

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE TRADITION OF THE RITUAL OF REJECTING THE BALA BEFORE PLANTING RICE IN PASIR TINGGI VILLAGE, SOUTH TEUPAH DISTRICT, SIMEULUE REGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the community's perception of the tradition of the ritual of rejecting reinforcements carried out before the rice planting season in Pasir Tinggi Village, South Teupah District, Simeulue Regency. This tradition is an ancestral cultural heritage that is carried out from generation to generation as a spiritual effort to seek protection from pest disturbances and harm to rice plants. The method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that there are differences of views among the community. Most people still maintain this ritual because it is considered part of the cultural identity and local wisdom that has magical and religious value. However, some other people consider that this practice deviates from Islamic teachings because it involves giving offerings to supernatural beings which are considered a form of shirk. These findings reflect the existence of socio-religious dynamics in societies that live in the midst of the intersection between local traditions and religious teachings. This research is expected to contribute to the study of religious anthropology and the preservation of local culture.

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### INTRODUCTIONS

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, perception is a direct response (reception) of something. While the definition of perception in the scientific dictionary is observation, the arrangement of impulses in units, the matter of knowing, through the senses, responses (senses) and the power of understanding. Perception is one of the important psychological aspects for humans in responding to the presence of various aspects and symptoms around them (Partanto, 2001)

Perception has a very broad meaning, involving internal and external. Various experts have given different definitions of perception, although they contain the same meaning in principle. Perception is a process that is preceded

by a sensing, which is a process that is in the form of receiving stimuli by individuals through their receptors. Therefore, the ability of humans to distinguish, group and focus those in their environment. referred to as the ability to organize observations or perceptions (Dzulfahmi, 2021).

Everyone has a tendency to see the same thing in different ways. These differences can be influenced by many factors, including knowledge, experience and perspective. Perception is also linked to the way a person views a certain object in different ways by using the sensory tools they have, then trying to interpret it. Perception is the result of the brain's work in understanding or assessing something that happens around it.

Perception occurs through a process that can be triggered by an object so that it causes a stimulus that hits the sensory apparatus or receptors. The process of stimulation regarding the sensory apparatus is a natural process or a physical process. Perception is not only about physical stimuli but also about the relationship between stimuli, the environment and the individual. A person can have different perceptions of the same object (Dzulfahmi, 2021). The process of perception will continue as long as humans are familiar with the surrounding environment. Every time we interact in the environment and will give a response or reaction, either in the form of behavior, opinions, attitudes, or ideas according to the views of each individual (Listyana, 2013).

The formation of a group or society is because humans use their thoughts, feelings, and desires in responding to the surrounding environment. Humans have an instinct to always be in contact with others. Relationships that are continuous and continuous produce a pattern of association called the pattern of social interaction (Dzulfahmi, 2021).

Each region has its own culture and characteristics between one and the other (Ningsish, 2023). There are variables and factors that affect differences based on their characteristics, such as geographical, religious and social layout, and are inseparable from the mentality of the people who live there. People in the world today still cling to cultural values to live their lives. Culture cannot be separated from life in society because culture arises because of the existence of society as a support. Customs are a type of culture, while culture is a form of real activity that originates from customs and is closely related to the constituent factors in human life such as cultural, social and economic aspects and other supporting factors (Mattulada, et al., 2006).

In this life, humans face various problems and challenges, such as crop failure, natural disasters, diseases, and so on. Humans cannot escape and run away from these problems. Therefore, there are many ways that humans can deal with and solve these problems. One of them is making peace with nature through the implementation of a series of rituals or ceremonies (Rakhmat, 2011).

Although humans are in an advanced and sophisticated era, this method is not completely abandoned by some groups of people. For them, carrying out rituals to make peace with nature is the way to achieve a peaceful, safe, peaceful, and prosperous life. The ritual in general for the people of high sand is known as "*tolak bala*". This ritual is carried out in a certain period of time and for a specific reason (Manan, 2016).

The phenomenon as described above is still found in the community of Pasir Tinggi Village, South Teupah District, Simeulue Regency. Although it must be admitted, in fact, this phenomenon in the past has also been carried out by various ethnic groups in Indonesia. It's just that in line with the development of the times and technological advancements, this ritual tradition slowly began to be abandoned. However, for the people of Pasir Tinggi village, it is considered to carry out the ritual of rejecting reinforcements by offering offerings to supernatural beings whose purpose is to eliminate pests on their rice plants. The implementation of this ritual of rejecting the reinforcements has become a tradition of the ancestors for generations that cannot be abandoned,

Even though they have embraced Islam, this practice still persists. Borrowing the term Mohd. Taib Osman, the ritual of rejecting reinforcements can be grouped into "Popular Islam". Popular Islam is the result of a dialogue between religions (Islam) embraced by the community and local beliefs. Belief in mystical matters can hinder or help activities that must be known in relation to the ritual. Rituals, for example, are an indication of human efforts to conquer nature. The conquest of nature requires rituals related to something around the sacred mountain. The status of rituals that are classified as sacred and supernatural dimensions cannot be digested through logic, so it requires another approach that is more effective and appropriate (Osman, 2008).

