

# THE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC THEOLOGY TOWARD MANDI SAFAR RITUAL IN AKIT TRIBAL BENGKALIS-RIAU

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## ABSTRACT

*Mandi Safar (Safar bathing) ritual is a tradition of rejecting reinforcements and a means of gathering for the coastal by Local Malay community in Rupert Island of Riau Province. This is an annual event. The purpose of this research is to show the local Islamic community's bathing Safar rite, which has attracted the attention of many Islamic theology. However, the event creates both benefits and drawbacks among those who support and oppose it. As a result, the goal of this research is to give an overview and analyzing of the influence of Islamic theology toward Mandi Safar ritual. This is a qualitative ethnographic study that highlights the role of researchers as the key instrument in the research process. This research's informants are local communities and their leaders, as well as culture experts, with a total of ten informants residing on Rupert Island. They comprehend the importance of these rites and skills in their everyday lives, as well as the responsibility of local governments in preserving this tradition. Malay culture and the local population of Rupert Island thinks that the month of Safar brings a bala' and ailment, thus they perform the Safar bath ritual, which includes reading chosen letters from the Qur'an, ablution, prayer congratulations, and prayer rejections. Safar bath has its purpose in the month of Safar to get safety and prevent ill luck. The novelty of this research lies in the unveiling the Islamic theology influence toward Safar bathing from the Qur'an and hadith.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Theology; Mandi Safar; Rupert*

## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, culture is extremely vital that culture was developed as a result of human interactions. The *Safar bathing* (also known as *Babarasih Banua*, *Batimbang*, *Jeknek Bappari*, *Mandi Sapar*, *Rebo Kasan*, *Rebo Buntung*, *Rebo Wekasan*) ritual is a spiritual endeavor (practice) toward self-approach to God that is practiced by various Muslim groups in numerous places of Indonesia, including West Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Riau Islands, Maluku, Kalimantan, and one of Indonesia's islands. Tanjung Punak Village, Rupert Island, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province is one such location in Riau. Hundreds of community members attend the customary

ceremony that takes place every month of *Safar* (Nurozi 2016).

In 1950, the *Safar bathing* ceremonial was established. This custom originated on the Malaysian shore. Because the origins of these two community groupings are the same, the North Rupert community frequently mingles with Malaysian culture. The *Safar* bath had been there since the 1920s. It's just that they take their *Safar* baths in their own houses rather than out in the open. They think that the practice of having a *Safar* bath may prevent or even erase all forms of ill luck, plagues, diseases, Infectious sickness, tragedy, or misfortune that will or has already occurred, particularly during the month of *Safar*

(Santikanandra and Arianto 2017);(Sagala 2018); (Sarumaha 2021).

Activities in the month of *Safar* illustrate the Indonesian Muslim cultures. Indeed, the custom of *Safar* bathing is already part of Malay culture's treasures. *Mandi Safar* is a bath culture with prayed-for rivers and ponds infused with *wapak* that is packed in the context of decentralization wisdom and passed down by generations. It has become part of the tradition of Bengkalis Regency people (Hayati, Hariansyah, and Wahab 2019). *Safar* bathing is carried out by the whole Malay population of Rupert in the last Wednesday of the month of *Safar*. It takes place in bathing tourist waterfalls, for example, bathing pools (lubok), beaches, as well as their accompanying residences.

Sultan Abdul Rahmansyah, who ruled the Penyengat Island, was eager returning to Rupert to engage in this *Safar* bathing practice, according to historical documents. This has led to his impeachment by the Dutch. Currently, *Safar* bathing has been designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTH) by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia as a cultural heritage (Hayati et al. 2019); (Zulhadi 2019), besides that *Safar* bathing is also found in several regions in Indonesia and especially in Rupert Island, Bengkalis Regency. This year's *Safar* bath event is considered special after its recognition as WBTH. Bengkalis Regency can take advantage of this *Safar* bathing tradition to attract domestic and international tourists to Rupert Island (Setyabudi, Rohan, and Hastutiningtyas 2019); (Habe and Salim 2020); (Manilet and Rajab 2021).

This *Safar* bathing tradition has also impacted by Islamic theology. It is believed that in the month of *Safar*, Allah send twelve thousand types of hardships or trials onto mankind on the very last Wednesday of either

the month (Alkhusaeri, Machendrawaty, and Aripudin 2020); (Hakeu and Sunarti 2019); (Nisa 2019). The occurrence of this ceremonial bathing of *Safar* undoubtedly boosts the benefits and drawbacks among the people. On one side, some feel it is a form of blasphemy which should never be performed since it contradicts the Islamic principles that ban superstition and contains components of shirk.

On the other hand, many people especially Akit community argue that *Safar* washing is merely an inherited tradition that breathes Islam and it must be followed (Husin 2021); (Mahmudah 2021). Its long term viability is ensured, of course, by stressing Islamic adaptations and eliminating mysticism and by "islamizing local traditions or culture" (Faridah and Mubarak 2012); (Nurhayati 2019). However, the advantages and disadvantages stemmed from the two groups that were constantly at conflict and even generated internal Muslim strife between Islamic doctrine and indigenization of Islam in interpreting the Islamic teachings through the lens of local customs (Ramadiputra 2019).

