

## Changes of The Function of The New Meaning of Ritual Reject Bala Malay Serdang

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### Abstract

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This study was carried out to get a better understanding of the role of the Tolak Bala ritual (ward off misfortune) in Malay society nowadays. The Tolak Bala ritual is a type of cultural treatment to seek protection from misfortune from God. Despite modernization and technology, the Tolak Bala ritual has become endangered in Malay society as a cultural value, as it is shown by the Serdang District that lost the Tolak Bala ritual. A qualitative descriptive research design is employed to see how Malay faiths have changed since they were implemented. This study shows how the Tolak Bala Ritual isn't just a healing treatment that uses spells and prayers, but it's also a way to package medicines for sale.

**Keywords:** Changes in Function; New Meaning of Ritual Tolak Bala; Malay Serdang

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### Introduction

Among the Malay people in Serdang, there's a traditional healing treatment. This is a part of partially oral folklore. This tradition has to be preserved as a way to preserve the culture. Generally, partial oral folklore is a mixture of oral and elemental elements. The medicine was made from materials that were infused with magic. The spells and prayers were also part of the healing treatment. It's not just the latest function but also the modification that society uses. This is a major difference that interests scientists to discuss as research findings. The original function of this healing treatment is about the part of cultural value. Several studies show that treatment is being used as a commercial tool to boost society's income and financial standing. The condition is used to establish cultural values and modernize the society. This culture wasn't wiped out by modernization, it was modified to make it better.

The ritual of Tolak Bala healing treatment needs to be kept as a form of cultural preservation that is almost extinct. Partial oral folklore is folklore that combines oral and written elements, like this ritual. This ritual, to some degree, is included in partial oral folklore that combines oral and written elements. Traditionally, these ceremonies are performed using a media called sesaji made up of flowers, food, goat heads, etc. Sesaji is considered a representation that actualizes their thoughts, desires, and feelings so that they would be closer to God. In addition to symbolic discourse, sesaji is a way to spiritually negotiate with

invisible powers. Having rituals in place serves to defend against spirit powers encroaching on society: by feeding the spirit, it becomes tame and willing to help you (Endraswara, 2003). As Serdang community members carry out their daily lives, they have a good relationship with the universe. There is a good balance between humans and nature here. You can see it just by looking at the daily routines, which are always connected. They also believe in spirit power.

## Research Method

This study was a qualitative study, so descriptive data were used. The purpose of this study was to see if the Tolak Bala ceremony could be used for healing treatments. The qualitative method is the way to gather descriptive data from people through written or oral interviews. Rationalism says you get valid science by understanding it and reasoning logically. This research was conducted in Serdang District, North Sumatra, where empirical reality has a singular reality (just like monism positivism), but that reality isn't distorted by perspectives.

This qualitative research helps researchers organize, critique, and clarify interesting data, giving them insight into unexpected findings (Endraswara, 2003) and building a new theoretical framework. A qualitative data set like text, symbols, and other elements of the Tolak Bala ritual in Serdang District was used in this study, and a quantitative data set was collected as well. Data from observation and interviews were used for qualitative analysis. Essentially, the data we used were data about the commercialization rituals. Primary data sources are the informants. Secondary data sources are research papers, books, and reports about tolak bala rituals in Serdang District, North Sumatra.

In this study, informants were chosen by using a variety of networks, like the community and cultural figures. Based on certain criteria, the study location was chosen. The study's instruments are interview guidelines and data cards. In order to gather data, I observed, interviewed about the document in-depth, and used text or spelling (mantra) to gather it. Data analysis started with reviewing all sources of data, including interviews, observations, recordings, and field notes.

## Results and Discussion

A Malay traditional healing analysis includes contexts like cultural, social, and ideology. The mantra text has a big influence on how rituals are organized in the culture. The mantra (spell) used in Tolak Bala Ritual is different from the mantra (spell) used in the burial ceremony because it is used for healing. This is because there's a difference in what you want to do with the ritual. Traditionally, the text of the mantra (spell) used in healing rituals contains a request to the Almighty God, and supernatural beings or spirits for sustenance, long life, health, a better life, and protection from obstacles when they perform their work. Therefore, we can conclude that the use of mantra texts in ritual activities depends on the type of ritual.