The ritual of rejecting reinforcements contains a belief in the existence of natural forces that must be supported and maintained to find the best way to continue the daily life of the community so that they are kept away or avoided from danger. The people in Pasir Tinggi village view that the ritual of rejecting reinforcements is a form of ceremony that contains the belief in treating the village. This ritual is a symbolic behavior or action as well as a form of expression of their soul in establishing relationships with the inhabitants of the supernatural world (Hasbullah, 2017).

Based on the results of initial observations and the reality that occurred in the field over time and the development of the times, many views/perceptions from the local community were born. There are some people who think that the rejection of reinforcements that they have done so far is an act that has deviated from Islamic law because it is included in the act of shirk associating Allah with His creatures by offering offerings to supernatural beings with the aim of getting protection and avoiding all dangers. And most people think that the rejection of reinforcements must still be carried out and maintained because it has become a hereditary ancestral heritage that must be maintained and preserved until now, with the aim that their rice plants get safety and avoid disturbances of various types of pests.

Therefore, some farmers in Pasir Tinggi village still believe in the ritual of rejecting the reinforcements until now. The practice of this ritual of rejecting reinforcements contains elements that come from Islam, namely prayers recited by religious leaders. However, this ritual also involves shamans as the executors of the ritual. Thus, this ritual is a form of combining Islamic elements with local beliefs.

As the author knows, the ritual of giving offerings is classified as an act of shirk. Because the ritual of offering the offerings is shown to a spirit creature who is considered to be the ruler of a certain place, of course it is included as an act of associating God with creatures. And these acts are very dangerous for the perpetrators. In Islam itself, it is clear that the law of worship, asking for other than Allah, preserving subtle beings, is an act that shirk cannot be done in Islam. And why the act of shirk is classified as a great sin to be committed.

First: Allah SWT hates these deeds very much and does not forgive sins for shirk deeds. As Allah says in Surah an-Nisaa' verse 48 in that verse Allah says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا (٤٨)

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah will not forgive the sins of shirk, and He forgives all sins other than (shirk) for whomever He wills. Whoever associates with Allah, he has indeed committed a great sin." (QS. (Id. at 48) (Indonesia, 2011).

Because in the giving of offerings there is a sense of resentment and fear in the hearts of those who give offerings to other than Allah. Even though this is a great worship of the heart and only deserves to be shown to Allah SWT. Even though the offerings offered are very small and trivial, if they are accompanied by fear and fear in their hearts for others besides Him, it is classified as a great sin.

Second: the giving of offerings does not only include polytheism which is classified as a great sin that is not forgiven. However, this act will actually also make the perpetrator go to hell. Even if the perpetrator dies in a state of unrepentance and polytheism, then the perpetrator is also haram to enter heaven and will be placed in hell. As Allah says in Surah an-Nisaa' verse 72 in that verse Allah says:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ (٧٢)

Meaning: "Indeed, those who say, "Indeed, Allah is the son of Mary." Whereas al-Masih (himself) said, "O children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, whoever associates (something with) Allah, surely



Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and his place is Hell. there is not a helper for the unrighteous (QS. Al-Maidah: 72) (Translation, 2015).

Third: Allah will also curse the perpetrators of polytheistic acts. In a saheeh hadith:

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ ذَبَحَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ

It means: "From Ali bin abi thalib ra that the Prophet PBUH said, "Allah curses those who slaughter (sacrifice) for others besides Him". (HR. Muslim) (Al-Hajjaj, 2017).

Offering something to the jinn, the spirit creature with the aim of seeking salvation and protection is indeed a great sin. In fact, it is an act of shirk that can cause a person to leave Islam. Therefore, Allah forbids the act of shirk.

Even though a person only participates and helps in the event, he is still included as a person who worships God. Because Allah only commands His hambah to help only in good deeds. As Allah says in Surah Al-Maidah verse: 2 In that verse Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشُّهُرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أُمِينَ النَّبِيِّ الْحَرَامَ يَتَّبِعُونَ فَضْلًا  
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نَقُومٍ أَن صَدُّوكُم مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى  
الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

Meaning: "O you who believe! Do not transgress the sanctity of Allah, and do not violate the Haram months, do not disturb the Hadyu (sacrificial animals) and Qalaid (the marked sacrificial animals), and do not disturb those who visit the Baitulharam; They seek the bounty and pleasure of their Lord, but when you have completed ihram, then you may hunt. Do not let your hatred towards a people because they prevent you from the Grand Mosque, encouraging you to go beyond the limits (to them). And help you in righteousness and piety, and do not help in sins and transgressions, and fear Allah, for Allah is very severe. (QS. Al-Maidah:2) (Translation, 2016).

Thus, Muslims should avoid acts that are classified as sharia. Because if it is done, the consequences are very dangerous, namely it can make a person classified as committing a great sin, make the perpetrator go to hell, and will be cursed by Allah SWT. To prevent the community from doing things that are contrary to Islamic law continuously, therefore da'wah must be carried out in a way that is good for the people.