The Islamic orthodoxy movement, also known as purification in Islamic theology, is a term used by individuals who endeavor to make a clear distinction between something true and what is incorrect according to their interpretation of the law, and who see Islamic teachings are official doctrines that really must be implemented as has little to do with their view of the law in Hadith and the Quran (Yani 2019); (Aqmal, Yonantha, and Amin 2021); (Hafidzoh, Hadirman, and Luma 2021).

This orthodoxy approach is used in terms of "mythology," like something muslims believe smells, clashes with their notion of "Islamic monotheism," of "*khuraffat* and superstition". Meanwhile, Islamic indigenization, also known as accommodative-reformative approach, is a

method of capturing Islam's moral principles rather than its formal legal features. Islam is culturally understood, adaptable, respectful of local culture, and appreciative of it.

When looking at the existence of rituals in various areas of Indonesia, it appears that people are more inclined to embrace the accommodative reformative pattern or the indigenization of Islam rather than the Islamic cleansing pattern (Widaty 2021). Religion becomes identical with tradition in such a situation. It might be a cultural expression of people's belief in a holy being, including the Creator.

If the relationship among traditional customs is considered as a form of history and contemporary interpretation, all religious worlds are extremely subjective manifestations of human creativity. Like Islamic theology, the religious truth that everyone believes to be "true" is fundamentally restricted to what people can comprehend and communicate in relation to God's absolute "truth". As a result, whatever shape humanity's attitude toward conserving, renewing, or purifying, it is necessary to see religious traditions as a conflict inside the movements of religious organizations' history (Dzofir 2017); (Jailani and Nurhasanah 2019); (Farida 2019).

The local administration has established a view that the ceremonial bathing of *Safar* is a cultural asset as well as an annual tourism attraction that is likely to draw both domestic and international visitors. Because of these factors, the *Safar* bathing ritual in Tanjung Punak Village, specifically on Tanjung Lapin Beach, North Rupert Village, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, is unquestionably a fascinating and distinctive socio-religious and cultural phenomena. On one hand, it is seen to benefit certain parties, but on the other hand, it causes internal conflict among Muslims as they weigh the benefits and drawbacks, particularly in

the surrounding community (Nadhiroh 2016); (Mutmainah, Otta, and Hadirman 2021). The presence of the ceremonial bathing of *Safar* should be investigated further as sociological and/or social psychological research based on this phenomena (Subhan 2020). This research will demonstrate how Islamic theology analyses and perspectives on the yearly bathing of *Safar* ceremony on Rupert Island, Riau Province.

Based on phenomenon in the field, there are pro and contra about *Safar* bathing. It also involves the Islamic theology such as the correlation of the ritual and Koran and hadith. The issue in society claim that *Safar* bathing is kind of *bid'ah* (forbidden additional ritual) in Islam, many people believe that there is no hadith or verse in Koran stating that *Safar* bathing is necessary for Muslim to be taken in to action during *Safar* month. However, *Safar* bathing is still practiced in Rupert Island by local community in Bengkalis. The ritual has been existed for longtime that makes local people believe *Safar* bathing is kind of ritual that is allowed in Islam. Even though, the limitation of this research is in the cultural belief of Rupert people toward *Safar bathing*. It could not represent *Safar* bathing in general. It will focus to analyze through the Islamic theological perspective on *Safar* bathing.

## Literature Review

The focus on the topic of Islamic theology in *Safar* bathing, from previous research, Ashubi's Mandi *Safar* rite is unique to this study. The goal is to showcase the local Islamic customs, such as the bathing *Safar* ritual, which is the emphasis of the diverse Islamic groups. The *Safar* washing ritual is one of the ancient traditions that is thought to be able to ward off bad luck such as accidents, disasters, and disease outbreaks. However, as a local custom linked to Islam, it creates benefits and drawbacks among those who support and oppose it. The novelty from this research is

that the aim of author's research is to figure out what the symbols and functions of ritual bathing represent to the individuals who support it.

Furthermore, earlier study by Sagala (2017) clarifies the local government design of the Mandi *Safar* ritual, which involves the community bathing together on the beach using the prayer *rajah* performed by the community every Wednesday in the last week of Safar (the second month of Hijri), as one of the supporting programs for economic development in Air Hitam Laut Village, Jambi. The practice of the Malay society has evolved from religious ceremonies to avert disasters and tragedies along Safar sparked debate at first since it was deemed heresy by certain Muslims. Nonetheless, the rite grew into a popular cross-ethnic practice, and it has been scheduled as one of Jambi Province's national tourist symbols since 2017. The novelty from this research is the informant, participant of Safar bathing and with this research. However, the gap between this research and previous research is the Malay's practice society which involves the religious ceremony.

