, and accordingly, it helped me much to explore participants' sexual experience.

There are some words that refer to sexual intercourse. The first word is *apolong tedung* (to sleep together (with husband/wife). This is a common expression and everybody understands it. The second word is *kerja* (to work). It means that having sex needs energy just like working, as the conversation between Bu' Zulfa and I below indicated:

Interviewer: "Now, you have four children, does the frequency of sexual intercourse decrease?"
Bu' Zulfa: "No, it is the same. I make them sleep first, then we (she and her husband) *kerja*".

This word is usually used between friends because it is a little rude. Another common word is *main* (to play); to describe that having sex is a fun thing. It is usually used between young couples. *Nyetor* (literally means to deposit, but here means to give) is another word. It is specifically used when a couple are having sex when one of the couple (husband/wife) returns after being away from home or the village for some time. 43

Most participants agreed about the importance of sexual intercourse within marriage. "For me, it is very important. It is a biological need", Pak Badrun argued when I asked him about it. Similarly, Pak Zainal stated that sexual intercourse is a basic need that has to be fulfilled. A couple of Bu' Zulfa and Pak Rozak even considered sexual intercourse to be number one in marriage, "it is *nomer settong* (number one)", she emphasized. Bu' Zulfa also admitted that the frequency of having sex has not changed, although she already has four children.

All participants agreed that having sex with their husband or wife is one of the acts of worship. For women, it means that they should serve the husband whenever their

43 Usually it is more than two or three days or certain time that is agreed between husband and wife.
husband needs it. They believe, it will be a sin to refuse their husband, as argued by mBa’ Bariyah: "A wife has to serve a husband’s need. I will be sinned if I refuse him". To avoid that refusal, some of them make a schedule for having sex. "If there is a schedule, so there is no excuse to refuse", Bu’ Jamilah, one of FGD participants, said. By scheduling, a woman will never feel forced because it is a commitment between her and her husband. The schedule which is proposed by a woman can be understood as an expression of agency. In this respect, the scheduling is intended to 'impose on or impel her husband not to 'force' her to ‘serve’ him outside the schedule.

On the other hand, most men realized that they should not force their wives to have sex with them. It is because "If (sexual intercourse) is ibadah (act of worship), there should not be imposition between husband and wife", Pak Karim argued. However, in practice, they are mangkel (angry but usually it is expressed through silence) and eventually, they force their wife to do it, as Pak Zainal admitted: "I never force her. I understand when she is tired, I never ask her. But, if she is not tired, I force her".

A further discussion about sexual intercourse concerned whether it was an obligation or a need. Some participants said that having sex is an obligation of a wife (to serve the husband) but most agreed that it is an obligation of both husband and wife. For Madurese, influenced by Islamic values, a husband has two obligations to his wife; the first is an obligation to give najkah lahir (material basic needs) and the second, is to give najkah batin (sexual intercourse). These two najkah must be fulfilled by a husband. If he does not give najkah batin (have sex) to his wife over a period of time, she can leave him. Legally - in Indonesian Islamic Family Law, if the husband does not give her najkah batin, the wife has the right to report to the judge and -if the judge accepts it- automatically her marriage is broken and her status is a divorcee. This is also written on the marriage certificate⁴⁴. Of the two kinds of najkah, Ca’ Kadir argued that najkah batin is more important than najkah lahir. He said:

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⁴⁴ Besides marriage consent, in the marriage certificate for Indonesian Muslims is also written some points, such as the rights and obligation for a husband and wife, sighat taklik (marriage consent), etc. There are some points mentioned in sighat taklik, i.e. a guarantee from the husband that he will fulfill his obligations to his wife—including he will treat her nicely- and otherwise, if his wife complains and report it to the judge, their marriage is broken automatically.
"For me, *nafkah batin* is more important than *nafkah lahir* because I learnt *kitab* (Islamic textbook) which explains that a man who is sexually impotent is better not to get married (...)".

The statement from *kitab* has convinced him that the health of a person is a main marriage requirement and therefore, *nafkah batin* is a priority.

However, some Madurese views sex as the right of a husband and an obligation of a wife. In this respect, *Bu’ Talbiyah* contended:

"(...) it is *kewajiban* (obligation) for the wife. But, I can say it is obligation and demand. In the normal condition, it is obligation for wife. But, when the wife is tired or sick, it is no longer obligation but it is a demand. A demand comes from husband to wife".

This argument implies that it is a 'must' for a wife to serve her husband whenever he needs it, just as stated by *Bu’ Shofiyyah*: "it is an obligation of a wife toward her husband. We (wife) are not allowed to refuse whenever our husband wants it".

Some participants –mostly men- also recognized sexual intercourse as a need of both husband and wife. Nevertheless, they argued that while a husband always has such a need, a wife rarely has it. *As Pak Badrun* told me: "Occasionally she (his wife) needs it too". *Pak Karim*, on the other hand, disagreed that only a husband has this need. According to him, a woman is just shy to express her feeling, including her need for having sex. *Bu’ Talbiyah* argued that (...) "men are different with women. Men cannot restrain their (sexual) need, but women are more patient".

Based on the notion of that sexual intercourse as a need, one of the aims of having sex is to fulfil it. Interestingly, most female participants mentioned it as the first aim while male participants put it as the second's aim. *As Bu’ Talbiyah* said: "First (of the aims), is to satisfy our need because honestly, we need it (...)".

On the other hand, male participants emphasized that having a child is the first aim of sexual intercourse while female participants put it as the second. It is related to *Bu’ Buryan’s* explanation. This community leader explained that for Madurese men, having a child is a source of pride because if they do not have child, their dignity will decrease. "That's why it is a pride for men if they have a child as soon as after getting
married", she said. Her explanation helped me to understand why men apparently desired to have children more than women did. To reach this aim, female fertility is very important — as I mentioned in chapter one.

In general, the Madurese see sexual intercourse firstly as involving reproduction. This perception is in line with Vance's (1991) theory namely that, 'cultural influence models of sexuality'. In her article, Vance writes, "the core of sexuality is reproduction" (Vance, 1991: 44). It does not mean that other aspects, such as orgasm, sex drive, etc. is ignored but those aspects are complementary. The meaning of sexuality is often assumed and taken for granted, just as Bu' Romlah explained: "I think you already know, we do sexual intercourse mainly for having a child. It is a natural".

3.2.2 Who initiates Sexual Intercourse and achieves Satisfaction?

Basically, most Madurese contend that both husband and wife deserve to initiate sexual intercourse. However, the initiative mostly comes from men. According to Pak Karim revealed that according to hadis, on a scale of lowest to highest, the sexual drive of men is only one while women's sexual drive is nine. Yet men cannot restrain their sexual drive, unlike women. Interestingly, almost all participants believe that a woman who initiates sex will be rewarded by God. Only Nyih Robi'ah — who comes from keyae's family — firmly said that it is taboo for women to initiate sex. I was surprised because her family is well known as pious Muslims and she had studied in pesantren. When I asked her why she sees this as unacceptable, she said that she had received this notion from people around her, including her family.