Based on the background of the problem about the ritual of rejecting reinforcements, the author is interested in conducting a research with the title "Community Perception of the Ritual of Rejecting Reinforcement Before Planting Rice in Pasir Tinggi Village, South Teupah District, Simeulue Regency".

## RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative method. This method is able to capture and understand the existence of interrelationships between various external and internal phenomena contained in the community's perception of the tradition of the ritual of rejecting reinforcements before planting rice in Pasir Tinggi Village, South Teupah District, Simeulue Regency. In addition, the data required in this study are descriptive and do not require quantification, so qualitative methods are considered appropriate to be used (Garna, 2005). Through this method, descriptive data will be obtained, namely what people say, both verbally and written in the language and in the term. Therefore, the type of research that is suitable for this research is field research using a qualitative descriptive approach. The data collection techniques carried out in the research are observation, interviews, and documentation (Bogdan & S.J., 2006).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Causes of the Tradition of Refusing the Ritual of Resisting Rice Before Planting Rice in the Pasir Tinggi Village Community

#### 1. The History and Origin of the Ritual

Rosdian Muluk as the Head of Pasir Tinggi Village explained that the Tolak Bala Ritual has been an important part of the community's cultural heritage since the time of the ancestors. With a deep understanding of the local customary history, Rosdian said that this ritual first began to be known around 1968. Since then, this tradition has been carried out for generations by village elders and elders as a form of effort to preserve nature and the safety of agricultural products, especially rice which is the main source of livelihood for the community. In his view, this tradition is not just a cultural symbol, but also a local strategy that is full of spiritual value in responding to environmental challenges.

Marjumin said that in the early days of its implementation, the Tolak Bala Ritual was born as a solution to the emergency conditions faced by the farming community. At that time, rice plants often experienced crop failure due to attacks by various types of pests such as rats, sparrows, caterpillars, langang sangit, and even snakes. In this worrying situation, a charismatic traditional figure named Grandpa Oco emerged who initiated a form of joint ritual as a spiritual effort to resist the army. The community believes that disturbances from spirit creatures are also the cause of the rampant pests, so this ritual is also aimed at expelling supernatural elements that are considered to disturb the balance of nature.

Since then, the Tolak Bala Ritual has begun to be carried out routinely every six months, coinciding with the initial period of planting preparations. This moment was chosen because it is believed to be the most appropriate time to ask for protection from God and nature so that the planting process to harvest can run smoothly. In practice, this ritual usually involves the recitation of prayers, symbolic presentations in the form of offerings, and mutual cooperation activities that unite all villagers in one common goal: to protect the produce from all dangers, both visible and invisible.

Furthermore, Rosdian Muluk emphasized that even though the times continue to change, people's trust in the benefits of this ritual is still quite strong. He stated that this tradition has become an integral part of the annual agricultural cycle and is a form of respect for nature and ancestors. According to him, the implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual is not only a traditional ritual, but also a spiritual and cultural expression of the Pasir Tinggi community in maintaining harmony between humans, nature, and invisible forces that are believed to also affect crop yields.

In addition to being a spiritual medium and preserving customs, the Tolak Bala Ritual also has a very strong social value in strengthening relationships between residents. Ritual processions usually involve all levels of society, from children to the elderly, who work together to prepare ritual equipment such as offerings, ceremonial places, and traditional dishes served after the procession is over. This moment becomes a space for friendship and togetherness that strengthens social solidarity among villagers. By bringing together all elements of society in one goal, a spirit of mutual cooperation is created that strengthens the social structure of the village and strengthens the sense of belonging to the traditions of ancestral heritage.

In addition to its spiritual and social value, this ritual is also considered to have indirect ecological benefits. Through local wisdom passed down from generation to generation, people are trained to be more sensitive to natural signs and agricultural life cycles. They learn to read natural phenomena, recognize pest types, and know the right planting time based on the experience of their ancestors. Thus, the Tolak Bala Ritual is not only a cultural symbol, but also a forum for collective learning that forms the character of an agrarian society that is resilient, adaptive, and full of gratitude for the natural gifts that they manage together.

## **2. Social and cultural factors that affect the sustainability of rituals**

The Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village is only a form of spiritual activity or agrarian tradition, but has become an important part of the social structure of the local community. This tradition has been going on for generations since 1968, starting from the community's anxiety about pest disturbances in rice plants that threaten the village's food security. A traditional leader named Oco initiated this ritual as a form of spiritual endeavor, which was then accepted and inherited by the next generation. In this context, the sustainability of tradition cannot be separated from the collective historical factors that shape the cultural awareness of citizens to continue to preserve it.

From a social perspective, this ritual functions as a unifying medium between villagers. All elements of society are actively involved in its implementation, ranging from traditional leaders, farmers, housewives, to children. Activities such as the preparation of offerings, joint prayer readings, and village deliberations become spaces for social interaction that strengthen intergenerational relationships. Mutual cooperation reflected in the implementation of rituals creates strong solidarity, as well as strengthens the collective identity as an agrarian community that upholds the values of togetherness and mutual help.