The progress of prior research reported by Habe and Salim (2020) indicates that the Air Hitam Laut Village community's behavior has changed by the Safar bathing tradition. The bathing of *Safar* tradition's rules and values are said to instill a sense of security and influence individual attitudes and conduct. This ceremony has been passed down through the generations. As a result, this article uses a qualitative technique to identify the *Mandi Safar* ritual and the behavior of the residents of Air Hitam Laut Village. The gap between this research and previous research is that the theological of Islam that might be involved in Safar bathing.

The previous research from Wahab, Hariansyah, and Nurhayati (2020). Since the pre-Islamic time, the Arabs have considered

the month of Safar to be unfortunate. Some members of the Malay community still adhere to this tradition. Therefore, the bathing of Safar is performed by people. In the month of Safar, people bath and perform other rituals to obtain protection and avert ill luck. Some Malay people from Rupert say a festive prayer and a request to deny reinforcements throughout the month of Safar as a form of religion in being spared from disasters and illnesses. Reading the holy Qur'an surah such as al-Ikhlâs, an-Nas, and al-Falaq to obtain a reward from Allah SWT. The novelty from previous research is the theological of Islam toward Safar bathing, it means that the analysis of Islam theology toward Safar bathing based on religious values.

Previous research also explained about the ritual of taking a *Safar* bath with character planting in an understanding of Islam written by Zulfadi (2019) which explains the Value of Islamic Education in the Safar bathing Tradition in Gili Indah Village, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency. This study aims to determine the history and form of implementation as well as the value of Islamic education contained in Tanjung Punak village, North Rupert District, Rupert Regency, practices the Mandi Safar heritage. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The data collection methods of this research are observation, interviews, and documentation. The research instrument used is the human instrument. Meanwhile, the data analysis used to analyze the data of this research is the extension of participation, persistence of observation and triangulation. The gap between this research and previous research is, this research focus on religious values on Safar bathing, meanwhile, previous research is talking about Safar bathing as Malay heritage in Riau.

Based on literature review, there is certain research gap or an issue that hasn't been answered in the previous research which is related to *Safar*

bathing and Islamic theology. None of previous research has reported that *Safar* bathing is related to Islamic theology, lack of informant and data collection from subject could be the reason that research gap is existed. It could be the novelty of this research that will be focus on Islamic theology on *Safar* bathing by observe the ritual statement which is related of Qur'an and Hadith. By giving an accurate data and informants, this research might answer and solve the research gap of this study and previous studies.

### Conceptual Framework

Strong conceptual frameworks encapsulate something actual in an easy-to-remember and apply format. The variables of this study are Islamic theology as independent variable and *mandi Safar* as dependent variable. The study of *mandi Safar* is related to certain subject in Islamic theological. However, this could be an analytical tool with Islamic theology and *mandi Safar*. This framework will develop the influence of Islamic theology toward *mandi Safar* ritual, which is based on literature review that make up with novelty of this study. The Conceptual Framework is a collection of interconnected goals and basics. The aims and purposes of financial reporting are identified by the objectives, and the basics are the underlying principles that assist attain those goals.

Theology is a broad study of the divine nature and religious belief. As an academic field, it is mostly studied at universities and seminaries. Revelation is the acknowledgement of God, lords, or deities. Because it is not merely spiritual realm that is above the natural universe, but also ready and wanting to participate with something and, in especially, to present themselves to individuals. While theology has become a secular topic, religious believers still regard it as a discipline that assists them in living and understanding ideas such as life and love, as well as leading lives

of obedience to the deities they follow or adore. A theologian's study of theology may assist them to better comprehend their own religious tradition, another religious system, or the essence of divinity without reference to any particular tradition.

Theology can be used to promote, reform, or justify a religious tradition. Or it can be used to compare, critique, or reject a religious tradition or worldview (e.g. irreligion). A theologian may use theology to address a current issue or need through a religious tradition, or to investigate other ways of interpreting the world. According to the Iqbal Muzaffar (Iqbal 2008), "the Qur'an gives a cohesive view of the creator, the universe, and man via its prophet Muhammad PBUH, and covers a wide variety of theological subjects relevant to late antiquity religious philosophy.

The fundamental points of contention in Muslim theology are obscured by the phrasing of the Qur'anic message, which is closely linked to Muhammad's life ". Modern historians and Islamic scholars, on the other hand, acknowledge that some forms of theological thought were already developed among polytheistic Pagans in pre-Islamic Arabia, such as the belief in fatalism (*qadar*), which recurs in Islamic theology regarding metaphysical debates on God's attributes, predestination, and human free will. As a result, religious rituals in the framework of meeting or forming a relationship between an individual and the Highest, both for prayer and adoration, are occasionally performed in a variety of ways linked with certain circumstances.

