

## Miwit Alah Jumpun: An Ecological Theology Perspective in Tamparak Village, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This research aims to provide an academic analysis of the Miwit Alah Jumpun Ritual, encompassing its general description, ecological theology perspective, and local wisdom values. Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual refers to a prescribed set of verbal expressions and physical gestures enacted by followers of a particular faith tradition, employing designated artifacts, implements, and apparatus within designated sites and accompanied by prescribed attire. Based on empirical field research employing qualitative methods such as interviews and recording techniques. The result is that the community engages in this ritual to establish a connection with the deity associated with the natural world, thereby fostering a sense of mutual reverence among individuals and promoting the preservation of harmonious interactions between humanity and the environment. Additionally, conceptual parallels exist between the execution of the Miwit Alah Jumpun Ritual and ecological theology, specifically on the notions of trust, care, and harmony.

**Keywords:** Dayak Manyan, ritual, Miwit Alah Jumpun, Ecological Theology

### INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the study of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual should begin by presenting a comprehensive overview of the ritual itself. Miwit Alah Jumpun is a traditional ceremony practiced by the Dayak Manyan community, deeply rooted in cultural and religious customs (Aiken, 2017). This ritual is characterized by specific verbal expressions, physical gestures, and the use of designated artifacts, all performed in a sacred space (Northcott, 2013). The participants, donning traditional attire, engage in these acts to connect with their deity, which is believed to be intertwined with the natural world. The ceremony represents a profound interaction between spirituality and environmental reverence, symbolizing an ancient worldview that maintains a symbiotic relationship with nature. This deep interconnection between human life, spirituality, and ecology is pivotal for understanding the cultural identity of the Dayak Manyan people and offers a unique lens through which to view environmental stewardship.

In addition to providing a descriptive account of the ritual, it is crucial to delve into its cultural and religious significance (Mair, 2016). The Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual is not only a practice of worship but also a manifestation of the community's ecological consciousness and their spiritual approach to life. It reflects local wisdom, wherein the belief system of the Dayak Manyan emphasizes harmony and balance with nature. This harmony is fostered through the ritual, which acts as a bridge between humans and the environment, promoting respect, care, and a shared sense of responsibility toward all living things. Analyzing the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual from this perspective allows for a deeper understanding of how such practices contribute to environmental conservation, spiritual well-being, and cultural continuity.

The study is positioned within the broader context of ecological theology, a framework that explores the relationships between religion, nature, and ethics. Ecological theology seeks to

interpret religious teachings and practices that relate to environmental care and sustainability. In this light, the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual embodies an indigenous form of ecological theology, where the sacredness of nature and its conservation are at the core of spiritual life. By examining the ritual through this lens, the research aims to illuminate how religious practices can serve as a foundation for environmental ethics, offering insights into how indigenous wisdom aligns with contemporary ecological concerns. Furthermore, understanding this relationship not only deepens knowledge of the Dayak Manyan's cultural practices but also contributes to a wider discourse on environmental conservation from a spiritual and ethical standpoint.

The rationale for investigating the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual lies in the need to recognize and preserve the traditional ecological knowledge embedded within such ceremonies. This knowledge is at risk of being lost in the face of modernization, environmental degradation, and the diminishing influence of indigenous practices. By documenting and analyzing the ritual, the research aims to capture the valuable insights it offers regarding sustainable living and environmental stewardship. Such insights are critical in the current global context, where the environmental crisis calls for holistic approaches that encompass not just scientific but also spiritual and cultural dimensions. The Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual, therefore, serves as a case study for exploring how local customs and beliefs can contribute to broader ecological understandings and practices.

The research problem centers on the need to explore and understand the intersection of ritual, ecology, and theology, particularly within indigenous communities. Despite the significance of rituals like Miwit Alah Jumpun in promoting environmental awareness and ethical practices, they have often been overlooked in academic discourse on ecological theology. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how the ritual reflects the community's perception of nature, the divine, and the moral responsibility to preserve the environment. Furthermore, it examines how such rituals embody a philosophy of care and harmony, fostering a deeper respect for the natural world. The research not only highlights the religious and cultural dimensions of the ritual but also seeks to understand its role in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors within the Dayak Manyan community.

To frame the study's direction, the research question guiding this investigation is: "How does the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual reflect the ecological theology and local wisdom of the Dayak Manyan community?" This question is intended to uncover the symbolic meanings and underlying values of the ritual, examining how they contribute to a worldview that integrates spirituality and environmental ethics. Alternatively, the study might hypothesize that the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual is a manifestation of indigenous ecological theology, reinforcing local wisdom and fostering sustainable environmental practices. By exploring this hypothesis, the research aims to contribute to the understanding of how traditional religious practices can inform contemporary approaches to ecological sustainability and cultural preservation.