Furthermore, cultural factors also play a central role in the sustainability of the Tolak Bala ritual. This tradition is seen as part of an ancestral heritage that should not be altered or eliminated. The implementation structure still follows the inherited pattern: from the type of offering, the time of implementation, to the order of the ritual. The belief in spiritual powers and spirit beings as guardians or disturbers of plants is still alive in the minds of the people. These values not only shape local belief systems, but also reinforce the position of rituals as a manifestation of man's relationship with nature and the supernatural.

However, the continuity of this ritual also faces the challenge of changing times and the inclusion of more literal religious values. Some people, especially young people or those who have a deeper understanding of Islam, have begun to question practices such as the use of offerings or incense. They consider that some elements in the ritual are contrary to religious teachings. Even so, traditional leaders such as Abdul Karim still maintain the authenticity of the ritual as a form of respect for ancestors and maintain a balance between local beliefs and Islamic spirituality.

In the midst of modernization, the attitude of the younger generation towards this ritual is quite interesting. Although not all understood its philosophical or spiritual meaning, they still showed interest and involvement, both out of respect for their parents and out of awareness of the importance of preserving local traditions. This shows that the Tolak Bala ritual has room to adapt to the development of the times, as long as its main essence is maintained. Intergenerationality of participation is one of the important factors that support the sustainability of this cultural practice.

Thus, it can be concluded that the continuity of the Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village is influenced by a close combination of social and cultural factors. On the one hand, this ritual is a means of strengthening social ties and solidarity of villagers. On the other hand, cultural heritage and belief values that are still maintained today are the main foundation in maintaining the existence of this tradition. Despite the challenges of modernization and differences in religious understanding, the people of Pasir Tinggi Village still strive to adapt this practice to remain relevant without losing its original meaning.

## **3. Traditions and beliefs and values**

Belief in spirit creatures and supernatural threats are the main background for the implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village. The community believes that various agricultural disasters, such as attacks by rats, caterpillars, and sparrows, are not only caused by natural factors, but also by the disturbance of angry or disturbed spirit creatures. This belief arose from hereditary inheritance, which then encouraged the initiation of rituals by traditional leaders such as Grandpa Oco in 1968. This ritual is then carried out as a form of spiritual effort by the community to "reject the army" or dismiss all disasters that originate from the invisible world.



These spiritual beliefs become a strong foundation that is passed down from generation to generation. Rosdian Muluk, the village head and traditional leader, emphasized that the Tolak Bala Ritual has become part of local customs that must be carried out every year, especially ahead of the planting season. This tradition is considered a form of respect for ancestors, as well as a way to maintain harmony between humans, nature, and spirit creatures that are believed to coexist with humans in the surrounding environment.

In its implementation, this ritual contains not only spiritual elements, but also social and religious values. The ritual began with a joint deliberation involving all villagers. After that, the recitation of Surah Yasin and joint prayer were carried out as a form of supplication to God to avoid danger and be given smoothness in farming. The presence of Yasin's prayer and reading elements shows an effort to associate local traditions with Islamic values, as a form of adjustment to the beliefs of the majority of the Muslim community.

However, this ritual also contains elements that are debated in terms of religious teachings. The use of offerings such as white chicken, frankincense, and certain foods placed at strategic points in the rice fields is still an important part of the implementation of the ritual. For some people, especially those who have a deeper understanding of religion, this practice is considered deviant from monotheism and can be included in the category of shirk, because it gives offerings to others than Allah.

Traditional values and belief in spiritual power in these rituals began to be challenged by the modernization and purification of religious teachings. Budi, one of the community leaders, stated that some of the younger generation have begun to doubt the spiritual benefits of the ritual. Around 25 percent of villagers are now more inclined to rational and religious approaches that reject the existence of spirit creatures as the cause of disasters. This shows a shift in values among the community, from traditional beliefs to a more textual understanding of Islam.

Nevertheless, the majority of people still maintain this tradition for pragmatic and spiritual reasons. They believe that this ritual has a positive effect on agriculture and village peace. In addition, social values such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, and respect for ancestors remain a strong part of the implementation of rituals. In fact, even though some residents no longer fully believe in its spiritual meaning, they still participate in rituals as a form of appreciation for the cultural values that have been inherited.

With this dynamic, there is an effort to adjust traditional values with religious teachings. Salida suggested that offerings be replaced with the form of alms to orphans or other social activities that have the value of worship in Islam. This shows that the values that underlie tradition are not static, but can change and adapt to the development of the times and religious understanding. The Tolak Bala ritual is now at the crossroads between cultural preservation and alignment with Islamic values that are more dominant in people's lives.