Conversely, Nyih Aisyah, a religious leader but not from keyae's family, told me a story about wives of sholeh (pious) men who always initiated sexual intercourse. She explained: "Sholeh wives usually did that by asking: hal laka hajatun? (Would you (have sex)?, -Arabic). They asked that every time their husband wanted to sleep".

45 His opinion about the difference of sexual drive of men and women is inspired by hadis (see al-Hasani, no year: 43) which mentions that women's syahwat (sexual desire) is nine while men's syahwat is one but conversely men's brain (intellectual quality) is nine and women's brain is only one. Number nine and one are to describe how big or small the appetite (for something) or the intellectual quality of men and women. This hadis then is used to judge that women are easier to get angry and they are less smart than men. Therefore, some Muslim scholars — especially Muslim feminist — criticize this hadis and they are hesitate if it is a hadis because the content is gender biased.
Madurese Muslim, *sholeh* men—and their family—are considered the ideal—to be followed through their acts, words, etc. In this respect, Nyih Aisyah tried to convince me that a wife who initiates sexual intercourse is a good wife, like *sholeh* wives. Similar to her, Pak Sapei, a community leader, asserted that it is not taboo for women to *menta kaadhe'* (to initiate).

Even though most women realize that it is recommended for them to use initiative for having sex, only a few of them did so. One of the FGD participants—*Bu' Jumi'*, revealed that "every time after I get menstruation—I usually get it for a week—I always initiate to do sexual intimacy because I pity for him having 'days off". She meant that her husband has to restrain his sexual drive during her menstruation period because as I have explained in chapter one, for Madurese Muslim, having sex is prohibited during this period.

While *Bu' Jumi'* said that she initiates sexual intimacy with her husband at least once a month, *Bu' Rina* told me that during seven years of her marriage, she did it only once. She said:

*Bu' Rina*: "(...) Before getting married I asked my mother if it is ok if I initiate sexual intercourse, my mother told me that it is allowed even I will get *pahala* (reward from God) if I do that. "You will *masuk surga* (be in heaven)"*, my mother emphasized it".

Interviewer:  "Have you ever practiced it?".
*Bu' Rina*: "yes, once, and my husband liked it. He even often says to me: "if you want (to have sex), just ask me"".

The appreciation of *Bu' Rina's* husband is also recognized by other male participants. *Pak* Badrun, for instance, said he will be happy if his wife expresses her sexual desire. He claimed that sometimes he recognizes her wife's sexual need but his wife is too shy to take the initiative. Most women also admitted to feeling embarrassed to initiate sexual intimacy, as *Bu' Shofiyyah* told me: "*todus engko'* (I feel embarrassed) if I have to *menta kaadhe'* (to initiate)

While most Madurese women are shy to initiative sex, they feel they should achieve satisfaction during intercourse. Both husband and wife have to have an orgasm (to reach satisfaction), not only one of them. The women revealed that they are never
reluctant nor shy to ask their husbands to wait for them (if they are not satisfied yet). *mBa'* Bariyah and *Ca'* Kadir told me that they always try to reach satisfaction at the same time, otherwise one of them has to be patient (to wait). Therefore, they see that communication between husband and wife is very important in order to understand how to satisfy each other. *Pak* Badrun also saw that unhappiness within marriage is because of this sexual problem resulting when only the husband or wife is satisfied.

Even though some women participants felt that sometimes their husbands forced them to be intimate, they nevertheless argue that they have to be satisfied as well as their husbands. One reason is that they are afraid of sinning if they are not satisfied, as *Bu' Zulfa* described:

> Interviewer: "In your experience, who deserves to achieve the satisfaction?"
> *Bu' Zulfa*: "both of us, not only my husband. I will be sinned if only my husband or I experiences the pleasure or achieve satisfaction. That is what *keyae* says".

Similar to her, *Pak* Karim also based his argument on Islamic values, when he said that according to Islamic textbooks, both husband and wife have to be satisfied. These two last examples indicated to me that for many Madurese, sexual intimacy within marriage is also an act of worship and has spiritual meaning.

However, most Madurese women contended that they will prioritize their husband's satisfaction if it is impossible for them to reach satisfaction. All participants in female FGD also agreed with this argument. In this sense, Madurese women intentionally ignore their own satisfaction.

### 3.3 Well-Being in Marriage

Madurese in general perceived marital well-being as more important than material aspects. Most participants agreed that non-material aspects contribute more to their well-being in marriage than wealth. Before I came to Madura, I had often heard that Madurese people are philanthropists; they are not stingy people compared to the Javanese. I found that it is true that they are very nice people. Every time I came to their homes, either to do interview or just to visit them, they gave me everything they have, such as vegetables, cakes, etc. even though, in my opinion, most of them are
poor people. It is because the Madurese believe that God has already determined rizqi (prosperity) for each person. Nevertheless, they also realize that they have to work hard to reach their rizqi.

All participants mentioned that having sex with their husband/wife contributes to their marital well-being. They saw an unhappy sexual life as one of the reasons for divorce\textsuperscript{46} or polygamy. Therefore, they suggested that both husband and wife develop good communication and mutual understanding, as Bu'Talbiyah said:

"In my opinion, the most important thing is developing mutual understanding between husband and wife. This concept must be there in any aspect, including sexual intercourse. For instance, I don't agree with the interpretation of hadis which says that we have to serve our husband even though in the vehicle transportation because you know when we do sexual intimacy each of us want to enjoy it and to be satisfied. So, if one of us feels pressured, it is not good. So, as a Muslim we have to practice Islamic teaching, for example we have to serve our husband. We understand it but on the other hand, our husband has to understand our condition. When the wife is tired, the husband shouldn't force her (to serve him) because if we do it with mutual understanding, it will be different".

I also found that for most women, the husband contributes much to their sense of marital well-being. Bu’ Talbiyah and Bu’ Zulfa for example, feel lucky because they have very nice husbands. During interviews, they continuously complimented their husbands. Bu’ Talbiyah asserted that she would not have a good career if her husband did not support her. Moreover Bu’ Shofiyah, who has married twice, always compared her first and her second husband. She admitted that she was never happy with her first husband. Her second husband practices the five criteria for developing sakinah family, as I have explained in part 3.1.1. Those five criteria improve well-being.

Another expected attitude of the husband is to be respectful towards his wife, as revealed by Nyih Robi’ah: "a respect toward women from men is very important for me. If we (women) feel not to be respected, like harassing or hurting words, we, a woman feel nelangsa (pity)".