Islamic theology (*kalam*) and philosophy (*falsafah*) are two learning traditions formed by Muslim intellectuals who were involved, on the one hand, in the rational clarification and defense of Islamic religious and scientific principles (*falsifah*). The fundamental sources of Islamic beliefs (the Qur'an, Islamic scripture; and the Hadith, sayings, and traditions of the Prophet

Muhammad PBUH) and who despised logic, as well as those whose reasoning caused them to forsake the Islamic community (the ummah) entirely, meanwhile in actuality, the status of an Islamic believer remained a legal issue, not one for theologians or philosophers to resolve. However, the correlation between Islamic theology and *Safar* bathing, the concept of principles which is in Koran and hadith. These intellectuals occupied a middle ground between the traditionalists, who clung to literal terms, and the modernists such as *Safar* bathing.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative research. The data collection methods of this research are observation, interviews, and study of documents. The research instrument used is the human. Meanwhile, the data analysis used to analyze the data of this research is the extension of participation, persistence of observation and triangulation. A researcher strives to define and comprehend societal phenomena as the community perceives it (to learn from the people) or emic (to learn from the environment) (emic factors). Observe involvement or experience being seriously involved in the field by watching numerous ritual actions of the *Safar* bathing ritual in a true natural setting rather than an artificial setting and comprehend the significance and worth of the action considering the informant's own perspectives or understandings, such as religious leaders and the individuals involved.

The informant of this research is local communities who know and/or have experience in *Safar* bathing. The leader of communities, culture experts are included in this subject, with the total of ten informants who live in Rupert Island, Riau Province.

Attempting to link some of the existing results after classifying and identifying the *Safar* bathing ritual with distinct qualities, and then

attempting to generate hypotheses, concepts, and theories, because the steps of data gathering, and analysis are carried out in parallel and continually until a firm understanding conclusion is reached based on what is observed in the field. More secondary data collecting techniques are gained through documentation techniques in the form of library research, archives, and various reports in the library, as well as multiple local government offices relevant to the study carried out, in addition to primary data collected in the field. The data's validity is checked using four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. A theoretical grasp is required to critically assess the issue being investigated and then perform different abstractions about what is actually happening in the field. As a result, some of the hypotheses proposed are not only meant to be verified, but also to interpret reality and current facts.

The observation is necessary due to gain more information about *Safar* bathing, while local community do this ritual in certain events, those informants will explain the ritual of *Safar* bathing. Normally local community will do near the river or beach in Rupert Island. After getting the data from interview, observation and documents, the authors will interpret the data by making interview protocol and verbatim, after collecting data, the authors will validate the data by combining the documents and observation in the field. After the data are collected, the authors will interpret the data and taking the conclusion and the analysis will be used descriptive data, to explain and give information about the influence of Islamic theology toward *Safar* bathing.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ritual is a type of celebration linked with a variety of faiths or religions that is distinguished by unique qualities that inspire exquisite reverence in the sense that it is a holy event. *Safar* bathing

is a bath taken during the month of *Safar*. The term "*Safar*" was originally defined as "empty". In the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, the peoples and civilization were ignorant, and they made the month of *Safar* a month of battle by leaving their homes empty. *Safar* may be viewed as a month of grief and tears in that situation. *Safar* is also known as the month of the wind in another sense. Allah sends down 320,000 reinforcements every year, according to Abdurrahman bin Abdul Aziz's book *Jawahir*, with the majority of them arriving on the last Wednesday of the *Safar* month

As a result, the ceremony of denying reinforcements takes place on the last Wednesday of each month. Noah was in danger of flash floods in the month of *Safar*. People think that the month of *Safar* is full of perils because of the prophets' accounts. The natives of Rupert Island refer to this day as "bathing day". So, work like catching fish, cutting wood, or even plucking leaves or breaking twigs is forbidden on Capuk Wednesday in the North Rupert region. Because those who are harmed by axes, falling on wood, and so on, according to local beliefs, will leave terrible markings. This is the understanding of the Malay population follows Islamic teachings which are incorporated into the practice of traditional practices. This is what leads to the establishment of Malay culture and Islamic acculturation, particularly in the *Safar* bathing rite. From the outside, it appears to be merely a decoration or a tool in religious rites, but what matters most is the "display of faith". As a result, religious events or rituals are held in a variety of locations and at varied times, as well as spectacular actions and other holy rites.

In addition to the efforts and efforts it has been made in the past not by *Safar* washing or other practices that are not in conformity with Allah's and His Messenger's commands. This is also the cause for individuals who do not practice or even reject the *Safar bathing* ritual.

Bathing *Safar*, in the opinion of the majority of the people of Tanjung Punak Village, North Rupert Island, is a tradition that deserves to be preserved and become distinctive, as well as a form of village community togetherness whose implementation is flexible, as long as it does not change the essence or three main things in *Safar* bathing activities, namely: first, writing or memorizing seven verses of the Qur'an. The second is wanting to take a bath for Allah's sake, and third, actually taking a bath. From the moment the ceremonial bathing *Safar* was held in congregation till today, it has been thirty five years. For decades, though, this ceremony has become a regional event. The ceremony will be conducted as a regional event in partnership with the local administration, Bengkalis Regency Riau Province, until it becomes an annual tourist draw. This was done for numerous reasons. First, to strengthen *ukhuwah islamiyah* and *ukhuwah insaniyah* (brotherhood based on religious and social ties). Second, to increase economic access by turning it into a tourist attraction, and third, to hasten regional development. From a practical standpoint, Islamic law is separated into two categories: *Shari'a*-based Islamic law and *ijtihad*-based Islamic law.