#### **4. The role of traditional and religious leaders in the implementation of rituals**

The Tolak Bala ritual which has been going on since 1968 in Pasir Tinggi Village is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation as a form of spiritual effort of the agrarian community in dealing with pest disturbances and disasters in the planting season. In its implementation, this ritual is not only a cultural agenda, but also a space for the active involvement of traditional and religious leaders. Figures like Abdul Karim, as a psychic or shaman as well as a traditional figure, have a central role in maintaining and continuing this tradition. He stated that this ritual has become part of the village customs and is carried out collectively as a form of hope for the smooth running of agriculture.

Traditional figures such as Abdul Karim are not only tasked with organizing rituals, but also play a role in preserving the philosophical meaning contained in each stage of their implementation. The village deliberations carried out before the ritual are one example of how traditional leaders invite the community to remain solid in upholding the values of mutual cooperation and local wisdom. Budi also acts as a link between the past and the present, ensuring that the spiritual values inherited by the ancestors remain relevant to the lives of the people today.

On the other hand, there are figures such as Abdul Karim, a traditional shaman who also plays an important role in the structure of the ritual implementation. He is trusted as a spiritual guardian and technical executor who understands the ordinances, types of offerings, and prayers used in rituals. For the local community, the presence of Abdul Karim is a symbol of the sustainability of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and invisible forces that are believed to have a role in the success of the harvest. He maintains the authenticity of the ritual as a form of respect for their ancestors and spiritual heritage.

Meanwhile, the existence of religious figures such as Budi brings a different color in the dynamics of the implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual. As someone who holds a strong understanding of Islam, Budi sees some elements in the ritual as contrary to Islamic teachings, especially the practice of giving offerings to spirit beings. According to him, this can lead to polytheism. Budi seeks to educate the public so that rituals can be replaced or modified into activities that do not deviate from monotheism, such as alms or joint prayers without magical elements.

This tension between customs and religion does not necessarily cause conflict, but rather as a process of value negotiation.

Salida, as a peasant community that also understands religious values, stated that he was open to harmonizing rituals with Islamic values. He even suggested that the implementation of the ritual continue but in a simpler and more religious form, for example replacing offerings with food which is then distributed to the poor or orphans. This shows that there is a meeting point between traditional leaders and religious leaders in maintaining the sustainability of traditions while purifying their values.

The role of these traditional and religious leaders is very important in shaping public perception, especially in facing the changing times. The older generation still strongly upholds traditional values and believes in the benefits of rituals, while the younger generation is beginning to question the relevance and validity of the practice. In this context, community leaders have a responsibility to explain, interpret, and direct cultural practices to remain meaningful without conflicting with religious beliefs.

Thus, the implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village is a reflection of the dynamic interaction between cultural heritage and religious values that coexist in the community. Traditional leaders play the role of preservers of tradition and social binders, while religious leaders act as guardians of the faith and spiritual guides. Both of them together keep this ritual from losing its meaning and remain relevant and harmonious in facing the challenges of the times and modernization.

## **5. The impact of rituals on agriculture and people's lives**

The Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village has a significant impact on the agricultural sector, especially on the success of the rice planting season. The villagers believe that this ritual can protect the plants from pests, diseases, and other disturbances that can damage their agricultural products. According to Budi, as the imam of the mosque, this ritual is carried out in the hope that the rice plants will thrive and avoid harmful disturbances. Collectively, this ritual builds a sense of optimism for the community in undergoing the planting season and reaping abundant agricultural products.

The implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual began with village deliberations involving traditional leaders, farmers, and the wider community. In the ritual, joint prayer and the recitation of Surah Yasin are carried out as a form of supplication to God so that agricultural products are protected. This also creates a close atmosphere of togetherness between villagers. In addition to being a means of spiritual hope, this ritual strengthens the value of mutual cooperation in preparing agricultural activities, such as the preparation of seeds and agricultural tools.

Directly, the Tolak Bala Ritual can be seen as an effort to improve the quality of agriculture in a more holistic way, covering spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions. Although some people are beginning to doubt its effectiveness, especially among the younger generation, this ritual still gives confidence and enthusiasm to those who



do it. The villagers believe that with the protection of spirit creatures through rituals, their crops will be free from pests and diseases that threaten crop yields.

In addition to the positive impact on agriculture, this ritual also contributes to the social life of the community. With deliberation and togetherness in each stage of the ritual, the social relationship between residents is getting stronger. This joint activity creates a sense of solidarity and helps each other in preparing everything necessary for the ritual. In fact, in practice, this ritual teaches the values of cooperation that are important in agrarian societies, which are interdependent on each other's success in farming.

However, although this ritual is believed to have a positive impact on agriculture, some parties, especially religious leaders, are beginning to worry about potential deviations from Islamic religious teachings. The giving of offerings carried out in this ritual, for example, is considered to lead to the practice of shirk by some people who have a stricter understanding of religion. Budi, one of the religious leaders, argued that this ritual should be replaced with activities that are more in accordance with Islamic law, such as giving alms or doing prayers more directly to God.