\textsuperscript{46} Even though a woman cannot divorce her husband, she or otherwise her parents or even the Islamic court can impose her husband to divorce her. According to Islamic Family Law in Indonesia (KHI 1990), a wife deserves to ask her husband to divorce her. If the husband refuse (to divorce her), the judge can divorce them based on the wife’s proposal.
Most men agreed that well-being will be achieved when there are no tensions or quarrels between husband and wife. Interestingly, some men perceived women as more easily angered, and if they do not understand her, they will quarrel with their wives. Pak Rozak described the situation when his wife is angry with him:

"I am happy especially if I don't quarrel with my wife. When my wife is angry, I go somewhere until she is calm. I don't want to make gegeran (an annoying quarrel). I realize that my wife is keras kepala (selfish), so I have to understand her".
CHAPTER FOUR
RITUALS PRIOR TO SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

As I have explained in chapter one, according to Leach (1999) ritual is not confined to magical or religious actions only. This chapter describes and analyses rituals done prior to sexual intercourse both on the wedding night and in daily life. In order to see similarities and differences, I divide this chapter into two parts; first, the rituals performed on the wedding night and secondly, the rituals before having sex in daily life.

4.1 Rituals on the Wedding Night

In a community which regards sex before marriage as taboo, the wedding night is a very big moment and must be unforgettable. Speaking about Madurese rituals prior to sexual intercourse on the wedding night, it cannot be separated from some rituals on and for the wedding ceremony. During my fieldwork, I attended a wedding party but not all the rituals were performed because the groom was Javanese. I would like to describe the wedding ceremony from my field notes:

It was Friday 3rd of June, 2005, the second day of my second week in Burneh, Madura. This afternoon, my relative, Bu' Rokhimah, asked me to attend a wedding party with her in Delambeh village, Tanah Merah sub-district. Tanah Merah is neighbouring Burneh sub-district. I am very enthusiastic to come because it is the first time for me to watch a Madurese wedding party, and I think I will find something that is related to my research. When Bu' Rokhimah was getting married, I did not attend her wedding party. Delambeh, some people call it Belandeh (Holland), is a little bit far away. It took about 45 minutes by car from Burneh to that village. Bu' Rokhimah took me in her big car. Besides me, there were six women in her car, all of them are her sisters in-law. There were no men in the car except the driver. My relative explained to me that their husbands had already attended the akad nikah in the morning, when I asked her if their husbands did not attend the walimah. When the car entered Delambeh village, I heard loud music was playing from a cassette and I realized that the place of the wedding party is close. At the wedding party place, some women in a red dress welcomed us. Regarding a red dress, Bu' Rokhimah told me that the favourite colours of the Madurese are red and

47 In Madura and some places in Indonesia, wedding ceremony is usually called akad nikah, while wedding party is walimah. In akad nikah, there are usually religious and legal ceremony while walimah usually includes traditional (Madurese) ceremony. Akad nikah and walimah are usually conducted in the same day but in the different time. Both akad nikah and walimah are conducted in the bride's place. In Madura and some places in Java, akad nikah event is regarded men space while walimah is women space.
green. The decoration of the dais and the chairs where the bride and the couple sat down were green. The bride wore a white dress in 'European' style\(^{48}\), -not Madurese- and was sitting on her chair on the dais. The groom had not coming yet; he was on his way. While I was enjoying the meal, there were very loud explosions outside. Realizing that I was shocked, Bu' Rokhimah laughed at me while saying: "don't be shocked! In Madura we usually explode fireworks as a sign that the groom is coming soon. It is also the expression of happiness". Not longer after fireworks, the groom and his family arrived. The groom was wearing a black wedding coat, also in European style. The bride is around 20-21 years old -somebody told me that she is in her second year at a university. I saw the bride kissing the groom's hand, and after that, they walked toward a young woman who was waiting for them on the right side of the wedding dais. The groom gave a necklace –I thought it was diamonds- to that young woman and put it around her neck. Then the groom did the same for the bride. When I asked Bu' Rokhimah who that young woman was, she said she (the young woman) is the older sister of the bride. Because her older sister was not married yet, the groom had to give plangkah kember (a gift to the older sister and the bride). The gifts have to be the same). Then, the bride and the groom went back to the wedding dais and took some pictures. Surprisingly, when being photographed, they acted in a very intimate pose, such as hugging tightly, etc. This is considered taboo in my society. Bu' Rokhimah, again, explained to me that it is tradition in Madura; taking very intimate pictures in front of the wedding guests. During the wedding party, I heard people behind me said that the bride is beautiful and pangling (a make up that makes the bride looks different). I wondered why pangling is important since when I saw Bu' Rokhimah's wedding picture, she also looked very different, I did not recognize her (...).

Some participants and Bu' Buryan, a community leader, explained the wedding process and its meaning to me. For the wedding day, the bride is expected to do more preparations than the groom. For 40 days before the wedding ceremony, the bride had to drink jhamo\(^{49}\) (herb). It is intended to freshen the body, to make the body smell good, and also to reduce wetness in the vagina. Her mother usually made it for her, as Bu' Buryan described:

"In the 40 days before the wedding ceremony the parents would give jhamo to their daughter. For example, the mother would say: "Please drink this to satisfy your husband". Because of this instruction, the daughter then asked her mother what the meaning of 'to satisfy your husband' is. Then, the old women (grandmother, etc) would teach her. She not only must drink jhamo but also is prohibited from eating certain food like banana, drink tea, etc. The aim is to look after her body (in order not to be fat, having a bad smell, etc).

\(^{48}\) I mean a wedding dress that is widely used in most places in the world. It is a white long dress.

\(^{49}\) Madura is famous with jhamo production. The Madurese exports their jhamo production to places in Indonesia and even to abroad, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, etc. The Madurese consumed jhamo since they were babies. For complete information about jhamo, see Jordaan (1985).
Nowadays, the bride usually drinks *jhamo* for one or two weeks before the wedding ceremony.

Besides drinking *jhamo*, the bride's mother does *ratus* ritual by burning *dhupa* (incense) and other herbs in the cupboard of the bride and in the bride's room several days before the wedding ceremony. The mother, then, puts jasmine in the bride's clothes (they usually use jasmine from Tonjung village because it is famous for its very nice smell). This ritual is aimed at making the bride's clothes and room fragrant, and accordingly it will influence the bride's body. It is also a sign that 'she' is the bride from her smell. According to *Bu' Buryan* and *Bu' Rina*, drinking *jhamo* means the bride cares from the inside and *ratus* is caring from the outside. The *jhamo* and *ratus* rituals for the bride shows how the Madurese perceive and control a woman's body, what Scheper-Hughes & Lock (1987) refers to as the 'body politic'. They write that the regulation and control of the body include reproduction, gender, and sexuality. In the Madurese context, the woman's body is expected, and therefore controlled, to be attractive to men, especially on the wedding night. The guarantee of female virginity, as described below, illustrates the control of Madurese society over women's reproduction and sexuality. As *Bu' Talbiyah*, who had experienced *ratus*, said:

"At that time, I had to be in the bathroom and to sit down in the chair. There was a burnt *dhupa* under the chair, then I was covered by plastic until I was sweating. After that, I had to take a bath with *aeng kembrang* (water that many kinds of flowers in it). It was two days before my wedding day. My clothes and my room were also given a burnt *dhupa*. (A burnt *dhupa* is put in) My hair and my body also, so I smelt fragrant. It is related to Madurese believe that if *manten's* (the bride) face doesn't *pangling* (change/look different), it means that she is not virgin. That's why before *manten* (wedding ceremony), she is not supposed to make up her face and accordingly, on wedding day she is expected to make guests or neighbour surprised through her face (make up) and her fragrant smell. All of those ritual are intended (to serve) her husband. That's why wedding night is *surga dunianya* (a heaven for) Madurese".

