

Research Article

Spiritual Efforts in Coping With Disasters in The Berat Sengkala Ritual: A Perspective By Roland Barthes

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Abstract: The *Berat Sengkala* tradition is a customary ritual practiced by the community of Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java, as a form of spiritual endeavor in response to calamities, particularly natural disasters, crop failures, and agricultural pest infestations. This ritual contains a system of symbols that represents the relationship between humans, nature, God, and ancestors; however, its symbolic meanings have not been extensively examined. This study aims to reveal the symbolic meanings embedded in the ritual while also understanding the community's form of spiritual endeavor in confronting calamities through the semiotic perspective of Roland Barthes. This research employed a qualitative approach using an ethnographic method. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with community elders and local residents, and documentation of the ritual process, which were then analyzed using Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. The findings indicate that holy water, agricultural produce offerings, and collective prayers form a system of signs representing life, divine protection, ecological awareness, gratitude, social solidarity, and respect for ancestors. At the level of myth, the ritual reinforces the collective belief that maintaining a harmonious relationship among humans, nature, God, and ancestors constitutes a form of spiritual endeavor in dealing with calamities and ensuring the continuity of community life. These calamities include natural disasters such as landslides, crop failures, and attacks by plant pests, including insects, rats, and birds, which can reduce agricultural productivity and ultimately lead to harvest failure, while simultaneously preserving the sustainability of community life.

Keywords: Berat Sengkala; Calamity; Divine Protection; Roland Barthes' Semiotics; Spiritual Endeavor.

1. Introduction

The *Berat Sengkala* tradition is one of the cultural heritages that continues to be preserved by the people of Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java. The continuity of this tradition demonstrates that customary rituals still occupy an important position in the social and spiritual life of the local community.

Within indigenous communities, rituals cannot be understood merely as ceremonial activities but rather as tangible manifestations of systems of values and knowledge that are maintained and transmitted through everyday life (Sulo, Lukman, & Iswary, 2023). Various traditions in Indonesia illustrate that rituals serve as a form of spiritual endeavor to cope with life's uncertainties rather than simply expressing resignation to circumstances (Syahrani, Asrina, & Yusriani, 2022). Consequently, rituals function as a medium for maintaining harmonious relationships among humans, nature, and supernatural forces (Indiani & Andriyani, 2024) Saputra & Sofa (2026). From the perspective of indigenous communities, calamities such as diseases, natural disasters, crop failures, and ecological disturbances are not perceived solely as material events but are also interpreted as indications of disrupted cosmic balance (Yustian et al., 2022). Addressing such disturbances cannot rely exclusively on technical approaches but also requires symbolic actions through rituals as an effort to restore the order of life (Affifah & Yudha, 2024).

Customary rituals also function as sacred spaces for constructing collective systems of meaning and restoring social order. Through rituals, communities not only offer prayers but also reaffirm the norms, expectations, and solidarity that constitute the foundation of

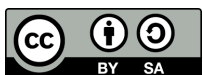
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communal life (Kusuma, 2024). One concrete example of this practice is the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, which is held every month of *Sura* as part of the *Merti Desa* or *Rumat Bumi* tradition in Lamuk Village. According to Pariaman (2025), a village elder, this ritual represents both a form of respect for ancestors and a spiritual endeavor to seek the preservation of the village's water sources and protection from various forms of misfortune.

Numerous studies have examined rituals from different academic perspectives. Sinaga and Tampake (2023) investigated the function of social cohesion in the *Saur Matua* ritual of the Toba Batak community. Umanailo (2023) examined the symbolism of traditional clothing on Buru Island as a representation of cultural hierarchy. Rindiani et al. (2023) employed a Peircean semiotic approach to uncover the symbolic meanings embedded in the *Appassili Bunting* tradition in Makassar. Another study conducted by Sholikha (2022) explored communication within traditional Javanese wedding ceremonies, while Kusuma and Nurhayati (2019) applied Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to the *Otonan* ritual in Bali. These studies demonstrate that rituals possess rich and complex symbolic dimensions. Nevertheless, studies that position rituals as forms of spiritual responses to calamities, including natural disasters such as landslides, crop failures, and attacks by plant pests such as insects, rats, and birds that reduce productivity and eventually lead to harvest failure, remain relatively limited. This condition constitutes the research gap and serves as the primary rationale for the present study.

This ritual was selected as the object of study not merely because of its uniqueness or continuity but because it represents the way communities interpret, respond to, and negotiate the relationships among humans, nature, God, and calamities, including natural disasters such as landslides, crop failures, and attacks by plant pests such as insects, rats, and birds that reduce agricultural productivity and ultimately result in harvest failure. Therefore, this study is based on the fundamental question of how the people of Lamuk Village interpret these calamities and seek to restore cosmic balance through ritual practices that are rich in symbolic meanings.

To reveal the symbolic meanings embedded in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, a semiotic approach is considered a relevant theoretical foundation. Semiotics examines systems of signs and the ways in which signs construct and communicate meaning within society (Viranti & Purnomo, 2025). From this perspective, rituals can be understood as cultural texts composed of various signs, symbols, and myths that convey collective messages and spiritual values (Putra, 2023).

Roland Barthes' semiotic approach provides an analytical framework that enables rituals to be interpreted as cultural practices that construct systems of meaning through multiple levels of signification, in which myths function as forms of ideology operating behind cultural signs (Barthes, 1967). For Barthes, myths are not understood as fictional stories but rather as systems of communication that shape how societies perceive and interpret cultural realities (Barthes, 1972). In the context of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, symbols such as water collected from seven springs, agricultural processions, and communal prayers are not merely ritual elements but also constitute cultural myths that represent both religious values and the ecological consciousness of the people of Lamuk Village.

The application of Barthes' approach is important because it explains how communities construct the meaning of calamities through ritual symbols that continue to be practiced across generations. These symbols do not remain at the level of literal meaning but develop into cultural narratives that strengthen collective identity and community spirituality (Mulyaden, 2021). Furthermore, this approach demonstrates that symbolic meanings are continuously reproduced through social practices. Consequently, rituals function not only as cultural heritage but also as cultural strategies for responding to change and contemporary challenges (Wasilah & Rengganis, 2020).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to uncover the symbolic meanings embedded in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual as a form of the spiritual endeavor undertaken by the people of Lamuk Village in confronting calamities. Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is employed to interpret the symbols and myths present in each stage of the ritual process, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how indigenous communities represent the relationship among humans, nature, and God through cultural practices transmitted from one generation to another (Indiani & Andriyani, 2024).