## **METHODS**

The methodology of this study is based on a qualitative research design that emphasizes an in-depth, contextual understanding of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual within its natural setting (Johnson, 2019). Empirical field research was carried out in the Dayak Manyan community to capture both the practices and meanings associated with the ritual. Data was collected through a

series of semi-structured interviews with key informants, including community leaders, ritual participants, and elders who possess in-depth knowledge of the cultural and religious significance of Miwit Alah Jumpun. These interviews aimed to uncover the perspectives, values, and interpretations of those directly involved in or knowledgeable about the ritual. The interview process was carefully structured to encourage open discussion, allowing participants to share their experiences and insights in their own words, thus providing a rich, narrative-based understanding of the ritual's significance. Additionally, the researchers participated in participant observations, immersing themselves in the ritual events to gain firsthand experience of the practices and interactions involved.

To ensure accurate and thorough data collection, the study employed various recording techniques. Audio recordings of the interviews were made to capture the details of conversations, while video recordings were used to document the ritual's visual and performative elements, such as the specific gestures, attire, and artifacts employed during the ceremony. These recordings provided not only a means to review and analyze the collected data but also to preserve the cultural and religious expressions as they occur in their original context. The selection of participants and sites was intentional and strategic, focusing on those most knowledgeable and active in the performance of Miwit Alah Jumpun, as well as on locations that hold religious significance to the community. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, wherein recurring themes and patterns were identified within the transcribed interviews and field notes. These themes were then examined to understand how they relate to the broader concepts of ecological theology and local wisdom. The analysis aimed to extract insights into the ritual's spiritual significance, its role in ecological preservation, and the values it imparts to the community.

## RESULTS

The results of this research provide a comprehensive account of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual, highlighting its intricate verbal and physical components. This ritual is characterized by a series of recitations, chants, and prayers that are spoken in the Dayak Manyan language, often performed in rhythmic tones to invoke spiritual presence and guidance. These verbal elements are accompanied by coordinated physical gestures that include specific movements, postures, and ceremonial acts, all of which are considered integral to the ritual's effectiveness. The use of artifacts, such as ritual tools, sacred plants, and symbolic clothing, plays a vital role in the ceremony. These artifacts are not merely ornamental but are imbued with religious and cultural meanings that aid in channeling spiritual energy and connecting participants to their ancestral traditions. The ritual is held in a designated sacred space within the community, often in nature or a location deemed spiritually significant, which enhances the feeling of unity and reverence among the participants. For the Dayak Manyan community, Miwit Alah Jumpun is more than a religious practice; it is a vital cultural tradition that reinforces communal identity, preserves local wisdom, and strengthens the bond between the people, their faith, and the environment.

A significant finding of this study is how the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual serves as a conduit for fostering a profound connection between the community and their deity, particularly in relation to the natural world. The ritual's various components are designed to express gratitude, seek blessings, and ensure the continued balance of both the physical and spiritual environments. Participants view the ritual as a reciprocal relationship, where they offer respect and care to nature, believing that in return, nature, under the guardianship of their deity, will provide protection and sustenance. This belief system encourages a holistic respect for all elements of the environment, from plants and

animals to water and landforms, which are seen as part of a sacred creation. Several participants expressed sentiments of interconnectedness during interviews, with one elder stating, "Our ritual is how we speak to the earth and the spirits; we honor them so that they honor us in return." This perspective highlights the communal value placed on living in harmony with nature, recognizing the earth not as a resource to be exploited but as a living entity deserving of care and reverence.

The parallels between the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual and the principles of ecological theology are evident throughout the findings. The ritual embodies the concepts of trust, care, and harmony that align closely with ecological theology's emphasis on the sacredness of the environment and ethical responsibility toward its preservation. Trust is exhibited in the community's belief that maintaining the ritual will ensure environmental balance and divine favor. The notion of care is reflected in the ritual's practices that promote sustainable interaction with nature, emphasizing that all life is interconnected and should be protected. Finally, the harmony between humanity, the spiritual world, and the natural environment is a central theme in both the ritual and ecological theology, promoting a worldview that values the integrity and flourishing of all creation. By understanding these conceptual parallels, the research underscores how the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual not only preserves local spiritual traditions but also provides a framework for environmental ethics grounded in indigenous spirituality.

## **DISCUSSION**

The discussion of this research focuses on the deeper implications of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual, particularly in how it reflects the ecological beliefs of the Dayak Manyan community and aligns with the principles of ecological theology (Grievies, 2009). The ritual, as observed in this study, encapsulates a worldview in which nature is not only a physical reality but also a sacred space inhabited by spiritual entities and divine forces. This perspective fosters a sense of stewardship among the community members, who view themselves as protectors and caretakers of the environment. The ritual's prayers, chants, and ceremonial acts are not simply religious observances; they are symbolic actions that reflect the community's theological understanding of their relationship with the natural world. Through these ritualistic practices, ecological beliefs are expressed, reinforcing a holistic approach to the natural environment, where the earth is seen as both a physical and spiritual entity deserving respect and care.