Her explanation above showed the complexity of the rituals which *Bu' Talbiyah* had to perform in order to be a bride. A change (*pangling*) in the bride's face at the wedding ceremony is a source of pride for her parents because it demonstrates that their daughter is still a virgin. It is also a guarantee for the groom and his family that the bride is *suci* (chastity/never having sex before marriage). Now, I understood why people were talking about *pangling* during the wedding party in which I attended.
In Madura, the wedding party is conducted twice; first, 
*walimah* in the bride's parents place where *akad nikah* also takes place, and second, *jeng mantoh* (literally means to have daughter-in-law), a wedding party in the house of the groom's parents. *Jeng Mantoh* is usually conducted a week or two weeks after the wedding ceremony in the bride's place.

At the *akad nikah* ceremony and the *jeng mantoh* party, the bride drinks a special *jhamo*. At *akad nikah*, the bride's mother prepares *jhamo* for her and asks her to drink it in order to please and satisfy the groom on the wedding night. At *jeng mantoh*, the groom's mother will give *jhamo* to the bride and ask her to drink it in the presence of the guests. It is a responsibility of the mother in-law and shows the acceptance of the daughter in-law. Most women participants revealed that they drank *jhamo* both at *akad nikah* and *jeng mantoh*. Only one participant said that she did not drink *jhamo* because she was an orphan, and nobody told her or prepared *jhamo* for her. Unlike women, most men do not drink *jhamo* - either at *akad nikah* ceremony or at *jeng mantoh* party.

While women prepare themselves for the experience of the wedding night by drinking *jhamo* and doing *ratus*, men are supposed to learn and memorize *aduweh* (prayer words) or at least read it fluently because it is written in Arabic. Some women also read a prayer on their wedding night, before 'having sex', but most women said that only their husband read and prayed. The fact that men are expected to pray in Arabic indicates that men are supposed to have more Islamic knowledge than women because men are expected to be leaders in their household. As I have explained in chapter three, men are responsible to teach their wives (especially to teach religious values), this gender role is applied since the wedding day.

Most men whom I interviewed said that they read a long prayer as their ritual on their wedding night before having sex. *Ca' Kadir*, for example, said that one of religious leaders taught him a prayer that should be read, and he practiced it. After *akad nikah*, he entered his bride's room. In front of her door, he stopped for and read some prayers: First, *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim* (literally means in the name of God, the merciful, the beneficence). *Ca' Kadir* told me that while reading this prayer, he said in his heart: thanks God, you give me a wife. Secondly, he praised the Prophet
Muhammad three times. It is a tradition for Muslims to praise the Prophet Muhammad after citing God's name. Thirdly, he read ayat kursi, a long prayer which is usually read to ask the evil spirit or devil to leave from a place or when it is believed that the evil spirit possesses someone's body. When I asked Ca' Kadir why he read this ayat kursi on his wedding night, he said: "Maybe the aim is to avoid setan (devil) to be involved when we have sex. It will be scary if setan come first (to have sex with one of them)". After reading a prayer, he entered the bride's room and had sexual intercourse with his wife.

One participant practiced a very long ritual on his wedding night. Pak Badrun, who had graduated from pesantren, said that on his wedding night, he took a bath before having sex. Then, he performed wudlu' (ritual ablution), and after that, he performed shalat (a kind of prayer). He said that he performed shalat taubat (repent prayer); which was aimed at showing repentance of many sins that had been done. By shalat, he wished God would forgive all of his and his wife's fault and sins, and on this wedding night, he and his wife were reborn like a baby who does not have any sins. When shalat was done, he then read a doa: Bismillah, Allahumma jannibna wa jannib as-Syaitana ma razaqtana (in the name of God, O God, please protect us from the devil and protect (a child), that you might give us, from the devil). By doing these rituals, he wished that God gives him sholeh and healthy child. Sholeh here means a child who is well behaved (in a moral sense), and healthy means physically and mentally healthy. Pak Badrun performed those rituals together with his wife.

In general, most men and some women performed such rituals on their wedding night before they had sex. The least and the shortest ritual is reading Bismillah (in the name of God), as Pak Rozak said: "only bismillah. I knew nothing, so I think bismillah was enough. The most important was (when I did having sex on the wedding night) I remember God". The longest rituals are the rituals that are practiced by Pak Badrun above, and on average, the Madurese performed wudlu' (ritual ablution) and read doa: Allahumma jannibna wa jannib as-Syaitana ma razaqtana (in the name of God, O

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50 According to Pak Syukri, a religious leader, "the purpose of performing shalat before having sex is to help somebody's mind clear, and accordingly s/he will not practice the prohibited things in her/his sexual activity. For example, because of shalat, s/he will not do anal sex because it is forbidden"
God, please protect us from the devil and protect (a child) that you might give us from the devil).

Even though the participants performed different rituals, their aim was quite similar. Through the rituals, they wished that when they had sex, the devil would not be involved and disturb them because if the devil participates and joins with them, they would not have a ‘good’ (moral) child. A good child also means a child who is physically and mentally 'normal' –not handicapped or insane - and morally nice and kind –not a naughty and rude child who does not respect his/her parents. Moreover, the wedding night was the first time for them to have sexual intercourse, thus, by performing rituals, they ensured that everything would run well because setan did not interfere with their sexual activity.

4.2 Daily Rituals Prior to Sexual Intercourse
The Madurese believe that Sunday night and Thursday night are the good times to have sexual intercourse with their husband/wife. Thursday night is believed to be the best day in the week. By performing worship on this night, including sexual intercourse, a person will receive a big reward from God. Having sex on Sunday night is as Ca' Kadir said auspicious because when someone 'makes love' on Sunday night, s/he will get everything that s/he wants. Thus, it is not coincidence if the Madurese – especially women- is accustomed to drinking jhamo at least twice a week; that is on Monday and Thursday, as admitted by Bu' Romlah: "It becomes habit (to drink jhamo) at least twice a week". In the past, this drinking ritual was not only for adults but also for children. According to Bu’ Buryan:

"(...) we (women), since the past, drink jhamo -since I was child- twice a week (Monday and Thursday). We regularly drink jhamo bengkes (a kind of jhamo) beside special jhamo. Jhamo bengkes is aimed at reduce the bad smell of the body and is good for womb. On Monday, in the past, there were jhamo sellers here. I don't know why Monday and Thursday. Perhaps Thursday is a good time to do sexual intimacy on Thursday night. On Monday may be to get new energy (after having sex on Sunday night). But, several years ago, this tradition was also for children (...).