Through this study, a more comprehensive understanding of local cultural practices as living systems of meaning within society is expected to emerge. In addition to contributing to cultural and semiotic studies, this research demonstrates that the cultural heritage and spirituality of indigenous communities remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges. The *Berat Sengkala* ritual serves as evidence that local communities are capable of preserving their cultural wisdom while simultaneously strengthening social resilience through symbolic practices that continue to be inherited and collectively interpreted.

2. Literature Review

Ritual as a Representation of Collective Spirituality

Ritual is not merely understood as a series of ceremonial activities but also as a cultural system that represents the values, norms, beliefs, and worldview of a particular society (Putra, 2023). Through ritual practices, communities establish and maintain harmonious relationships with God, nature, and their ancestors while simultaneously strengthening social solidarity among their members (Wulandari & Siregar, 2020). Ritual functions as a cultural mechanism that preserves social cohesion while continuously transmitting local wisdom across generations (Wibowo, 2021). It also serves as a symbolic space in which communities express and interpret various life experiences, ranging from gratitude and hopes for prosperity to responses to calamities and different forms of uncertainty (Budi, 2024).

The *Berat Sengkala* ritual in Lamuk Village clearly demonstrates this function as a form of the community's collective spiritual endeavor in responding to calamities. This tradition reflects the belief that the balance among humans, nature, and God must be continuously maintained through symbolic actions inherited from previous generations. The presence of holy water collected from seven springs, agricultural products, communal prayers, and the participation of the entire community indicates that the ritual is not only a religious expression but also a cultural medium through which collective meanings regarding safety, survival, and environmental sustainability are constructed. Therefore, the *Berat Sengkala* ritual can be understood as a cultural institution that integrates spirituality, collective identity, and the social resilience of indigenous communities into a single cultural practice that continues to be reproduced from one generation to the next.

Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Semiotics is the study of signs and the process of meaning construction within social and cultural life (Barthes, 1964). Every sign possesses the ability to generate meanings that extend beyond its literal form because the process of signification is always influenced by cultural contexts and the collective experiences of society (Nitiasih, 2018). Roland Barthes introduced the concept of multiple levels of signification, consisting of denotation, connotation, and myth as a second-order system of signification (Barthes, 1964). Signs are never neutral because they always contain social constructions that shape the way communities understand reality (Barthes, 1972). Myth is understood not as a fictional narrative but as a communication system that naturalizes values, beliefs, and ideologies, making them appear normal, natural, and unquestionable within society (Barthes, 1972). Barthes' semiotic framework enables researchers to uncover the ideological layers of meaning hidden behind cultural symbols (Mulyaden, 2021).

Barthes also conceptualized culture as a system of signs that is continuously produced and reproduced through social practices (Barthes, 1967). Every cultural object, including ritual practices, conveys meaning not only at the denotative level but also through connotations that eventually develop into cultural myths (Barthes, 1964). Barthes' semiotic approach is particularly relevant for analyzing traditional rituals because each ritual element contains signs that communicate meanings extending beyond their physical manifestations (Marcella & Azeharie, 2024). In the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, holy water from seven springs, agricultural products, customary processions, and communal prayers function not merely as ritual components but also as a system of signs representing divine protection, respect for ancestors, ecological balance, and social solidarity. Through the analytical framework of denotation, connotation, and myth, these symbols can be interpreted as representations of the Lamuk community's worldview regarding the relationship between humans, God, and nature.

Symbolism in Traditional Rituals

Traditional rituals are composed of various symbols that function as a medium for expressing shared values, belief systems, and the cultural identity of a community (Putri & Truna, 2024). Ritual symbols possess meanings that extend far beyond their physical forms because they represent the relationship between humans, nature, and transcendent reality (Pramudita & Hidayah, 2021). Symbols in traditional rituals constitute a system of cultural communication through which societies transmit values, beliefs, and knowledge to subsequent generations (Nur Muharromah et al., 2024). The meanings of symbols cannot be understood independently of the social and cultural contexts in which they originate because the process of meaning-making develops through collective experiences that are continuously maintained through social practices (Kusuma & Nurhayati, 2019).

From Barthes' semiotic perspective, ritual symbols are cultural signs that always contain denotative, connotative, and mythological layers of meaning (Barthes, 1964). Every symbol not only represents a particular object but also shapes the way communities understand the world through a system of values that has become naturalized within society (Barthes, 1967). In the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, elements such as water from seven springs, agricultural products, ritual processions, and communal prayers form an interconnected system of signs representing prosperity, protection, gratitude, and the harmony of life. These symbols function not merely as ritual attributes but also as representations of the collective worldview of the Lamuk community regarding the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and God. Symbols in Indonesian traditional rituals also function as social representations that reinforce collective identity while reproducing the cultural values embedded within society (Nangoy & Kresna, 2025). Therefore, the symbolic dimension of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual constitutes an important theoretical foundation for explaining how cultural meanings and collective spirituality are constructed, maintained, and transmitted through every stage of the ritual process.

3. Proposed Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using an ethnographic approach and Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as the primary analytical framework. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to develop an in-depth understanding of the meanings underlying cultural practices, particularly those associated with the *Berat Sengkala* ritual (Moleong, 2019). Meanwhile, the ethnographic approach was applied to examine cultural practices through the experiences, actions, beliefs, and worldviews of the community within their social context (Spradley, 2016). Through this approach, the study not only described the ritual process but also explored the symbolic and spiritual meanings embedded in the cultural practices of the indigenous community.

The research was conducted in Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro District, Wonosobo Regency. This location was selected because the local community continues to preserve the *Berat Sengkala* ritual as an inherited cultural tradition that remains actively practiced today. In addition to its rich symbolic characteristics, the ritual reflects the continuity of spiritual values that are consistently transmitted and practiced by the community, making it a relevant setting for examining symbolic meanings from the perspective of cultural semiotics.