The change in the young generation's view of the Tolak Bala Ritual also shows the impact of rituals on people's lives. Although many younger generations still participate in this ritual, they tend to be more skeptical of the spiritual values it contains. This affects their level of participation in the ritual. Rosdian Muluk, as the village head, revealed that this tradition may become extinct in the next 10 to 20 years if the younger generation continues to doubt its relevance and benefits.

Despite the challenges and differences of views on the sustainability of this ritual, its positive impact on the agricultural and social life of the community is still felt. The Tolak Bala ritual continues to be part of the cultural identity of Pasir Tinggi Village, providing a sense of security and confidence for farmers that their crops will be protected. This tradition also teaches people to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature, while maintaining the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation which are very important in their social life. In the face of modernization, the village seeks to adapt this ritual to religious teachings and the development of the times so that it remains relevant for future generations.

## **b. The Perception of the People of Pasir Tinggi Village Towards the Tradition of the Ritual of Resisting Reinforcements Before Planting Rice**

### **1. People's Views on Rituals**

The majority of the people of Pasir Tinggi Village still believe that the Tolak Bala Ritual has a positive influence on the success of their agricultural products. Most villagers, especially the older generation, believe that this ritual can protect rice plants from various pests that often damage plants, such as rats, snakes, or sparrows. They believe that by performing this ritual, agricultural products will be protected from pest infestations, thus providing a sense of security and ensuring a smooth harvest.

Although the majority of the villagers still support this ritual, there are differences of opinion between the older generation and the younger generation. Rosdian Muluk, the village chief, noted that about 75% of the community still supports and implements this ritual, while another 25% are beginning to doubt the effectiveness of the ritual. The younger generation, according to observations, tend to be more skeptical of the success of these rituals, prioritize scientific or modern approaches in agriculture, and less associate farming success with these kinds of customary rituals.

This change in view is inseparable from the influence of modernization and education improvement. Some people, especially younger ones, are starting to focus on more modern and scientific agricultural techniques. They tend to think that the protection of agricultural products is more effective through the use of pesticides or the latest agricultural technologies, rather than relying on rituals that are considered not directly related to concrete results. This led to a shift in views towards rituals that were previously believed to be very important in guaranteeing crop yields.

One of the aspects that affects people's views on this ritual is religious understanding. Some religious leaders in the village, such as Budi, consider that this ritual is contrary to Islamic teachings, especially in terms of the use of offerings that are considered to lead to the practice of shirk or associate with Allah. They argue that everything that happens in the world, including agricultural products, is by God's permission and should not depend on magical or spiritual practices other than those taught by religion. This thought caused some people to begin to doubt or even abandon the ritual.

Despite the difference of views, Refi said that the older generation in Pasir Tinggi Village still maintains this tradition. They consider the Tolak Bala Ritual as part of the cultural heritage and ancestral beliefs that must be preserved. For them, this ritual is not only an attempt to protect agricultural products, but also as a means to maintain a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the subtle beings that are believed to exist around them. The older generation feels that by carrying out this ritual, they are following in the footsteps of their ancestors and maintaining the social and spiritual values that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Rabia said that although some people began to doubt the success of this ritual, many still believe that the Tolak Bala Ritual has an important social function. In practice, this ritual is a place for the community to gather, work together, and strengthen solidarity between citizens. The entire village community is involved in the preparation and implementation of this ritual, from the collection of offerings to joint prayers. This process of mutual cooperation creates a strong sense of togetherness, which in turn also supports the continuity of this ritual despite the change of views.

The hope of the majority of the people of Pasir Tinggi Village is that the Tolak Bala Ritual is preserved, even though it must be adjusted to the development of the times and religious values. Rosbia hopes that this ritual can still be carried out but in a way that is more in accordance with Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, Budi hopes that the public will be more careful in carrying out rituals that have elements of shirk, and suggested that activities that are more in accordance with Islamic religious teachings, such as giving alms or helping others, can replace practices that are considered not in accordance with Islamic law.

## **2. Belief in the benefits of rituals**

The majority of the people of Pasir Tinggi Village still believe that the Tolak Bala Ritual has real benefits in protecting their plants from pests and diseases. This ritual is considered a form of preventive spiritual effort, carried out before the planting period to maintain optimal crop yields. This belief was born from the collective experience of the community who felt that after the ritual was carried out, the intensity of the pest attack decreased and the agricultural yield became better.

The implementation of the ritual began with the recitation of Surah Yasin and joint prayer, which was followed by the entire community. This reflects that rituals are not only about tradition, but also as a spiritual medium to ask for protection from Allah SWT. For people who still believe in the benefits of this ritual, the element of prayer is considered to have the power to prevent them from danger and bring blessings to farming life.

Despite the controversy, some people still believe that offerings placed in rice fields serve as a symbol of repellent. They consider that offerings are not to worship other than Allah, but as a form of respect for the spirit of guardians of nature who are believed to be able to maintain the balance of the environment. In their belief, the offering is a means so that spirit creatures do not disturb the rice plant.