From the side of the *ijtihad* area, you may see *Safar* bathing. According to Islam, there are three sorts of bathing: required bathing, sunnah bathing, and acceptable bathing. Bathing when traveling is neither mandatory nor Sunnah bathing, according to the category, because there is no one rationale that rules bathing while traveling as a result, this excursion is classified as an acceptable bath because nothing makes it mandatory or mandatory. Bathing is a traditional Islamic method of keeping one's health and hygiene custom grows from The community can establish customs as long as they do not infringe *shari'a*.

That is to say that everything in Malay society should relate towards Islamic and therefore should not conflict with it. It is necessary to correct up everything which is not in agreement with Islamic beliefs. To put it another way, Malay culture is inextricably linked to Islamic principles. *Safar* bathing ritual as a celebration, party, banquet is really considered a big regional event that requires careful preparation. For the people of Tanjung Punak Village, North Rupa Island, this ceremony does not only require money but the energy and thoughts of all components of the village community. Although the celebration is considered routine, every year special preparations are held in advance, which may lead to suggestions or suggestions for improvement or development efforts.

Both in terms of facilities and infrastructure as well as the content of the ritual bathing *Safar* that is associated with the fishermen's thanksgiving. The procession of the *Safar bathing* ceremony begins in the morning after dawn, the community prepares the necessary equipment. Furthermore, a leaf or a square piece of paper (*rajah*) is prepared which is then handed over to village elders who are considered to have sufficient religious knowledge. The tattoo is written with verses using hard objects such as sticks made like pencils with a pointed tip, or ink that glides easily. The *Safar bathing* procession begins with remembrance together and then a procession is carried out accompanied by *kompang* and 8 pairs of children who are representatives of each village in North Rupa District to the old well. This old well is not far from Tanjung Lapin Beach.

It is said that the old well is called a lapin well which is considered to have its own specialties and is believed to be a sacred well that never dries up despite a long drought. In addition, the water does not taste salty even though it is by the sea. *Dolah*, as the guide, started the procession by standing while reading prayers, then writing

verses on a piece of paper and then a ceramic jar decorated with coconut leaves in the form of miniature mountains, birds, and others. The edges of the jars are neatly intertwined with areca nut knitted in a circle to fill the edges of the jars. After that, 8 pairs of children were invited to sit in a row in front of 8 urns that had been decorated with coconut shoots and *mayang*. The water that has been put in the paper.

The traditional elders, religious leaders, and the local government patted the children's flour, using a spoon made of coconut shells. After completion, residents are welcome to take water and scramble to take the prayer water. Some washed their faces, some washed their hair, and some brought empty mineral water bottles to fill with water, some made the soaked tattoo to hang above the door of the house with the aim of preventing disaster and disease from entering the house. After that, the community held a feast at the well. They enjoyed the fat ketupat and the food they brought together. After the feast, the community went to take a bath together in the sea then rinsed with water from the lapin well where the prayer was read earlier.

It is believed to be able to cleanse all calamities from one's body. The atmosphere became lively, laughter and all togetherness filled the procession. Now this event has been managed and organized by the

Department of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports of Bengkalis Regency. Moreover, because of the interest of the Governor of Riau in this culture, the local government intends to make this traveling culture in North Rupa a national event. This is to support the Riau 2020 vision with the theme Riau, the homeland of Malays. *Safar* bathing ritual can be practiced independently with several stages; first, write seven verses of the Koran that begin with pronouncing the *salam*. The verses are written on leaves or paper using

ink that can be easily erased or memorized the verses (for those who memorize them, there is no need to write them again). Insert the inscription (verse) into a basin or water container (tub, drum, barrel, well, etc.) which will be used for bathing.

Intend to take a bath with the following pronunciation: "I intend to take a bath because of Allah Ta'ala". Fourth, the implementation of bathing can be done by using a bucket of water at home or in the river. Another way of implementing it is to write down the seven verses and put them in a glass and drink them with the intention of obtaining goodness and blessings (*tabarru'an*).

However, if the ritual will be carried out together as was done on the beach of Tanjung Punak Village, then the preparatory stage will be carried out by an appointed committee. People generally just come at the beach when the ritual bathing *Safar* is taken place. The implementation stage is carried out in stages, first, taking the mango leaves which are used to write seven verses that begin with pronouncing *salam* with the ink that fades easily. The seven leaves of mango are carried out at night by the person whose ritual bathing *Safar* is usually appointed by a kyai. After writing, the seven leaves are placed on a tray covered with white cloth.