The research participants consisted of a traditional leader, Pariaman, who serves as the village elder, and members of the community who actively participated in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involved choosing participants based on their level of involvement in the ritual process and their understanding of the symbolic meanings embedded within it (Creswell, 2014). This selection strategy was expected to generate comprehensive and in-depth data that aligned with the objectives of the study.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was employed to obtain a direct understanding of the ritual process, symbolic actions, expressions, and interactions that occurred throughout the ceremony. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of the participants regarding the symbolic meanings of the ritual.

Documentation was also utilized to record the ritual process and provide supporting evidence for the observational and interview data (Wibiyanto et al., 2022).

Data analysis was conducted using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory by conceptualizing the ritual as a system of signs containing cultural meanings. The analytical process began with the transcription of interview data, followed by coding to identify the signifiers and signified elements represented within each ritual symbol. These signs were subsequently analyzed through the processes of denotation and connotation until they formed myths as a second-order system of signification in accordance with Barthes' semiotic framework (Barthes, 1964). The analysis was carried out thematically to reveal how the people of Lamuk Village interpret calamities, construct spiritual endeavors, and represent the relationship among humans, nature, and God through the symbols embedded within the *Berat Sengkala* ritual. Consequently, this study not only described the external characteristics of the ritual but also explained the cultural meanings and ideological dimensions reproduced through the symbolic practices of the indigenous community.

4. Result And Discussion

Geographical, Social, and Cultural Conditions of Lamuk Village

Lamuk Village is one of the villages located in Kaliwiro District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java Province. Geographically, the village is approximately 23 kilometers from the center of Wonosobo Regency, with a travel time of around 38 minutes by motor vehicle. Meanwhile, the distance between Lamuk Village and Semarang, the capital city of Central Java Province, is approximately 122 kilometers, with a travel time of about three hours. This geographical location places Lamuk Village within a rural area that is relatively accessible while still maintaining the mountainous environmental characteristics that distinguish the Wonosobo region.

Topographically, Lamuk Village is characterized by a hilly landscape with considerable variations in elevation. The northern part of the village is situated at a higher elevation than the southern area. This condition corresponds to the general characteristics of Wonosobo Regency, which is dominated by hilly and mountainous terrain with slope gradients ranging from 15% to 40%. These geographical characteristics not only shape land-use patterns but also influence settlement patterns, agricultural activities, and the social dynamics of the local community.

Most residents of Lamuk Village depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods. In addition to farming, community members also work as livestock breeders, laborers, traders, and, to a lesser extent, civil servants. From a religious perspective, the majority of the population practices Islam, resulting in the integration of Islamic values with local traditions and the formation of a distinctive socio-cultural character. This combination of religious and cultural values has become one of the key factors supporting the preservation of various customary traditions that continue to be practiced today.

One of the traditions that has been preserved is the *Berat Sengkala* ritual. For the people of Lamuk Village, this ritual is not merely understood as a form of cultural heritage but also as an element of collective identity that has been passed down from generation to generation. Based on an interview with Mr. Pariaman (73 years old), an elder of Lamuk Village, conducted on February 10, 2025, the *Berat Sengkala* tradition has been practiced since the time of the ancestors, although its origins have never been documented in written form. According to him, the implementation of the ritual represents both an expression of respect for the ancestors and an effort to preserve a cultural heritage believed to possess sacred values and provide protection for the village community.

This perspective was reinforced by Mr. Atmo (49 years old), one of the residents of Lamuk Village, who was interviewed on the same date. According to him, the *Berat Sengkala* ritual is a cultural legacy that must continue to be preserved as a form of respect for the ancestors and an expression of gratitude to God Almighty. To this day, the ritual continues to be held consistently every *Sura* in the Javanese calendar as part of the *Merti Desa* or *Ruwat Bumi* ceremony, which generally coincides with August in the Gregorian calendar.

Although no written sources have been identified to explain the exact origins of the *Berat Sengkala* tradition, the consistency of information obtained from village elders and community members indicates that the tradition has been transmitted through an ongoing oral tradition. The triangulation of interview findings and field observations demonstrates that the *Berat Sengkala* ritual is not merely practiced as an annual event but has become an integral part of the community's collective memory, representing the continuity of historical, cultural, and spiritual values in the lives of the people of Lamuk Village. This social and cultural context provides an important foundation for understanding the symbolic meanings embedded in each stage of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Semiotic Analysis of the *Berat Sengkala* Ritual Procession in Lamuk Village

The procession of collecting holy water from seven springs constitutes both the initial stage and the central component of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual in Lamuk Village. For the local community, this procession is not merely understood as the act of collecting water from several springs but rather as a symbolic practice that represents the spiritual relationship among humans, nature, ancestors, and God. From the perspective of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, every element involved in the procession functions as a system of signs that produces multiple layers of meaning, beginning with denotation, developing into connotation, and ultimately forming myths as a second-order system of signification (Barthes, 1964; Barthes, 1972; Marcella & Azeharie, 2024; Haqi & Khusyairi, 2025).

At the denotative level, the procession begins with the collection of water from seven springs located in the seven hamlets of Lamuk Village, namely Krajan, Kaliwungu, Talun Yali, Gunung Sari, Kaligawe, Kedung Bunder, and Gunung Jenggot. The collected water is subsequently stored in the village hall for seven days before being carried to the ritual site together with the community's agricultural products. At this first level of meaning, water is understood as a natural resource that serves as a source of life, while the number seven simply refers to the number of springs involved in the ritual process. This form of signification remains denotative because it is directly associated with observable physical reality (Marcella & Azeharie, 2024).

However, the people of Lamuk Village do not perceive water solely as a natural resource. Based on interviews with Pariaman, the village elder, water collected from the seven springs is interpreted as a symbol of *panguripan*, or life, which represents the source of the community's continuity and survival. Likewise, the number seven (*pitu*) is interpreted as *pitulungan*, meaning divine assistance from God Almighty. Therefore, the collection of water from seven springs is not intended merely to fulfill the practical requirements of the ritual but also functions as a collective supplication for protection, safety, and harmony. In this context, the community has assigned new meanings that transcend the physical function of water, transforming it into a cultural sign enriched with spiritual values and giving rise to connotative meaning (Haqi & Khusyairi, 2025).