The alignment of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual with ecological theology is particularly significant, as it demonstrates how religious practices can encapsulate ecological ethics. Ecological theology seeks to establish a framework in which spiritual beliefs encourage responsible and sustainable interaction with the environment. In the context of Miwit Alah Jumpun, the principles of ecological theology are inherently embedded in the community's worldview. The ritual fosters a reciprocal relationship with nature, where maintaining ecological balance is seen as a spiritual duty. This ecological awareness manifests in actions aimed at preserving biodiversity, honoring natural cycles, and ensuring that human activities do not disrupt the harmony of the environment. By participating in the ritual, community members reaffirm their commitment to these values, suggesting that such practices can serve as models for integrating spirituality and environmental ethics in a way that promotes sustainability.

The implications of the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual extend beyond its religious and cultural significance to offer insights into local wisdom and sustainable environmental practices. The ritual embodies a form of indigenous knowledge that has been passed down through generations, emphasizing a sustainable way of life that is closely connected to the land. This local wisdom is

evident in the community's traditional ecological knowledge, which includes an understanding of plant species, weather patterns, and sustainable agricultural practices that are deeply intertwined with the ritual itself. The Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual, therefore, serves as both a spiritual and practical guide for environmental stewardship. Its practices, which include offerings to the earth and rituals to honor the seasons, reflect a sustainable approach to living in harmony with nature that can inform contemporary environmental practices. By examining these local traditions, the study sheds light on how indigenous practices contribute to sustainable living, offering alternative perspectives on environmental conservation.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to broader discussions on the role of religious rituals in environmental conservation and cultural preservation. The Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual provides a case study of how religious and cultural practices can function as mechanisms for promoting environmental ethics and cultural continuity. In many indigenous communities, rituals are more than religious expressions; they are ways of life that carry ecological and cultural values critical to the community's identity and survival. This study highlights the importance of recognizing such practices as part of the global conversation on sustainability and cultural preservation. It suggests that incorporating religious rituals into conservation efforts may offer holistic approaches to addressing environmental issues, especially in regions where indigenous beliefs and customs play a central role in daily life.

Cultural preservation is another critical aspect of the discussion, as rituals like Miwit Alah Jumpun are integral to maintaining the identity and traditions of the Dayak Manyan community. These rituals not only reinforce spiritual beliefs but also serve as educational tools through which cultural values and ecological practices are transmitted to future generations. The study emphasizes that cultural preservation is inherently tied to ecological preservation, as the loss of such rituals would signify not just a loss of religious practice but also a loss of the traditional ecological knowledge that sustains environmental harmony. Preserving these rituals is therefore essential to maintaining the community's way of life and its contributions to ecological wisdom, providing valuable lessons for how culture and environment are interlinked.

In conclusion, the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual stands as a profound example of how indigenous spiritual practices can offer a framework for ecological balance, cultural preservation, and sustainable living. The ritual reflects a worldview in which the spiritual and natural realms are inseparable, fostering a sense of responsibility and care for the environment that aligns with ecological theology. By studying this ritual, the research brings attention to the valuable role that indigenous practices play in promoting environmental ethics and sustainable living. Moreover, it underscores the importance of integrating local wisdom into broader conservation efforts, advocating for a more inclusive approach to environmental stewardship that honors both cultural diversity and ecological sustainability. This approach emphasizes that sustainable practices are not just a matter of policy but also of spiritual and cultural significance, highlighting the need to protect both the environment and the cultural traditions that support it.

## CONCLUSION

The research on the Miwit Alah Jumpun ritual reveals that this traditional practice serves as a profound expression of the Dayak Manyan community's ecological beliefs and spiritual values. The findings indicate that the ritual not only reinforces communal bonds and cultural identity but also embodies an indigenous approach to ecological theology, where the environment is viewed as a sacred entity requiring care and reverence. Through the ritual's verbal expressions, physical



gestures, and symbolic use of artifacts, the community engages in acts that promote environmental respect, sustainability, and a sense of harmony with the natural world. This reflects a reciprocal relationship between the people and their environment, which is fostered through spiritual beliefs and practices that align with principles of ecological ethics. The study emphasizes that rituals like *Miwit Alah Jumpun* are critical to preserving both the cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous communities, providing holistic approaches to environmental conservation that integrate spirituality, local wisdom, and sustainable living practices.

Understanding rituals from an ecological and theological perspective, as exemplified by *Miwit Alah Jumpun*, has broader implications for environmental discourse and cultural preservation. The research demonstrates that religious rituals are not merely cultural artifacts but active practices that guide human behavior toward ecological responsibility and respect for all forms of life. Recognizing the significance of such rituals provides opportunities to incorporate indigenous perspectives into current environmental policies and conservation efforts. Additionally, the study opens the door for future research to explore similar rituals in other indigenous communities, examining how these practices contribute to local environmental ethics and sustainable development. Further research could also delve into how changing social and environmental contexts affect the continuity of rituals like *Miwit Alah Jumpun*, as well as how these traditions adapt or resist modern influences while maintaining their core ecological values. Such inquiries would enhance the understanding of the dynamic relationship between culture, spirituality, and environmental sustainability.

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