51 There are hadis which mention that it is prohibited to have sex in certain days, such as in the first day of the month. A couple who does sexual intercourse in those days will have a handicapped or an insane child or even a child who is rude and naughty like the devil (al-Hasani, no year: 48).
Some women usually bought *jhamo*, like *Sari Rapet* (tightness), *Sari Asmara* (romantic love), etc, while others made it themselves. The *jhamo* usually contains curcuma, betel leaves, and other ingredients which are intended to make the vagina fragrant, tighter and to reduce the wetness in vagina or even to make the vagina dry.

Like women, most men regularly consumed *jhamo*, especially before having sex with their wives. The ingredients of *jhamo* for men are usually eggs, honey, ginseng, and other ingredients that strengthen a man. When a man feels strong, it will increase his confidence toward his wife, and it is a guarantee that he can satisfy his wife when they are having sex, as Ca' Kadir explained: "When I don't drink *jhamo*, I feel *lemes* (weak)".

Besides drinking *jhamo*, some women participants told me that they also used *tongkat wasiyat* (the phallus stick –white or black- that is made from herbs). They inserted *tongkat wasiyat* before having sex. Bu’ Rina taught me how to use it:

"insert this (the black *tongkat wasiyat*) into your vagina for 10-15 minutes. Insert it before having sex. Then, put it off. Don't insert (into vagina) all of it, just 3/4 of it. When you put it off, you will see white things (vaginal discharge) around *tongkat wasiyat*. Then, your vagina becomes dry and tight. After that, wash the *tongkat wasiyat* and put it in a safe place".

To know more about *tongkat wasiyat*, I met a *tongkat wasiyat* maker who also makes another kind of *jhamo*. Mak Um, has made *jhamo* (she only makes *jhamo* which is only related to sexual activity) since 1985. For women, she makes *jhamo sari rapet* (to reduce vaginal discharge) and she makes *jhamo ma’jun* for men (to make men strong) and *tongkat wasiyat*. When I asked her how she learnt to make *tongkat wasiyat* and *jhamo*, she said that she got it from dream. She believes that her dream was from God because, before making *tongkat wasiyat*, she was working in Malaysia but she was never successful. In her dream, she was also taught a special *doa* (prayer) that had to be read before making *tongkat wasiyat*, and it convinced her that God showed her how to earn a living through a dream. She would not tell me which kind of prayer she read. Her daughter, who is a postgraduate student at the faculty of Biology and a teacher in a secondary school, said that *Mak Um* would not tell her and her sisters the prayer either. I also failed to get information about the ingredients of *tongkat wasiyat*. She told me that a month before I came, there were women from a
NGO, who also asked her about the ingredients, but she refused to reveal it. "It is a secret", she said.

What Mak Um admitted that she makes jhamo and tongkat wasiyat based on God's advice and guidance convinced the Madurese about the efficacy of these herbs. It is also related to the Madurese Muslims belief that consuming such jhamo or tongkat wasiyat—which is intended to satisfy her/his mate- is an act of worship and accordingly they will be rewarded by God.

Just like on wedding night - in daily life - the Madurese -men and women- also practice rituals before sexual intercourse. It is simpler than on the wedding night. For example, before the wedding night, the women practiced ratus to make their body fragrant and smell nice. In their daily life, they do not have to practice it, but the most important thing is that they have to look nice for their husbands before having sex, as asserted by Bu' Shofiyyah:

"before we do sexual intimacy, we (women) should use perfume. Our clothes have to be clean. Don't use 'kitchen clothes'. Our husband is not supposed to smell terrible from our body or clothes".

All participants –men and women- emphasized that they have to be in a state of purity before having sex. Thus, they purify themselves before sex by taking a bath and doing wudlu' (ritual ablution). Those who use tongkat wasiyat, do so after taking a bath but before wudlu.

After purifying the body, the Madurese cite prayers. Most of them read a short prayer; i.e. Bismillahirrahmanirrahim (in the name of God, the merciful, the beneficence), while some of them read Allahumma jannibna wa jannib as-Syaithana ma razaqana (in the name of God, O God, please protect us from the devil and protect (a child) that you might give us from the devil). One participant read Allahumma shalli 'ala sayyidina Muhammad (O God, may you bless Prophet Muhammad).

Just as on the wedding night (although they read different prayers), the aim is to purify, protect, and bless. They read the prayer for the process and the result of sexual intercourse. Through prayer, they seek blessings of God on their intercourse and
protect themselves from setan. Such blessed sexual intercourse will result in having a good child. Therefore, Bu' Zulfa admitted that she never forgets to read a prayer before 'making love':

"Lok toman kelopaen (I never forget (to read prayer)). If I don't pray I am afraid my child becomes lok bener (not good), physically and mentally. I am afraid, for example my child will be born without ear, foot, etc".

While most participants were using a contraceptive method, the purpose of praying was still aimed at ensuring the 'goodness' of a potential child. This is because they believe that contraceptive methods are just human efforts while God is the only who will give them children, or not. In cases of contraceptive failure they understand it as God giving them a child whenever He wants. Therefore, they still have to be wary of this possibility by reading a prayer before having sexual intercourse.

I will try to analyse the rituals I described by using Leach's theory. As I have mentioned in the Literature Review, I will use these three meanings of ritual as a tool of analyses.

4.2.1 Ritual as Social Communication
As a medium of communication, ritual has a function as language. It means that ritual contains messages that are conveyed to other people who also understand its meaning. It also implies that when the same ritual is performed in a different context, it will have different meanings. Like language, which consists of grammar, syntax, etc., ritual also has patterns, rules, etc., which helps people to understand it. However, Davis (1984) emphasizes that "ritual, more than other types of activity, depends upon indirect symbolic expression in order to communicate its meanings" (1984: 20).

In the context of Madurese ritual prior to sexual intercourse, the message only has meaning for particular people, the husband and wife, because it is a private ritual. During fieldwork, I observed —unintentionally— the ritual performed by the wife in the house of a family where I stayed. It was Thursday night around 9.30 p.m. I saw her entering a bathroom and I heard she was taking a bath. It is uncommon for Madurese —and most people in Indonesia— to take a bath later than 7.00 p.m. When she came out
from the bathroom, I found her changing her clothes into something better. I asked her why she took a bath at night and she just smiled shyly and said "it is nothing, I just want it". After that, she entered the room and after a while, I saw her husband entering the room. I, then, understood that she was performing one of the rituals—that is taking a bath—before sexual intercourse. I was also convinced that she performed the ritual because on Friday morning I found that her hair was wet. It was a sign that she had sexual intimacy at night. For Muslims, after having sex, they must purify themselves by taking a special bath and it can be recognized by wet hair. Instead of using hair drier, a Muslim prefers this 'wet' sign. Thus, purifying by taking a special bath is done before as well as after having sex.