The process of collecting water is carried out specifically at springs that are believed to possess historical and spiritual significance. One example is Talun Yali Spring, which, according to Mr. Atmo (49 years old), a resident of Lamuk Village, once served as a temporary resting place for Prince Diponegoro and his followers during their resistance against the colonial government. In contrast, Kaligawe Spring is believed to have been the meditation site of Kyai Gawe, who prayed for the safety and well-being of the community during the colonial period. These beliefs transform the springs from ordinary water sources into cultural spaces that preserve the collective memory of the community. From Barthes' perspective (1972), this local history undergoes a process of transformation into cultural connotation, causing the springs to be understood not only through their ecological functions but also as symbols of historical continuity, spirituality, and the legitimacy of traditions inherited across generations.

Connotative meaning is also evident in the practice of storing the holy water in the village hall for seven days before the main ritual takes place. At the denotative level, this storage period represents a technical stage within the ritual sequence. However, from the cultural perspective of the Lamuk community, this practice symbolizes a process of purification and spiritual preparation before the water is incorporated into the central ceremony. Storing the water for seven days represents the community's spiritual readiness to enter a sacred space, demonstrating that the ritual extends beyond a ceremonial event and functions as a process of purifying collective intentions. The symbolic meaning of an action does not reside in its

physical form but rather in the cultural constructions established and maintained through continuous social practices (Zakaria et al., 2024).

Myth, according to Barthes (1972), represents a second-order system of signification that naturalizes cultural values, allowing them to be accepted as normal and unquestionable. Within the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, the myth constructed by the people of Lamuk is the belief that the balance among humans, nature, and God can only be preserved through respect for the sources of life inherited from previous generations. Consequently, water from the seven springs is no longer understood merely as water but has been transformed into a representation of life, blessings, divine protection, and ecological sustainability. This myth continues to be reproduced through the annual implementation of the ritual and has become an inseparable component of the community's cultural identity.

The construction of this myth also illustrates how the people of Lamuk perceive nature not as an object to be exploited but as an integral component of life that must be protected and preserved. Symbols within Javanese traditions not only convey religious meanings but also serve as instruments for transmitting values related to environmental conservation (Nurzanah & Widiastuti, 2022). Cultural symbols in Javanese traditions function as systems of signs that reproduce the community's worldview through collective cultural practices that are continuously inherited across generations (Widagdo et al., 2025).

Every cultural practice functions as a system of signs that generates meaning through the interaction among objects, social experiences, and community ideologies (Barthes, 1967). The collection of holy water therefore serves not only as a symbol of a request for divine protection but also as a representation of the cultural ideology of the Lamuk community, which considers environmental preservation to be a prerequisite for achieving a peaceful and prosperous life. Through the ritual, this ideology becomes naturalized and eventually accepted as a cultural truth that must be continuously maintained and reproduced (Barthes, 1972).

A symbol acquires its interpretive power when it is collectively accepted and continuously reproduced within social life (Haqi & Khusyairi, 2025). Cultural meanings do not naturally adhere to objects but are constructed through an ongoing process of signification that develops within social practices (Viranti & Purnomo, 2025).



Figure 1. Collection of Holy Water during the Berat Sengkala Ritual in Lamuk Village.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 16, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.



Figure 2. The Water Purification Process at the Lamuk Village Hall.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 23, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.

After the procession of collecting the sacred water from the seven springs had been completed, the *Berat Sengkala* ritual continued with a procession of agricultural produce arranged in the form of a *gunungan* (mountain-shaped structure) or cone. The *gunungan* consisted of various agricultural commodities, including mustard greens, carrots, chilies, tomatoes, eggplants, long beans, cassava, bananas, and various other fruits and vegetables harvested by the people of Lamuk Village. All agricultural products were collectively gathered through mutual cooperation by residents from each hamlet and then assembled into a unified arrangement before being paraded to the village square together with the sacred water. After the communal prayer had been completed, all of the agricultural produce was distributed among community members as a symbol of togetherness, blessings, and gratitude for the abundance of sustenance bestowed by Almighty God.

Based on interviews with Mr. Atmo (49 years old), a resident of Lamuk Village, the *gunungan* procession was not merely intended to showcase the community's harvest but also served as an expression of collective gratitude for the successful planting season that had been completed. The distribution of agricultural products to all residents after the ritual procession was also understood as a form of sharing blessings so that the entire community could partake in the harvest granted by God. This explanation indicates that the *gunungan* of agricultural produce possesses a social function that extends beyond its economic value, serving as a medium for strengthening solidarity, fostering social relationships, and reinforcing the community's collective identity as an agrarian society whose livelihood depends upon harmony with nature.

The *gunungan* of agricultural produce can be understood as a system of signs that generates meaning through several levels of signification. Every sign always consists of a relationship between the signifier and the signified, which subsequently develops from denotative meaning to connotative meaning and ultimately forms myth as a second-order system of signification (Barthes, 1972). Therefore, the *gunungan* of agricultural produce in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual cannot be understood merely as an arrangement of various agricultural products but rather as a cultural construct that contains spiritual, ecological, and social values continuously reproduced through the ritual practices of the Lamuk community.

At the denotative level, the *gunungan* is an arrangement of harvested crops shaped into a cone and paraded together with the sacred water to the ritual site. All commodities used in the arrangement originate from the community's own agricultural production, making the *gunungan* a direct representation of the agrarian economy of Lamuk Village. The upward-pointing conical shape displays various types of crops arranged neatly and harmoniously. After the prayer procession is completed, all agricultural products are distributed to the community without distinction based on social status or economic background. At this first level of meaning, the *gunungan* is understood as a physical object consisting of agricultural products arranged for ritual purposes. Denotative meaning remains literal and does not yet involve broader cultural constructions (Barthes, 1964).

Nevertheless, the meaning of the *gunungan* does not end with its physical form. At the connotative level, the *gunungan* becomes a symbol of the community's gratitude for a successful harvest while simultaneously representing the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. The people of Lamuk believe that agricultural products are not obtained solely through human labor but also constitute manifestations of God's generosity expressed through fertile soil, the availability of water, and the order of nature. Consequently, all harvested products are symbolically returned to God through the ritual procession before ultimately being redistributed to the community. From Barthes' perspective (1972), this process demonstrates that a material object has undergone a transformation into a cultural sign carrying religious messages concerning gratitude, human dependence on nature, and recognition of God's authority in sustaining life.