Aliban, said that since this ritual has been carried out for generations, the community's agricultural products are relatively more stable. People feel calmer mentally after performing the ritual, because they believe that they have made a natural and mental effort. For them, rituals are a form of obedience to ancestral teachings and proof of respect for cultural heritage that has been proven to help their lives.

In addition to the spiritual aspect, rituals also create an atmosphere of togetherness that strengthens people's trust in its benefits. When all residents are involved, both in deliberations, prayers, and the provision of offerings, a

sense of solidarity and collective responsibility arises. This moment is considered to be able to strengthen the spirit of mutual cooperation and social trust, which indirectly increases the belief that rituals have an overall positive impact.

Belief in the benefits of ritual is also supported by psychological aspects. People feel calmer and more confident in facing the planting season after carrying out the ritual. This more stable emotional condition is considered to affect the way they work in the rice fields, so that all agricultural activities become smoother. With a strong conviction, the farmers feel that they have involved a spiritual element in maintaining the results of their efforts.

Although the majority still believe in the benefits of rituals, a small part of society, especially the younger generation, is beginning to doubt its effectiveness. They argue that agricultural yields are more influenced by technical factors such as seed quality, irrigation, and fertilization. Nevertheless, for the group that still maintains the ritual, the spiritual benefits it feels are the main reason for them to continue carrying out this tradition. They believe that success does not only come from physical effort, but also from the spiritual blessings obtained through the ritual of Tolak Bala.

### **3. The attitude of the younger generation towards rituals**

Along with the development of the times and the introduction of formal education and wider religious information, the young generation in Pasir Tinggi Village showed a more critical attitude towards the Tolak Bala ritual. They began to question the validity and urgency of performing these rituals in the context of modern life, especially when compared to the purer teachings of Islam. This shows a shift in mindset from the acceptance of traditions in its entirety towards sorting based on rational and religious values.

Unlike the older generation who are actively and passionately involved in every stage of the ritual, the younger generation tends to only be spectators or simply follow along to respect their parents. Budi as the imam of the mosque noted that the active participation of young people has continued to decline in recent years. Many of them attended without really understanding the spiritual or historical significance of the ritual, and were only socially engaged, not ideologically.

One of the main factors that shape the attitude of the younger generation is education. With more young people accessing higher education and accessing digital information, they are becoming more open to textual and scriptural religious understanding. This makes them see practices such as giving offerings or offerings to subtle beings as something that is not in accordance with the values of monotheism in Islam.

The younger generation who have gained religious understanding from Islamic boarding schools, studies, and social media generally consider that the Tolak Bala ritual contains elements of shirk. In their view, rituals involving offerings and belief in spirit beings as rice field guardians are considered deviant from Islamic teachings that prohibit associating with Allah. Therefore, they feel uncomfortable if they have to involve themselves in the tradition.

Despite rejecting some aspects of the ritual, not a few young generations still appreciate the cultural values contained in the implementation of the Tolak Bala ritual. Some of them still support this activity as a symbol of local identity and ancestral heritage that should be preserved, as long as it does not contradict religious principles. This suggests a kind of cultural compromise, where they keep tradition as a form of respect, not because of spiritual beliefs.

The attitude of the younger generation is also greatly influenced by the role of parents and families in inheriting traditional values. Families that still hold fast to customs tend to be able to maintain their children's participation in rituals, even if only physically. However, families who are already inclined towards a stricter understanding of religion usually direct their children to stay away from practices that are considered incompatible with Islamic law.

Abdul Karim and the people who still routinely follow this ritual every time before planting rice expressed their concern that in the next 10 to 20 years, the Tolak Bala Ritual has the potential to become extinct if there is no strong regeneration. The attitude of the younger generation who tend to be pragmatic and rational makes it difficult



for them to accept the spiritual and magical aspects of the tradition. Therefore, the main challenge in the future is how to package this ritual with a more religious and educational approach so that it can be accepted by the new generation without losing its cultural essence.

#### **4. Ritual relationship with religion and customs**

The Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village has been a part of people's lives since 1968. It emerged as a customary response to the threat of pests that disrupt agricultural products, especially rice. The community believes that this ritual is an ancestral heritage that aims to maintain harmony between humans, nature, and supernatural beings. As part of the traditional tradition, this ritual has strong historical and cultural value, and has been deeply rooted in the social system of the community.

Although it is rooted in custom, the implementation of the Tolak Bala Ritual has accommodated Islamic elements. One of them is the recitation of Surah Yasin and joint prayer as a form of supplication to Allah so that agricultural products are protected from pests and disasters. These prayers are a means of integration between religious values and the implementation of rituals with local cultural nuances. This shows that there are efforts by the community to make traditional rituals more religious and in harmony with Islamic beliefs.

However, practices such as the use of offerings and offerings to spirit beings in the Tolak Bala ritual have caused controversy, especially from those with a more conservative understanding of the religion. Community leaders such as Budi consider that these elements have the potential to be shirk, namely allying with Allah. He emphasized that belief in beings other than Allah as the protector of rice fields is a form of deviation from the teachings of monotheism in Islam.