Most participants told me that they recognized when their husband or wife was performing the rituals. It was seen as an initiative to have sex. For example, when I interviewed the couple, Ca' Kadir and mBa' Bariyah, they revealed that sometimes mBa'Bariyah initiated sex. I asked Ca'Kadir how he recognized it. He said:

"I know it. On Sunday night for example, after shalat isya' (a daily night prayer) I found her wearing a good clothes, using perfume, and make up her face. I understand that she wants it (to have sex) because as I told you, it is our schedule (to have sex on Sunday night)"

When I confirmed it to mBa' Bariyah whether it was true or not, she smiled and said "yes".

Another example is Bu' Ilia's—one of the FGD participants—who told me that every Thursday night—except when she is menstruating—she has a schedule to have sex with her husband. However, sometimes her husband wants it on another day or even in the morning. She said: "I recognize it when my husband performs wudlu\(^{52}\) (ritual ablution) outside daily shalat (prayer) time. I know it although he doesn't tell me".

Besides as social communication, these rituals can be understood as 'spiritual communication' between human and supernatural being (God and devil). When a husband or a wife is performing the ritual, s/he convey a message to God that s/he will perform an act of worship (having sex), and therefore s/he expects to be rewarded

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\(^{52}\) *Wudlu* is basically a ritual ablution to purify the body which is done regularly before performing daily prayer. It can be done to another purpose, such as before having sex, depending on the context.
by God. On the other hand, s/he also communicate with devil that it is a warning for devil not to disturb her/him during sexual intercourse.

These examples demonstrate the effectiveness of ritual as language. These rituals, as Leach (1999) argues, are able to communicate with the observers, i.e. Ca' Kadir, Bu' Ila's husband, and I, through sets of behaviours. Nevertheless, I think that the ritual will be effective only if the observer has knowledge about that ritual. Otherwise, just as language, it will create misunderstanding.

4.2.2 Ritual as Power

a. A 'tight' Woman versus A 'strong' Man

In his article, Leach (1999) affirms that the power in any context invokes metaphysical force. It means that the power which is imposed is invisible and so-called irrational. Leach mentions that the power by which someone is able "to coerce and control behaviour" of another person is "just as abstract and metaphysical as the magical or religious power" (Leach: 1999: 181). Based on his argument, I argue that the rituals practiced by Madurese Muslims before having sex, involve metaphysical/supernatural (not physical) force.

A Madurese woman who regularly uses tongkat wasiyat before having sex and a Madurese man who consumes jhamo at the same time, are in a sense involved in a contestation of power. Both the man and woman use agency to impose their power. The argument of all participants that both husband and wife have to satisfy each other strengthens the power of this ritual.

A Madurese woman who is taught that she has to serve (in having sex) her husband well, utilizes the ritual as her tool to 'master' her husband. Inserting tongkat wasiyat itself is a ritual to serve the husband well, and accordingly, it has potential power to keep the husband faithful to her and prevent him from having sex with another woman. As Bu' Talbiyah asserted: "if we (women) don't serve (our husband) well, we are afraid that 'unexpected thing' will happen". In this respect, almost all participants agreed that the main cause of polygamy—as one of 'unexpected things'- is because a wife does not serve her husband well. Thus, this ritual, as one of the ways to serve the
husband, is also expected to 'prevent' the husband from taking another wife in polygamy.

By using *tongkat wasiyat*, a woman is playing her stereotypical gender role but in doing so, she also has some agency. As a wife, she has to serve her husband well and she performs this role by performing rituals. On the other hand, a Madurese wife is aware that her husband has potential power to practice polygamy (since polygamy is allowed and is many in Madura). Accordingly, following Foucault (1976), who believes that the power is accompanied by resistance, the wife tries to resist or undermine her husband's power through ritual. Therefore, this ritual is seen as very powerful for the wife.

Besides, it is a source of pride for a man if he has a wife has a tight vagina, which gives him a sense of her being a virgin. Madurese men say that Madurese women are famous with their vaginal tightness (rapetnya). It implies that they expect their wives to be similar. Therefore, by using *tongkat wasiyat*, which is believed makes the vagina tighter and drier, a wife 'coerces' her husband to be proud of her.

Consuming a specific *jhamo* before having sex is a ritual which has the power to give a man strength to 'kerja' (having sex) with his wife. The Madurese believe that a strong man has the capability to satisfy his wife. The gender role that places a man in the position as a leader contributes to the image of a man as having to be strong in every aspect.

Just as a Madurese man is proud of having a 'tight' wife, a Madurese woman will proudly tell her friends if she has a 'strong' husband. It will be embarrassing to have a weak husband. Since *carok*\(^5\) (revenge) tradition, which symbolizes protection of women, also requires a strong man, it will be a source of pride for the wife to have a strong husband. The expectation of being a strong man can be a burden for a man but hopefully, this ritual can be a way to 'manipulate' his weakness.

\(^5\) *Carok* is "an institutionalized way of settling conflicts among men in Madurese culture" (Niehof, 1985: 209). It happen when a man feel harassed because his wife is teased by another man for example, then he is *malo* (embarrassed) and *carok* will be chosen as revenge. For further explanation about *carok*, see Wiyata (2002).
b. Human, God and Devil: The Triangle of Power

The ritual of reading *doa* (prayer) before having sex also contains metaphysical force, as argued by Leach (1999). It has power. A husband and wife use prayer as a tool to 'force' two things. First, through a prayer, they 'coerce' God to give them a 'good' child. The Madurese believe that it is God's right to give them a 'good' child or not, even to give them a child or not, as Pak Rozak asserted in our conversation:

Interviewer: "you already have four children. Do you want more?"

*Pak* Rozak: "it's up to Allah (God). If He wants to give me more, *alhamdulillah* (literally means praise to God but here means thanks to God) but if He doesn't, *alhamdulillah*. Honestly, four children for me are enough but I don't mind if Allah gives me more".

However, they also think that they deserve to ask and to demand from God to give them what they want. It is because they believe that God has a higher position than they do and thus has the power to change what He had already decided, as *Keyae* Syukri and *Nyih* 'Aisyah (religious leaders) mentioned about it.

On the other hand, the Madurese perform prayers because they are afraid of the devil who has the power to negatively influence their sexual activity. His power, then, may cause them have an unhealthy and bad child, such a handicapped or naughty child. As I have mentioned in part 4.1, there are many hadis which discourage Muslims from having such a child - Madurese Muslims are encouraged to have a 'good' child. Because they believe that the devil is as a hindrance to having a 'good' child, they use such prayers to avoid the devil.

In this respect, the Madurese, 'create' power through ritual. The ritual aims to 'coerce' two supernatural powers. Firstly, God. They perform ritual to 'force' God to bless them by giving them a good child. Besides, because they are aware that God's power is the highest, through ritual they 'impose on' God to hinder the devil from joining their sexual activity. Secondly, is the devil. As an evil supernatural being, the devil has the power to create disorder in the world and to disturb human activities. Thus, through such prayers, the Madurese feel confident that they can ward the devil off from their 'love making' activity.