However, for people who have memorized it, there is no need to write it down on the seven leaves, but simply read it when they want to take a bath. Second, put a tower that has been given boiled eggs near the beach in front of the main stage. Welcome remarks from several regional officials and closed with remarks from the chairman of the committee who explained to the public how the technical and urgency of the ritual bathing *Safar*. Fourth, the process of bathing together on the beach which begins with the intention and then dips seven mango leaves which have seven verses of salvation written on them and then immerses themselves in the water

led by the ritual leader, *Safar* bathing. After bathing, local regional leaders and traditional leaders climb on rafts that have been brought to the surface of the water on the beach to distribute cooked eggs that have been prepared in advance.

After that, each other shook hands to apologize. After the ritual bathing procession is completed, it will be continued with other community activities, such as kite competitions, ornamental boats, fishing, and so forth. The implementation of the *Safar* bathing ritual, such as an umbrella to lead the ritual and a raft with a tower on it which is carried by many people, are not mandatory, especially in the form of offerings or offerings, but are merely symbols that have certain meanings as follows that only one God has the right to be worshiped. Number one also shows the symbol of togetherness and unity of the people of Tanjung Punak Village, united in building and uniting in realizing all the ideals of the Nation and State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The Raft and Foundation of the Tower are made in the form of a rectangle, in Bugis language called Sulapa Eppa or Eappa Sulapa which means "the four elements of human creation", namely, earth, fire, wind, and water with their own characteristics and characteristics. Earth is sitting, fire is standing, wind is bow, and water is prostrating. This shows that humans were created nothing but to serve Allah the Creator, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet. The *Inenara* raft is made of wood, *nibung* and *nipah*. *Nibung* and *Nipah* are typical Malays, which have been used as regional slogans "*Sepucuk Nipah Serumpun Nibung*".

*Nibung* and *Nipah* were originally used as rafts to go to an area across the sea and rivers, when they arrived at their destination, they were transported to land to be used as a house. *Nibung* as sticks and floors while *Nipah* leaves are used as roofs and walls. *Nibung* and *Nipah* are the main

ingredients for building shelter and shelter for some people in Bengkalis. The figure of a leader in front of the tower carrying a prayer that has been written on seven leaves to be used in a *Safar* bathing, shows the necessity of having a leader in a society who can be a protector, protector, and decision maker in every problem faced with the fairest way possible. justice, as well as being a conditioning for the entire community and the people they lead.

Seven leaves containing a prayer for traveling on a trip. Through the ritual of bathing the journey, it is hoped that everything will go well and be successful. The umbrella that shelters the leader is a symbol of the people's loyalty to a just and wise leader in leading and protecting his people (Alfadhilah 2021). The raft and tower carriers are representatives of the entire community of Tanjung Punak Village. This shows that the ritual bathing *Safar* the main concepts in development are togetherness and cooperation, as well as the willingness to act and make sacrifices. People who attend traditional rituals are not allowed to take a bath before the figures who are trusted to carry prayers in front of the tower rafts do it. This shows the necessity of every member of the community to obey and obey the leader as long as his leadership is in the rails of truth and justice, as was said by the Messenger of Allah that there is no obedience in sin and immorality.

In Tanjung Punak Village which is a maritime village and is located on the east coast of Sumatra, precisely in the North Rupat District, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, facing directly to the Malaysian state, previously there was a ceremony called Maccera' Kampong or Maddoassalama' Kampong. This ceremony is held every year since the opening of this village. *Safar* bathing tradition is a prayer effort for salvation that is manifested in traditional practices, including drinking purposes in prayer-infused water the prayer bath comprises seven

Qur'anic verses, which together begin with the word *salamun*, which means "salvation." Several travel-related prayers on a journey are written, some are read right away, and even memorized. Reading the verses of the Koran is aimed at asking for intercession, begging for optimism and hope in religious jargon, this is referred to as "*tafa'ul*."

Verse bathing and drinking are simply mediators; Allah is the one who cures. According to the law, something that is done by many people and contains benefits but does not conflict with religious teachings, then it can be done and preserved. In principle, religion (Islam) does not eradicate tradition, as long as the tradition does not damage the creed of the people. Islam emphasizes that if a tradition leads to the destruction of faith, it must be abandoned. This is in line with the *nash* which means: "Indeed Allah has permitted the good and forbade the bad." Even though *Safar* bathing, like other customs that emerged in the society, appears to be a religious ritual with religious overtones, it is not religious in nature. This is due to the fact that Islam has never issued a command in the Qur'an or Hadith. take a bath while traveling. Therefore, in the *Safar bathing* ceremony, the aspect of "tradition and culture" that needs to be prioritized is not the aspect of religious rituals(Ashsubli 2018b).

Because it is feared that if having taken a *Safar* bath is recognized a religious ritual that is marked by that of the objective of stealing a *Safar* bath, writing specified verses on a sheet of parchment or a leaf, and then taking a bath, it will lead to a belief among some of the individuals that the *Safar* bath or the stanza is going to heal, saving, and saving people from all kinds of disasters and calamities. An understanding like this is an understanding that smells of shirk, because in essence the only one who can heal, save, and prevent people from calamities and disasters is Allah alone. Regarding the existence of the *syifa* (healing) verse in the Qur'an, basically it is a guide

to finding *syifa* (healer/healer) antidote).