Rosdian Muluk, as the village head as well as a traditional leader, understands the tension between customs and religion. He acknowledged that this ritual comes from ancestral traditions, but also recognized the importance of adjustment to Islamic law. Therefore, he supports the transformation of rituals so that they are preserved without deviating from religious values. For example, he proposed that the giving of offerings be replaced by alms or other forms of social charity.

The majority of the people of Pasir Tinggi Village do not see any sharp contradiction between religion and custom as long as the ritual is carried out with good intentions and does not condemn God. They believe that reading prayers, giving alms, and maintaining traditions can go hand in hand. However, this perception is more widely embraced by the older generation who see religion and customs as two things that complement each other, not contradict each other.

For the community, this ritual is not only a traditional activity, but also a means of building solidarity and uniting good intentions for the common good. In its implementation, Islamic values such as mutual cooperation, joint prayer, and gratitude are still put forward. This shows that despite the presence of customary elements, the ritual performance also contains a strong religious content and is part of the religious expression of the local community.

In the future, the relationship between customs and religion in the implementation of the Tolak Bala ritual will be faced with the challenge of modernization and increasing religious awareness. A dialogical approach is needed between traditional leaders, scholars, and the community to find a harmonious common ground. It is hoped that the traditions that become cultural identity can still be maintained, but in a form that is more in accordance with the pure Islamic principles, without losing the social and spiritual values contained in them.

#### **5. Sustainability of tradition in the modern context**

The Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village faces a big challenge in the modern era. Changes in lifestyles, increasing education, and the entry of information technology have made the younger generation begin to question the relevance of these rituals. If this tradition was once considered sacred and irreplaceable, now there is an assumption that such a practice is outdated and not in accordance with the development of modern logic.

People's participation in rituals slowly began to change. The older generation still holds fast to its implementation in its entirety, but the younger generation tends to follow only formalities. Some of them are only present because of social pressure or respect for parents, not because of understanding and belief in the spiritual meaning of the ritual. This shows a shift in motivation in the preservation of traditions.

Salida as a member of the peasant community is aware of this challenge and seeks to adapt the ritual to more universal and religious values. He suggested that symbolic forms that are considered contrary to religion, such as offerings, could be replaced with alms to orphans or other social activities. This is done to maintain the essence of the ritual while responding to the demands of the times.

The improvement of education among the public, especially the younger generation, has a great influence on the perspective of tradition. They began to use rational and scientific approaches in assessing the effectiveness of rituals on crop yields. As a result, some have begun to judge that the success of agriculture is influenced more by technical factors such as fertilizer use, irrigation, and modern pest control, rather than by the spiritual aspects of rituals.

Nonetheless, there is still a collective awareness that these rituals are part of the local cultural identity. For some people, the preservation of traditions is not only a matter of believing in its benefits, but also as a form of respect for the ancestors and the identity of the community. Therefore, even though its values and forms began to undergo modifications, its existence is still considered important as cultural heritage.

To answer the challenges of the times, some people try to synchronize traditional values with religious teachings. For example, rituals are still carried out, but focus on spiritual activities that are allowed in Islam such as the reading of prayers together, almsgiving, and mutual cooperation. This approach is considered a middle ground that can maintain the sustainability of tradition without ignoring religious principles.

The sustainability of the Tolak Bala Ritual tradition is highly dependent on the attitude of the younger generation in the future. Therefore, community leaders hope that there will be educational and cultural efforts that can instill positive values from this ritual. With an inclusive, adaptive, and dialogical approach, this tradition is expected not only to survive, but also to develop in a more contextual form and in accordance with modern and Islamic values.

## CONCLUSION

The Tolak Bala ritual in Pasir Tinggi Village is a tradition that has been going on since 1968, functioning as a spiritual effort of the agrarian community to protect agricultural products, especially rice, from pest and disaster disturbances. This ritual not only has a spiritual dimension, but also plays an important role in strengthening social ties between citizens, creating solidarity, and preserving cultural values inherited by ancestors. The community believes that the implementation of this ritual can provide protection and blessings for their agricultural products.

The sustainability of this ritual is influenced by social and cultural factors, where the involvement of all elements of society, from the old to the young generation, is key in its implementation. Although the majority of people still support this ritual, there is a shift in views among the younger generation who are more skeptical of its effectiveness, tend to prioritize a scientific approach to agriculture, and question elements that are considered contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Traditional leaders and religious leaders play an important role in maintaining and adapting this ritual to remain relevant to the times. The dialogue between the two creates a space to harmonize traditional and religious values, so that rituals can be carried out in a way that is more in accordance with Islamic principles, such as replacing offerings with alms.

Although the challenges of modernization and changing values among the younger generation threaten the sustainability of these rituals, the collective awareness of the importance of preserving traditions as part of cultural identity remains. Efforts to adapt the ritual with a more religious and educational approach are expected to preserve the essence and meaning of the Tolak Bala Ritual, so that this tradition can continue to be preserved and developed in a context that is more contextual and relevant to modern values.

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