4.2.3 Ritual as Belief
The Madurese perform rituals prior to sexual intercourse because they believe in it. As Levi Strauss (1972) argues, a symbol will be effective when people believe in it - rituals are effective because the performers have faith in it. The stories below demonstrate that ritual is belief. Besides, the stories also answer my research question concerning participants' experiences sexual intercourse which is preceded by rituals.

When Bu' Rina tried to convince me to use *tongkat wasiyat* before having sex because it will give me a different experience, I realized that she believes in this ritual and its power. She said that she has never forgotten to use *tongkat wasiyat* because she experiences a good sensation during sex. She rejected people's argument that using the herb is just to satisfy the husband. Firmly, she said:

"My vagina becomes dry and it helps reducing *keputihan* (vaginal discharge) problem. *Lebih peret, deddih jen nyaman* (it's tighter, so it is (sexual intercourse) more pleasant). So, it is (pleasure) not only for husband but wife also will feel *enak* (pleasant). I don't agree with those who said that it is (the effect of *tongkat wasiyat*) only for husband. I, myself, will not use it if it is only for my husband".

Likewise practising *tongkat wasiyat*, the religious ritual which is practiced by the Madurese, such as taking a bath, *wudlu'*, and reading prayers, demonstrates that Madurese believe in the efficacy of such rituals, e.g. *Wudlu'* before having sex is done because they believe that *wudlu'* purifies the body. A Madurese Muslim needs to perform *wudlu'* because it will create a state of cleanliness. The state of purity is important for them because as Bouhdiba (1998: 55) writes that "cleanliness is part of faith. Dirt is the work of the devil". They accordingly cleanse the body while also purifying it spiritually.

The devil has negative and polluting powers. Since the Madurese, as other Muslim societies\(^{54}\), believe that sexual intercourse is potentially polluting, the Madurese believe that the devil will join and disturb them during intercourse if they did not perform *wudlu'* and read a prayer. Reading a prayer is effective for warding off the devil during their sexual activity. Thus, they feel *leqa* (free of worry) after performing

\(^{54}\) Moroccan people regards sexual intercourse is sexually polluting, and a woman who potential to create the pollution. Accordingly, they have to perform certain prayers before having sex to "prevent a complete merging with the woman". The woman is believed as a "symbol of unreason, disorder, the anti-divine force of nature and disciple of the devil" (Memissi, 1975: 62-63).
the ritual and can enjoy sexual intercourse without any burden. Conversely, when they do not perform those religious rituals they will feel uncomfortable, as a couple Bu' Romlah and Pak Zainal admitted:

"it is different when we do it (sexual intercourse) without doa (prayer). Grasa grusu (literally means careless but in this context it means it cannot be enjoyed). There is a burden. It (reading a prayer) then becomes a habit".

Such rituals also function as one of health seeking behaviours. The Madurese regard the rituals as an effective way to avoid having a handicapped, insane, or naughty child. As Bu' Zulfa asserted: "I am afraid, for example my child will be born without ear, foot, etc". Bu' Shofiyah also emphasized:

"If I don't read such prayer, I am afraid that I will have a child who bertabiat seperti setan (has bad behaviour like devil). That is what Keyae (a religious leader) told me".

The Madurese believe that like religion, ritual is effective. The rituals that are part of the religious system illustrate that the Madurese regard religion as the "ultimate" concern (Geertz, 1973) when they face uncertainty. In the context of sexual intercourse, they feel uncertain about the child that may be born as the result of sexual activity. Besides, they also need to be reassured that devil will not have any influence during sexual intercourse, and thus, if the rituals are done properly, God will be on their side.

Above all, the Madurese believe that practising these rituals -inserting tongkat wasiyat, drinking jhamo, wudlu, taking a bath, and read a prayer- are acts of worship. As act of worship, they therefore will be rewarded by God. The rewards will be both having sakinah family and having a 'good' child, and accordingly, the rituals contribute their well-being in their marriage. This belief asserts their religiosity and spirituality.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

There are many layers to Madurese rituals prior to sexual intercourse. The core layer is that Madurese Muslims' religiosity and spirituality are reflected in almost every aspect of their life, including their sexual life. They always refer to God whenever they do some activities. God is as a source of inspiration, motivation and even a 'threat' for the Madurese. As Muslims and Madurese, they incorporated Madurese beliefs and traditions into Islamic teachings and they have developed Madurese Muslim practices.

The Madurese consider sex before and outside marriage as taboo and it is condemned by God. Accordingly, marriage is a very important institution to menghalalkan (to allow and get God's blessings) sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. Through marriage, the Madurese expect to have a halal child (in this context, halal means having a clear parents or ancestor because s/he is born within marriage) as well. Marriage is also understood as sunnatullah (God's order and destiny) and they cannot escape from it. It is also sunnatullah that marriage is aimed to develop sakinah (harmony, peaceful, and nice) family.

Following van Gennep (1961) - who says that marriage is one of the critical moments in human life and accordingly, is announced publicly and ceremonially, the Madurese also perceive marriage as a transition from childhood to adulthood. To be adult means to adhere to, respect and develop greater understanding of local cultural ideas and practices. It thus has a social meaning. It gives the married couple an introduction into local personhood as they adapt to and become steeped in local e norms, beliefs and traditions within the community.

One important aspect of marriage involves the production and reproduction of gender roles. As seen in the thesis a husband is supposed to be a breadwinner and his wife is a homemaker. To be a breadwinner, a husband is expected to be a leader in his family and thus, he is the one with authority and the ability to make decisions. His wife is essentially his helpmate. As a leader, he has to be respected by his wife and other family members. Hence, a wife has to obey her husband and 'doing nothing without
getting his permission'. These gender roles are accepted and taken for granted
(*sunnatullah*) as a result of religious leaders' interpretation of one of the Qur'anic
verses (Al-Qur'an 4: 34).

However, to some extent, gender relations between a husband and wife are never as
stereotypical as they seem. Some husbands voluntarily assist their wives with
domestic tasks and some wives contribute to the household income by taking up
formal employment outside the home, when sometimes a wife becomes the second
bread winner. As seen in the thesis, women also have some agency, for example
when they participate in the research without asking their husbands' permission.

Stereotypical gender relations are nevertheless strong e.g. a wife is required to serve
her husband by having sex. In this respect, the Madurese consider sexual intercourse
as an obligation for a wife. Yet sexual intercourse is also an obligation for the
husband, who has to have sex with his wife as his *nafkah batin* (having sex)
obligation to his her. This is in accordance with Islamic norms; that a husband is gives
both *nafkah lahir* (material basic needs) and *nafkah batin* to his wife. These
perceptions and related practices are strongly influenced by religious teaching which
interprets sexual intercourse as an act of worship.

While it is easy to portray Madurese women as passive and thus essentially female,
Madurese people appreciate and support women who initiate sexual intercourse.
Wives are encouraged to take such initiative and are ensured a reward by God if they
do so.

