



Day 19

In many countries popular “Folk Islamic” practices are even more important than orthodox Islam in the daily life of millions of Muslims. Orthodox Islam does not usually have a real expectancy that Allah will actually intervene in difficult situations. He is basically inaccessible. Therefore many people search out Muslim holy men for help. In some countries the tombs of various Muslim holy men are reputed to be places of blessing where people can also seek help. Various things including talismans and the “Hand of Fatima” are often used against the “Evil Eye” and evil spirits.

The Minangkabau, numbering about 8,659,000, are the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia and exercise significant influence in the country. While some Minangkabau are scattered across the country on various islands, they originate from the province of West Sumatra.

Lina is a young Minangkabau woman from a large family, all of whom are proud of their culture and religion. They do everything that Islam requires of them, but they are also involved in other traditional practices. Instead of going to a doctor when someone is sick, they will often visit a dukun (a traditional healer). Lina especially believes that evil spirits are everywhere and she is very interested in all things supernatural.

Because of these beliefs, she is often tense and is afraid of almost everything. Even sudden loud noises make her jump, and she sleeps with a light on at night. Muslims say, “Bismillah i-rahman-ir-rahim (in the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful)” before they eat; Lina says it before practically every bite of food she takes.

This life of fear even affects Lina’s attitude toward her religion: she sees God as a faraway figure. She tries to do all her religious duties not out of a desire to be faithful and obedient but because she is afraid of going to hell when she

dies. She seems resigned to the idea that she will never be in paradise, because her good deeds never seem to be enough to outweigh her sins.

Even though Lina has had many conversations with some followers of Jesus about the forgiveness of sins through Isa Al-masih (Jesus the Messiah), she is still too afraid to even consider the possibility that it is actually truth. Unfortunately she believes that Jesus is simply a prophet and that He cannot protect her from evil spirits. Millions of other Minangkabau have never had the opportunity to learn about Jesus.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of the Minangkabau to the truth that only Jesus can bring salvation and that He can free them from a life of fear.*
- ▶ *Pray that Minangkabau people, including Lina and her family, will no longer look to the dukuns to solve their problems but rather they will look to Jesus for help and healing.*
- ▶ *Pray that whole families of the Minangkabau will come to a trusting reliance on Jesus.*