The verses in the Qur'an in essence only function as an intermediary, not a goal (healer). Allah SWT does not discriminate between one verse and another, all verses in the Qur'an are *hudan* (guidance) for humans in life in this world. Thus "Safar bathing as a tradition can be carried out and preserved as long as it is not considered a religious ritual which is characterized by the intention of taking a *Safar* bath and writing a number of verses on a leaf and pouring it out. Bathing is generally something that is recommended in religion because bathing is one way to clean the body in the hope of avoiding dirt and disease, n but must be based on the intention alone to Allah.

The tradition of bathing *Safar* as a vehicle to increase *ukhuwah*. The ritual of bathing *Safar wathoniyah* and *ukhuwah insaniyah* on the other hand, is not contradictory and is highly recommended by religion. Meanwhile, to distinguish the category of heresy or not, it can be seen in the intentions spoken. The intention that was said was "I intend to go for a trip because of Allah Ta'ala, not I intend to take a sunnah of *Safar* bath because of Allah Ta'ala. Intentions in the first category are not included in the category of heresy. Heresy here is fabricating something worship that has no basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah but is considered as a teaching from the Qur'an and Sunnah (Islam).

### **Islamic Theology in Mandi Safar Ritual**

There are various rituals related with natural events in Islamic teachings alone, such as the *istisqa* prayer (praying for rain) and the solar or lunar eclipse prayers (*kusuf* and *khusuf* prayers). Some of these rites are governed by laws found in the Prophet Muhammad's sunnah (Nakissa 2020); (Lange 2021). Where, of course, the regulations have directives or permission from

Allah SWT. However, numerous rituals that are the labor and creativity of people still exist among Muslims and society in general, particularly in Indonesia. Their objective is to draw closer to the Almighty, to pray for something, or simply to display a type of thanks for what He has provided to mankind.

Depending on the natural occurrences people meet, rituals or ceremonies take various shapes. There are sea alms rituals, *grebeg mulud* rituals, village clean rituals, feasts of salvation, and other ceremonies in Java, for example. There are also numerous rituals in the Jambi region, such as village washing rituals, rituals before planting and harvesting rice, feasts, or salvation, such as the ritual of bathing in *Safar*, and so on. With so many different sorts of rituals, it's not unusual for the general people to believe that these rituals are religious rites that must be performed, particularly in the Islamic faith, and even to believe that these ceremonies have a legal foundation and incorporate Islamic teachings. This is what leads to the formation of pro and anti-Islamic organizations among Muslims (Chowdhury 2021); (Despotis and Athanasiou 2022).

The pro group believes that the ritual was taught by the *salafus salih* and that it must be carried out from generation to generation, even if it is no longer practiced. There will be sensations in the heart that aren't quite correct. Meanwhile, the opposing camp believes that these ceremonies have no legal basis in the Qur'an or Sunnah (Roqib 2021), and hence are *bid'ah dhalalah* (misleading practices) that might lead to polytheism. The ceremonial washing *Safar* is one of the rites that has caused controversy in the Islamic community. Every Hijri year, on the last Wednesday of the month of *Safar*, a bathing ritual is performed that begins with writing seven verses of the Qur'an, beginning with *Salamun*, and then immersing it in water to be used for bathing. Some individuals

think that bathing *Safar* is a rite that may protect mankind from different types of catastrophes, disasters, and diseases, as well as spare them from the Dajjal's fitnah (torment). Some Muslims in Indonesia see *Safar bathing* as one of the religious rituals that stem from religious teachings (the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's Hadith) as the primary basis of all shari'ah and rituals (Behr 2018);(Chaudhary 2019);(Ulfat 2020).

However, the two primary texts do not specifically urge such a voyage. Sheikh Syarfuiddin's comment in his book *Ta'liqah*, indicating that having a *Safar* bath upon that night throughout the last Wednesday of the calendar of *Safar* is a tradition, Allah SWT, is one of the sources held thus far (Oladosu 2017); (Abu-Shamsieh 2019); (Qutbuddin 2021); (Schvarcz and Billig 2022). Another source says that a similar practice to taking a *Safar* bath was narrated by In his book *Abwab al-Faraj*, articles on Medicine with *Syifa* Verses, a famous philosopher named al-Shaykh Muhammad bin Atwi al-Maliki al-Hasani tells that al-Imam al-Shaykh Abu al-Qashimal-Qusyairi Rahimahullah, his child was so unwell that he almost stopped seeing him, then he dreamed of seeing the Prophet in his sleep, and then he lamented about his son's health.

"Don't you know the passages of *syifa* in the Qur'an?" the Prophet said. Then Imam al-Qusyairi went straight to the passages mentioned by the Prophet. (Markschies 2019); (Mansouri, F., Keskin 2019); (Zhuo Job Chen, Mustafa Tekke 2021). And found 5 verses in the Qur'an containing the word *syifa*, namely those contained in the letter at al-Tawbah (14), Yunus (57), an-Nahl (69), al-Isra' (82), and ash-Shu'ara (80) (Quran n.d.).