This connotative meaning becomes even stronger when examined through the conical form of the *gunungan*. In Javanese cosmology, an upward-pointing shape is often understood as a representation of the vertical relationship between humans and God while simultaneously symbolizing the horizontal relationship among fellow human beings (Pramudito, S. F., & Purnomo, S. H., 2025). The broad base of the *gunungan* symbolizes collective community life, whereas its peak, which points upward, represents spiritual orientation toward the Creator. Thus, the structure of the *gunungan* serves not only an aesthetic function but also symbolizes the interconnectedness of the social, ecological, and religious dimensions of community life.

Forms and arrangements within Javanese traditions contain philosophical messages regarding the relationship between humans, nature, and God rather than merely fulfilling ceremonial functions (Nurzanah & Widiastuti, 2022).

In addition to its form, the diversity of agricultural products arranged within the *gunungan* also carries profound symbolic meanings. Rice, vegetables, fruits, and various other agricultural commodities represent the diversity of life's resources bestowed upon the community by God. The unification of various types of harvests within a single *gunungan* demonstrates that prosperity is not understood as an individual possession but rather as the collective achievement of the entire village community. Consequently, the *gunungan* becomes a representation of social solidarity established through cooperation in cultivating the land, preserving water sources, and maintaining traditions inherited from ancestors.

The distribution of agricultural produce to the community after the communal prayer also possesses significant connotative meaning. Empirically, this distribution marks the conclusion of the procession. However, from a semiotic perspective, this act becomes a symbol of the redistribution of blessings received by all members of the community without distinguishing social status. The value being constructed does not lie in the quantity of agricultural products received by each individual but rather in the belief that blessings should be enjoyed collectively. Through this process, the *Berat Sengkala* ritual constructs the understanding that prosperity acquires meaning only when it is shared with others. Cultural symbols function as mechanisms that internalize moral values into the social life of the community (Pramudito & Purnomo, 2025).

The connotations attached to the *gunungan* of agricultural produce do not emerge naturally but are instead shaped through cultural experiences transmitted from one generation to the next. The people of Lamuk collectively attribute meaning to harvested products as symbols of God's blessings, so the process of parading and distributing them is understood as a form of honoring the source of life. Within this framework, the *gunungan* is no longer viewed merely as a collection of fruits and vegetables but has been transformed into a cultural sign representing religious consciousness, the ethics of sharing, environmental preservation, and social solidarity. Cultural signs always generate meanings that extend beyond their material functions because they are shaped by the systems of values and ideologies that exist within society (Barthes, 1967).

Javanese cultural symbols derive their meanings through processes of connotation constructed by the collective experiences of the community (Marcella & Azeharie, 2024). Ritual symbols function as media that naturalize cultural values so that they become accepted as part of everyday life (Affifah & Yudha, 2024). The symbolic meaning of an object is not inherent in its physical form but emerges through processes of signification that continuously occur within social practices (Dwi & Purnomo, 2023).

At the mythological level, the *gunungan* of agricultural produce in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual is no longer interpreted merely as an arrangement of harvested crops carried in a traditional procession but has developed into a system of signs that naturalizes the worldview of the people of Lamuk Village regarding the ideal relationship among humans, nature, and God. Myth is a second-order system of signification that transforms cultural constructions into something that appears natural, self-evident, and accepted as collective truth (Barthes, 1972). Within the context of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, the belief that village prosperity can only be achieved when people maintain harmony with nature, honor their ancestral heritage, and continuously express gratitude to God constitutes a cultural myth that is continuously reproduced through the annual performance of the ritual. Consequently, the *gunungan* of agricultural produce functions not only as a medium for expressing gratitude but also as a cultural instrument that preserves the value system of the Lamuk community.

This mythological meaning can be observed in the way the community treats the harvest before distributing it among residents. Agricultural products are first paraded around the village together with the sacred water and positioned as part of a sacred procession before ultimately being enjoyed by the community. This sequence of actions demonstrates that the harvest is viewed not merely as the product of human labor but as a blessing originating from God through the intermediary of nature. Therefore, honoring agricultural produce is understood as honoring the very source of life itself. Cultural objects acquire meaning through systems of relationships established by society, so the symbolic value of the *gunungan* emerges

not from its physical form but from cultural agreements that associate harvested products with blessings, safety, and the continuity of community life (Barthes, 1967).

Mr. Pariaman (79 years old), the elder of Lamuk Village, explained that the *Berat Sengkala* procession represents the community's supplication that Lamuk Village may continuously experience a life characterized by *gemah ripah loh jinawi, subur kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang sarwa tinumbas* (prosperity, tranquility, fertile land where everything planted grows abundantly, and affordable basic necessities that are easily accessible to the community). This expression not only illustrates hopes for abundant agricultural yields but also reflects a collective aspiration for a prosperous, peaceful, and harmonious life. This cultural expression represents a form of connotation that has evolved into myth because it has been accepted as a worldview continuously transmitted without being questioned (Barthes, 1972).

Mr. Pariaman (79 years old), the elder of Lamuk Village, further explained that neither the village government nor the community has ever attempted to eliminate the tradition because they believe that abandoning the ritual would disrupt the balance of village life. This belief demonstrates that the ritual has transformed into a cultural mechanism that preserves social order while simultaneously reinforcing the legitimacy of ancestral values. Myth functions as a cultural ideology by presenting a social construction as something natural and, therefore, continuously reproducing it within everyday life (Barthes, 1972).

Furthermore, the *gunungan* of agricultural produce also constructs a myth concerning the importance of sharing as the foundation of communal life. After the procession is completed, all agricultural products are distributed among community members regardless of their social or economic backgrounds. This action not only symbolizes the distribution of harvested products but also represents the belief that blessings acquire meaning only when they are enjoyed collectively. Consequently, the distribution of agricultural produce becomes a cultural mechanism that instills the values of mutual cooperation, togetherness, and social responsibility among all residents. From Barthes' semiotic perspective, this act of sharing has transcended its practical function and has become a cultural sign representing the community's collective ideology concerning social justice and communal solidarity (Barthes, 1964).