Since marriage and sex is aimed at having a child, sexual intercourse is primarily for
reproductive purposes. Even though sex is primarily linked to reproduction, and as
Vance (1991) indicates concerning the 'cultural influence models of sexuality' –the
Madurese do not ignore the role of satisfaction and pleasure for both husband and
wife during sex.. It is seen as sinful if only a wife or a husband gets satisfaction from
intercourse. Therefore, achieving satisfaction is also an act of worship.

For Madurese, sexual intercourse contributes to their marital well-being. An unhappy
sexual life is seen as a reason for divorce or polygamy. Yet, because of unequal
gender relations, it is not so easy for a woman to seek a divorce for sexual dissatisfaction and she cannot take a second husband either. It is however clear that non-material issues, such as a husband’s support, harmony in marriage (*sakinah*) and a peaceful life (also resulting from good sexual relations), are believed to contribute more to a couple’s well-being than material factors. This idea is influenced by the belief that God has already determined *rizqi* (prosperity) for each person. However, couples are not fatalistic either— they work hard and try to ‘beg’ or ‘force’ prosperity from God (who can also change what He has determined).

Sexual intercourse is an act of worship, and Madurese see the necessity of rituals prior to sexual intercourse. Rituals are cultural and spiritual activities involving series of actions, as seen by the example, taking a bath, practicing ritual ablution, preparing a drinking *jhamo*, saying prayers, etc. It has a structure and a set of phases. The practices are done in a certain fashion, ordered way. The way in which these actions are done has particular meaning for a couple and is shared by them. As in any ritual some things are said, like prayers, and some things are done, e.g. inserting the *tongkat wasiyat*. The rituals have an affective element— it will bring about the reward from God. Having a *sakinah* family and a ‘good’ child are such rewards to be expected from God, as Leach (1999) stresses, ritual is also a belief. In this respect, such rituals contribute to Madurese well-being within marriage.

These rituals assert stereotypical gender relations to some extent, such as at the wedding night, women are prepared to serve their husbands by performing *ratus* ritual, while men who are expected to be leaders must learn and read prayers. On the other hand, the rituals also demonstrate a contestation of power. 'A tight woman versus a strong man' show how husband’s and wife’s power is contested and in the same time it strengthens the stereotypical gender relations as well.

In religious level, as Leach (1999) contends that ritual can be seen as power, through the rituals, Madurese Muslims link three kinds of power; human, God, and devil, and keep them in balance. This does not mean that the power of God can be usurped, but God can be entreated.
The rituals will be meaningless if they do not have a function as 'language', or as a form of social communication (Leach 1999). As language, it is useful to convey message to another person or to 'the observer'. It can also be understood as a 'spiritual communication' between humans and supernatural beings (God and devil).

Madurese perceptions of and experiences with rituals prior to sexual intercourse give us a wider perspective on the complexity of sexual intercourse. Since I have been involved in promoting sex education, this study opened my eyes that considering specific culture of one society in sex education will be more effective than making generalization for all societies.
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Appendix A
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Appendix A


Wiyata, A. Latif
SAMPLE QUESTIONS

These some examples of possible questions are used in interviews and focus group discussion.

A. Sample questions for core participants (married couple/married men and women):
These questions were not strictly used; it flexibly followed the conversation between participants and me.

Marriage
1. When did you get married? What age?
2. How long have you been married? Was it arranged marriage?
3. How did you meet each other?
4. What made you attracted to her/him? Why?
5. How do you feel about your marriage? Are you happy?
6. In your experience, what are women's/men's tasks and responsibilities as husbands/wives? What are their rights?
7. What are the characteristics of a good marital relationship? How to achieve it?
8. What are the characteristics of a good wife/husband?
9. In your opinion, what is regarded well being in marriage? How do you experience it?

Sexuality
1. What according to you is a happy marital sexual relationship?
2. In your opinion, what is the aim of sexual relationship in marriage?
3. Is pleasure important in sexual intimacy?
4. In your opinion, how important pleasure in sexual intercourse? Who deserve to experience the pleasure?
5. In your experience, what can enhance the pleasures of sexual intimacy?
6. Can you recall the most exciting sexual intimacy you have ever had with your husband/wife?
7. How often do you have sexual intimacy?
8. In your opinion, does sexual intercourse contribute to well being in marriage? How does it work?

Appendix B
Rituals on Wedding Night
1. Can you recall your feeling on the wedding night?
2. What did you prepare for your wedding night? Who told you about the preparation?
3. What kind of ritual prior to sexual intimacy did you perform on your wedding night? How did you perform it?
4. Who taught you about that?
5. Who initiated the ritual? Why?
6. How did you feel about the ritual?
7. How did the ritual influence your sexual intimacy with your husband/wife?
8. In your opinion, what will happen if you did not perform the ritual on your wedding night?

Rituals prior to sexual intercourse
1. In your opinion, do married couples have to perform certain rituals before they having sex? Why?
2. What kind of ritual do you do? How do you perform it? How long it takes time?
3. What is the aim of the rituals? (to probe answer about physical health, social health, such as marital happiness, stigma prevention, etc, and spiritual health such as being closer to God)
4. When and where do you learn the rituals? Who taught you?
5. In your experience, who usually initiates the ritual?
6. In your experience, have you ever forgotten the ritual? What happened afterwards?
7. Do the rituals enhance the pleasures of sexual intimacy?
8. In your opinion, what will happen if you did not perform the ritual?
9. How does the ritual mean to you?
10. Are there any changes of the ritual compare to the past? If yes, what kind of changes?
11. Do you think young Madurese can continue this ritual? Why?

B. Sample questions for religious/community leaders.

1. How does Islam/Madurese view about marriage? What its aim?
2. According to Islam/Madurese beliefs, what is the right for wife and husband, and what are their responsibilities and tasks?

3. How does Islam/Madurese view about sexuality within marriage?

4. In Islam/Madurese norms and values, who should initiate sexual intimacy, husband or wife or both?

5. What is the aim of sexual intercourse between husband and wife that should be achieved?

6. According to Islam/Madurese norms and values, is there any ritual which must be done prior to sexual intercourse? Why? Are there any differences between rituals on the wedding night and on daily life?

7. What kind of Islamic/Madurese text which mention that ritual? What does the text mean?

8. In Islam/Madurese norms and values, what kind of consequences will married couples have if they do not perform the ritual?

C. Focus Group Discussion

1. Do the rituals prior the sexual intimacy on wedding night influence the regular rituals?

2. What is the aim of ritual prior to sexual intimacy related to marriage well being? Beside these questions, I also used quotation which I got from participants during in-depth interview as a topic of FGD.
Sex Education

UN ICPD on sexual health

Concept of Sexual Health

Meaning given to sex

Islamic concept of: - marriage - gender

Madurese concept on: - marriage - gender

Rituals prior to sexual intercourse among Madurese Muslim

Rules of Rituals prior to sexual

Rules of rituals prior to sexual

Reasons for having sex

Appendix C