Then al-Qusyairi transcribed the poems on paper and dissolved them in water, which he presented to the kid to consume as an antidote, curing him of his ailment. The seven verses

mentioned in the book of Tajul Muluk are contained in the letters Ya Sin (58), as-Saffat (79), as-Saffat (109), as-Saffat (120), ash-Shafat (130), az-Zumat ( 73), and al-Qadar (5)(Quran n.d.).

The ritual of taking a *Safar* bath is also carried out by some people, but what is written is not five *syifa* verses or seven verses beginning with pronouncing the *salam*, but writing the letters of *raja*-*raja* on the a piece of paper or a leaf is then placed into a bath or barrel of drinking water or a well at certain times of the month of *Safar*. Then the Water is utilized for both bathing and drinking. Bathing *Safar* is a significant occasion for the people of *Tanjung Punak* Village, North Rupert Island, once a year, in order to nurture the "*ukhuwwah wathaniyah*" (brotherhood of countrymen and countrymen), regardless of nationality, race, or religion, everyone coming together to follow and implement the practice.

The maintenance of *Mandi Safar* is not a cult that leads to the notion that if you do not carry out or follow the tradition, you will be struck by calamity and will perish. Because plagues, calamities, and illnesses are no longer a choice for mankind, but rather a mandate of the universe's Creator and Allah SWT is also responsible for your safety and pleasure. The second intention model, in which the intention is included in the lafadz "*sunnah*," which indicates that there is a hadith based on both *qauliyah* and *fi'liyah*, even if the hadith that says the advice to take a *Safar* bath was not located in the study done.

As a result, the *Safar bathing* ritual in Teluk Punak Village does not fall within the *bidah dhalalah* category (misleading heresy) Various types of *bid'ah* arose, without a doubt, as Muslim areas expanded. As a result, *fitnah* began to sneak into the lives of Muslims, affecting their beliefs, worship, and behavior. Then, among certain *fuqara'* and jurists, ignorance reigned supreme, escalating the conflict between the two groups

(Asadullah, Hussain, and Akhlaq 2021). This ceremony comprises educational aspects that are explained through the symbols employed in the rite and represent high Islamic ideals. As a result, this *Safar* washing practice might be regarded a sacred tradition, particularly in Islam (Bahar 2019); (Redzan and Benhaddou 2021).

If you look at the rituals that exist in various areas of Indonesia, you'll see that the community is more inclined to adopt the accommodative-reformative pattern or Islamic indigenization rather than the Islamic purifying pattern. This is understandable because everyone is born into their own "culture" and "custom.". The inculturation and acculturation of a person's religion is heavily influenced by the local culture in which they grew up. It's difficult to believe that a person can be "pure" without being influenced by his environment. Except for a genuine prophet or apostle who can claim to have received divine revelations, but for the rest of us, if we're talking about regular people, knowledge and how to exhibit variety comes from their parents, teachers, and kiyai, as well as behaviors that are just passed down from generation to generation.

Religion becomes identical with tradition in such a situation or a cultural manifestation of people's trust in the Almighty, or a cultural representation of people's belief in anything Holy. If religion and tradition are considered as a sort of history and contemporary interpretation, then all religious realms are expressions of human creativity that are highly subjective. This indicates that the religious truth that everyone believes to be "true" is essentially restricted to what humans can interpret and articulate in relation to God's absolute "truth." As a result, whatever shape humanity's attitude toward preserving, rejuvenating, or cleansing religious traditions adopts, it must be understood as a conflict in the history of religious organizations.

## CONCLUSION

*Safar* bathing is a cultural belief of Malay community in Rupert Island, Riau Province. However, due to majority of Malay community in Rupert is Muslim, they adopted the theology of Islam in the *Safar* bathing. Moreover, some Muslim groups, particularly in Indonesia, have a *Safar* washing practice. The practice of *Safar* washing does not clash with Islamic theology, which is based on Koran and Hadith, since there is no element of heresy, based on its procedure and purpose. Specifically, this article meets the purpose of filling up the research gaps. As a result, *Safar* bathing must be preserved as a cultural tradition with high social ideals, especially in Malay community in Rupert Island. Furthermore, the type of *Safar* bathing practice has the ability to boost the region's economic and tourism growth in Rupert Island. This research still must be explored and elaborated in the context of scientific advancement.

Even though, there is a doubt from certain group of Muslims that claim *Safar bathing* is not kind of Islamic religious practice, with the theology of Islam and hadith, Teluk Punak Village's *Safar bathing* ritual does not fall within the *bi'dah dhalalah* category. Without a doubt, several varieties of *bid'ah* emerged as Muslim regions spread. As a result, *fitnah* began to infiltrate Muslims' lives, influencing their beliefs, worship, and conduct. Ignorance ruled dominant among certain *fuqara'* and jurists, intensifying the struggle between the two parties. However, the cultural belief of Rupert Island toward *Safar bathing* should be respected as it should be, by the conflict perception of certain group of Muslim, this ritual could give positive feedbacks for the community in Rupert Island.

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