The mythological meaning of the *gunungan* of agricultural produce is also closely associated with the ecological consciousness of the people of Lamuk. All the commodities arranged within the *gunungan* originate from agricultural land that has long served as the community's primary source of livelihood. Therefore, honoring the harvest indirectly constitutes an act of honoring the soil, water, and all natural elements that sustain life. This awareness demonstrates that the community perceives nature as a partner in life rather than merely an object of economic production. Such a perspective illustrates that ecological values have become integrated into the community's cultural system and continue to be preserved through ritual symbols transmitted across generations. Cultural symbols of this kind function to reproduce ideologies that shape how people understand and interact with their environment (Barthes, 1967).

In addition to representing the relationship between humans and nature, the *gunungan* of agricultural produce also illustrates the vertical relationship between humans and God. Before the harvest is distributed to the community, all ritual participants first offer a communal prayer as an acknowledgment that all forms of sustenance originate from the will of Almighty God. Therefore, the *gunungan* procession is not merely a celebration of a successful harvest but also a spiritual manifestation that places gratitude at the very foundation of community life. Myth emerges when people believe that human success never stands alone but always depends upon harmonious relationships with both God and nature (Barthes, 1972). This myth subsequently becomes the moral foundation that encourages the community to maintain ecological balance, strengthen social solidarity, and preserve ancestral traditions.



Figure 3. Procession of Agricultural Produce.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 23, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kalimiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.

The culmination of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual is marked by a collective prayer procession led by the elder of Lamuk Village and attended by all members of the community present. After the sacred water (*tirta suci*) and the *gunungan* of agricultural produce are paraded toward the village square, all ritual participants gather together in a shared space to offer prayers as an expression of gratitude and, at the same time, a plea for protection from God Almighty. The prayer is led by the village elder, who solemnly recites the following supplication to God:

"Ya Gusti Kang Murbeng Dumadi, kulo nyuwun pangestu lan pangayoman. Mugi sumber banyu ing Desa Lamuk tansah lestari, paring berkah tumrap sedaya warga. Mugi tanah subur, tanduran ngrembaka, pari ngidul paring hasil, rejeki lancar, gemah ripah loh jinawi. Mugi kersaa Gusti paring pitulungan, nyingkirake bala lan rubeda, nglestarekake karaharjan lan katentreman. Kulo sami nyuwun mugi Desa Lamuk tansah pinaringan rahayu, tentrem ing manah, rukun ing bebrayan, subur kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang sarwa tinumbas. Amin, ya Gusti Kang Maha Welas lan Asih."

(O Lord, the Creator and Sovereign of all creation, I ask for Your blessing and protection. May the water sources in Lamuk Village always remain sustainable and bring blessings to all residents. May the land remain fertile, the crops flourish, the rice fields yield abundant harvests, sustenance flow smoothly, and prosperity and abundance prevail. May You grant us Your assistance, remove misfortune and obstacles, and preserve well-being and peace. We all pray that Lamuk Village may always be blessed with safety, peace of mind, harmony within the community, fertile land where everything planted grows abundantly, and affordable necessities that are easily accessible to the people. Amen, O Most Merciful and Compassionate Lord.)

Within the traditions of the Lamuk community, prayer is not understood merely as a verbal recitation accompanying the ritual but as a symbolic act that connects humans with God, nature, ancestors, and fellow community members. Therefore, the collective prayer becomes the spiritual core that gives meaning to the entire series of *Berat Sengkala* rituals. The language used in the prayer constitutes a system of signs that not only conveys messages literally but also constructs cultural meanings through the processes of denotation, connotation, and myth (Barthes, 1972).

Based on field observations and interviews with Mr. Pariaman (79 years old), the elder of Lamuk Village, the prayer is solemnly delivered in Javanese as a cultural language that has been passed down from generation to generation. After all community members have gathered, the village elder invites the ritual participants to focus their attention and begins the prayer by asking for protection from God Almighty. The prayer expresses hopes that the springs in Lamuk Village will remain preserved, the land will continue to be fertile, agricultural yields will remain abundant, the community will be protected from *bala* (misfortune) and *rubeda* (obstacles), and village life will always remain peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous. In addition, the prayer contains the expression *gemah ripah loh jinawi, subur kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang sarwa tinumbas* (prosperous and peaceful, with fertile land where everything planted grows abundantly and basic necessities remain affordable and easily obtained by the community), representing the collective aspiration for sustainable prosperity.

At the denotative level, the collective prayer is a communicative activity carried out by the community through verbal discourse addressed to God. Textually, the prayer contains requests for the preservation of water sources, abundant agricultural yields, the safety of the community, and the maintenance of peace within the village. This meaning represents the first order of signification because it still refers to the content of the utterances as spoken by the village elder without involving broader cultural interpretations (Barthes, 1964). In other

words, the prayer is understood as an expression of supplication, gratitude, and hope collectively conveyed within the ritual sequence.

However, when analyzed at the level of connotation, every expression within the prayer contains symbolic meanings that extend far beyond their lexical definitions. The opening statement, *"Ya Gusti Kang Murbeng Dumadi"* (O Lord, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe), for example, not only identifies God as the creator of the universe but also represents the community's acknowledgment of the highest authority governing human life and nature. From Barthes' perspective (1972), this expression constitutes a cultural sign that constructs an awareness that all human activities exist within a spiritual relationship with God. Consequently, prayer is not merely a form of religious communication but also a symbolic mechanism that affirms humanity's position as part of a larger cosmic order.

The connotative meaning is also evident in the expression *"mugi sumber banyu ing Desa Lamuk tansab lestari"* (may the water sources in Lamuk Village always remain preserved). Literally, this sentence is a request for all water sources to remain protected. However, for the people of Lamuk, springs are not understood merely as sources of clean water but as sources of life that enable agricultural sustainability, fulfill daily needs, and ensure the continuity of the community's social life. Therefore, the request to preserve water sources actually represents an ecological awareness that has become integrated into the community's belief system. Water is interpreted as a gift from God that must be protected collectively, making environmental preservation a moral responsibility shared by all residents. This interpretation demonstrates that the language of prayer has been transformed into a cultural symbol connecting religious dimensions with the ethics of environmental conservation.

The expression *"paring berkah tumrap sedaya warga"* (blessing all residents) also contains a broader meaning than simply requesting divine blessings. Within the worldview of the Lamuk community, blessings are not understood merely as improvements in economic prosperity but as a condition of life characterized by health, tranquility, harmony, and the sustainability of social relationships. Therefore, blessings are positioned as a quality of life that encompasses every aspect of the community's existence.

The same symbolic meaning can also be found in the phrase *"mugi tanah subur, tanduran ngrembaka, pari ngidul paring basil"* (may the land become fertile, the crops flourish, and the fields produce abundant yields). At the denotative level, this expression represents the hope that the land will remain fertile and the crops will produce good harvests. However, at the connotative level, the land is positioned not merely as a medium for agricultural production but as a living space that must be respected because it serves as the source of the community's livelihood. Soil fertility is understood as a manifestation of harmonious relationships among humans, nature, and God. Therefore, agricultural success is not solely associated with human abilities in cultivating the land but is also regarded as the result of a cosmic balance that is continuously maintained through ritual practices. This meaning demonstrates that the people of Lamuk establish a spiritual relationship with their environment through the symbolic language embedded in the prayer (Barthes, 1964).

The symbolic meaning is also evident in the phrase *"mugi tanah subur, tanduran ngrembaka, pari ngidul paring basil"* (may the soil remain fertile, crops flourish, and the fields yield abundant harvests). At the denotative level, this expression represents a hope that the land will remain fertile and that agricultural crops will produce favorable harvests. However, at the connotative level, the land is positioned not merely as a medium for agricultural production but as a living space that must be respected because it serves as the source of the community's livelihood. Soil fertility is understood as a manifestation of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and God. Consequently, agricultural success is not solely associated with human ability to cultivate the land but is also viewed as the result of a cosmic balance continuously maintained through the performance of the ritual. This meaning demonstrates that the people of Lamuk establish a spiritual relationship with their environment through the symbolic language embedded in the prayer (Barthes, 1964).

Furthermore, the phrase *"mugi kersaa Gusti paring pitulungan, nyingkirake bala lan rubeda"* (may God grant us assistance and remove misfortune and obstacles) contains a very strong symbol of protection. At the denotative level, this sentence constitutes a request for God to provide assistance and protect the community from various calamities. However, at the connotative level, *bala* (misfortune) and *rubeda* (obstacles) are not interpreted merely as physical disasters but encompass all forms of imbalance that may disrupt community life, including social conflicts,

crop failures, diseases, environmental degradation, and various other problems that threaten the continuity of collective life. Thus, prayer functions as a symbolic mechanism that constructs collective optimism by affirming that every threat can be confronted through solidarity, human effort, and dependence on God. Ritual language generates connotations that shape the way communities understand their social and spiritual realities (Barthes, 1972).

An equally significant meaning is found in the expression "*tentrem ing manah, rukun ing bebrayan*" (*peace of mind and harmony in communal life*). Literally, this phrase expresses the hope that the community will attain inner peace and maintain harmonious social relationships. Connotatively, however, the expression represents the Javanese philosophy of life, which places social harmony at the foundation of collective existence. Inner tranquility is considered inseparable from social harmony because individual well-being can only be achieved when relationships among community members remain peaceful. Ritual language not only contains a religious dimension but also reproduces social values that serve as guidelines for community behavior (Barthes, 1972).

The peak of the prayer's connotative meaning is reflected in the expression "*gemah ripah loh jinawi, subur kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang sarwa tinumbas*" (*prosperous and peaceful, with fertile land where everything planted grows well and essential goods remain affordable and accessible to the community*). For the people of Lamuk, this expression does not merely describe a prosperous economic condition but symbolizes an ideal way of life characterized by agricultural abundance, social stability, harmonious relationships with nature, and blessings from God Almighty. Therefore, the communal prayer within the *Berat Sengkala* ritual cannot be understood solely as a religious recitation but must also be interpreted as a cultural text containing a collective construction of meaning regarding how the people of Lamuk perceive the relationship between humans, God, nature, and social life.

When examined through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, the meanings embedded in the communal prayer do not stop at the level of connotation but develop into myth, a second-order system of signification that transforms cultural constructions into ideas perceived as natural, legitimate, and continuously inherited within society (Barthes, 1972). Myth should not be understood as a fictional narrative but rather as an ideological mechanism that shapes how a community perceives its social, spiritual, and cultural realities (Barthes, 1972). Within the context of the *Berat Sengkala* ritual, communal prayer serves as the primary medium through which the Lamuk community reproduces its worldview concerning the balanced relationship among humans, nature, ancestors, and God. Through the repeated recitation of the same prayer across generations, the community constructs a collective belief that a peaceful and prosperous life can only be achieved when these relationships are continuously maintained.

This mythological meaning is evident in the overall content of the prayer, which not only seeks individual safety but also encompasses the preservation of water springs, soil fertility, agricultural success, social harmony, and the continuity of village life. This demonstrates that the people of Lamuk do not separate spiritual, ecological, and social dimensions. Instead, all aspects of life are understood as an interconnected whole. This construction of meaning represents a process of cultural naturalization, whereby a particular belief is accepted as something natural and is therefore no longer questioned by the community. Consequently, communal prayer functions not only as a means of communication with God but also as a cultural instrument that preserves the community's collective perspective regarding the ideal social order.

The myth constructed through communal prayer also reveals that the people of Lamuk perceive disasters such as landslides, crop failures, and agricultural pest outbreaks caused by insects, rats, or birds not merely as natural events or material problems but as signs of a disrupted relationship among humans, nature, and God. This perspective explains why the requests expressed in the prayer are consistently directed toward restoring balance rather than merely eliminating suffering. The petition to be protected from *bala* (*misfortune*) and *rubeda* (*obstacles*) is not simply interpreted as a hope to avoid disasters but rather as a collective effort to preserve the social order believed to be the source of communal tranquility. Such beliefs constitute a cultural myth that shapes how the community interprets both the causes of disasters and their solutions through ritual symbols.

The mythological meaning of the prayer becomes even more apparent in the expression "*gemah ripah loh jinawi, subur kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang sarwa tinumbas*" (*prosperous and peaceful, with fertile land where everything planted grows well and essential goods remain affordable and accessible*). This expression does not merely represent a hope for abundant harvests but serves as a representation of an ideal way of life that has long existed within the collective imagination of Javanese society. The desired way of life is characterized not only by economic prosperity but also by environmental sustainability, social stability, communal harmony, and blessings originating from God. Consequently, this expression has evolved into a cultural myth that positions prosperity as the consequence of maintaining harmony among humans, nature, and the spiritual dimension. Barthes (1972) explains that myths function by transforming cultural constructions into phenomena that appear natural, allowing them to be continuously reproduced through social practices without requiring further explanation for each successive generation.

The process of reproducing this myth is sustained through the annual repetition of the ritual. The prayer recited by the village elder consistently employs a structure, language, and message that remain relatively unchanged, as they have been inherited from previous generations. This repetition does not merely preserve an oral tradition but also maintains the system of values embedded within it. The Javanese language used in the prayer functions as a medium of cultural transmission because it not only conveys linguistic meanings but also carries philosophical values that constitute the identity of the Lamuk community. Language serves as the primary medium for constructing cultural meaning because every choice of words represents the way a society understands reality (Barthes, 1967). Therefore, the use of the Javanese language in communal prayer constitutes an essential component of preserving cultural identity while simultaneously reproducing the spiritual values of the community.

Mr. Pariaman (79 years old), the elder of Lamuk Village, explained that communal prayer is always accompanied by advice delivered by the village elder, encouraging the community to maintain harmony, respect their ancestors, preserve nature, and continue practicing the traditions inherited from their predecessors. This advice demonstrates that prayer does not remain solely a religious practice but develops into a medium of cultural education that transmits social norms and ethical values to all members of the community. Cultural signs do not merely generate meaning; they also produce ideologies that influence the ways in which a community thinks and behaves (Barthes, 1972). Consequently, communal prayer becomes a means of internalizing values through continuous ritual experiences.

Furthermore, communal prayer also constructs a myth concerning the importance of ecological harmony. The petitions for the preservation of water springs, the maintenance of fertile soil, and the productivity of crops indicate that the people of Lamuk regard environmental sustainability as a fundamental prerequisite for human survival. Nature is not positioned as an object of exploitation but rather as an integral component of a life system that must be respected and protected. Therefore, environmental conservation acquires moral legitimacy through the ritual language collectively recited by the community. This system of signs shapes the community's consciousness regarding the way they interpret nature, causing environmental preservation to be viewed not only as a practical necessity but also as a spiritual obligation (Barthes, 1964).

In addition to constructing ecological awareness, communal prayer also reproduces the myth of social solidarity. All members of the community participate in the prayer from the same position, regardless of age, economic status, or social standing. This equality demonstrates that, before God, all members of the community occupy an equal position as members of a traditional society. This collective consciousness is subsequently reinforced through the next stage of the ritual, namely the distribution of agricultural produce among all residents. Consequently, prayer becomes the starting point for the development of solidarity that is not merely emotional in nature but is also manifested through concrete actions, such as sharing harvests and maintaining harmonious social relationships. Cultural symbols function both to construct and preserve the collective identity of a community through an ongoing process of signification (Barthes, 1972).

When examined comprehensively, the text of the prayer in the *Berat Sengkala* ritual demonstrates that every linguistic element articulated by the village elder forms an interconnected network of meanings. Petitions addressed to God, hopes for the preservation of water springs, prayers for fertile soil, aspirations for harmonious social relationships, and

the desire to achieve *gemah ripah loh jinawi* together constitute a series of complementary signs that collectively construct the worldview of the people of Lamuk. These interconnected signs create a broader narrative that prosperity is not generated solely through human ability to manage resources but rather through the capacity to maintain balanced relationships with God, nature, ancestors, and fellow human beings. This constitutes the central myth that is produced and continuously reproduced through communal prayer within the *Berat Sengkala* ritual.



Figure 4. The Water Purification Process at the Lamuk Village Hall.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 23, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.



Figure 5. Procession of Water and Agricultural Produce.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 23, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.



Figure 6. Joint Prayer Led by Village Elders.

Source: Photograph by Eka Larasati, July 23, 2024, Lamuk Village, Kaliwiro Subdistrict, Wonosobo Regency.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the *Berat Sengkala* ritual constitutes a system of cultural signs that represents how the people of Lamuk Village interpret disasters, life, and the relationship between humans, nature, and God. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, every element of the ritual contains three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. At the denotative level, *Berat Sengkala* appears as a sequence of traditional ceremonial activities that includes the collection of sacred water from seven

springs, the procession of the agricultural produce cone (*gunungan*), and communal prayer. At the connotative level, these three symbols represent *panguripan* (life), *pitulungan* (divine assistance), gratitude, ecological awareness, respect for ancestors, and social solidarity. At the mythological level, the entire ritual sequence constructs a collective belief that prosperity, safety, and the continuity of life can be achieved through harmonious relationships among humans, nature, God, and the cultural heritage inherited from ancestors.

These findings emphasize that *Berat Sengkala* cannot be understood merely as a religio-magical ritual but should instead be interpreted as a cultural text that continuously reproduces the collective identity of the people of Lamuk. Through intergenerational transmission, this ritual functions as a medium for preserving the religious, ecological, social, and moral values that shape the community's understanding of life. The symbols embedded within the ritual do not function solely as ceremonial attributes but also serve as cultural instruments that strengthen social cohesion, foster awareness of environmental conservation, and sustain the continuity of local wisdom amid social change.

Within this context, the people of Lamuk interpret disasters not merely as material events but as signs of a disruption in the balance of relationships among humans, nature, and God. Therefore, *Berat Sengkala* represents a form of spiritual endeavor in response to disasters, not for the purpose of rejecting or avoiding them, but rather to restore balance through communal prayer, the preservation of water springs, respect for nature, the strengthening of social solidarity, and the preservation of tradition. These findings demonstrate that responding to disasters requires the integration of technical and material measures with the reinforcement of spiritual, ecological, and cultural dimensions. Consequently, *Berat Sengkala* illustrates that local wisdom remains relevant as a valuable source for building a resilient, harmonious, and sustainable society.

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