Basically, social context refers to everything that influences a ritual or mantra text's running. This study includes people involved in the ritual, like gender, social class, ethnicity, age, and so on, so that's what we call a social context in this study. Actors, managers, connoisseurs, or even the supporting community can participate.

It's about the time, place, and use of the mantra text. Describe that context in a way that makes sense. Time division will be announced and performed, including time for spell casting, place for chanting, events during casting spells, and performers during casting spells. Pawang (the handler) is the only one who can say tolak bala for healing. The next part of the situational context includes the equipment for casting spells, clothes for casting repellent spells, and how to speak the mantra.

### **The Proper Way to Say the Mantra:**

Get some quiet space. Find somewhere to be alone. Make sure those around you understand you don't want to be disturbed while you're alone. You can do it in your bedroom or in a quiet room at home, which is familiar and easy to get to, but some people find it more beneficial to chant in places with a spiritual atmosphere. It can be anywhere quiet like a park or inside a small church (or a suitable place to pray). Get rid of anything that can distract you from the spell you're chanting. Get rid of visual or auditory distractions. You can use instrumental music or nature sounds to help you focus. However, don't use music that distracts you from the words in your mantra. If you hear a clock ticking on the wall, you can get distracted from the spell. You can use spiritual images and objects to keep yourself focused and elevate your chanting. Many people find it helpful to chant in front of an image of the divinity they revere. Another option is to use a symbolic image or image that's a symbol of divinity for you. You can also use a statue, a medal, or a three-dimensional

object that serves the same purpose. Remember, there are some beliefs that don't allow visuals and icons.

#### **Preparation for reading MANTRA:**

It's best to say the mantra in the morning before you're distracted by your daily activities, or right before you go to sleep. Pick a time when you don't have to think too much. If you're better at focusing during the day, this is the time for you, but if you're better at it during the night, this is what you'll do. Get comfortable. Sit down in a comfortable chair or lay down on a bed. Let go of any physical discomfort so your mind isn't drawn to it. You should not only sit comfortably, but also keep your whole body relaxed. Wear loose clothing, urinate first, and stretch if anything feels tight or sore. Make sure your hands are relaxed at your sides or resting on your thighs. You can do this with your hands relaxed at your sides or resting them on your thighs. However, if you choose a particular hand position, it'll serve as a reminder that you're doing it. Mudras are hand postures used to chant mantras and meditate. Put your index finger near the tip of your thumb, and curl your other fingers gently. Do it with both hands. Alternatively, straighten the fingers in your palms and then bring your palms and finger together in a "praying" position. You can focus your gaze on one thing or close your eyes. Look straight ahead and keep your gaze fixed on one point, but if you get distracted easily, close your eyes. If you want to stare at a certain point, pick something simple like a wardrobe doorknob or a wall that doesn't move. Look away from too detailed or moving stuff, especially if it's unpredictably and erratic. Make sure your mind doesn't wander if you close your eyes. If your awareness fades, open them again. You can cast many spells. You just need to find out what you believe and what you believe in. It's okay to use a common prayer or mantra, or make up your own mantra that's meaningful to you. A Christian can cast a spell by praying Our Father, for instance. Bible verses can also be used as mantras if you have a particular belief. A series of words with a certain meaning can also be used as a mantra. For example, a Jew or Christian could recite Psalms as a mantra. An Indian yogi named Yogananda once wrote rhythmic mantras, one of which is still used to this day. This incantation says: "I'm a bubble of foam, make me the sea. / You and I, never separated, I the waves of the sea merge with the sea, / I'm a bubble of foam, make me the sea."

#### **The Elements Function used in Healing Treatment of Serdang Malay Community**

Researchers found that reciting the mantra and using materials during Malay healing rituals served several purposes.

The mantra's purpose.

In the Serdang Malay community, tolak bala is a traditional healing treatment. As a connection to God, Prophet Adam, Prophet Muhammad, angels, and supernatural beings, the mantra (spelling) serves as a connection between ritual participants and God. Ritual participants use the mantra to: 1) to pray to Allah SWT to grant them health, sustenance, strength, and long life, and to avoid anger and danger; 2) to have Prophet Adam and Prophet Muhammad be witnesses at participants' requests; 3) to have an angel record all the things that the participants want; and 4) to keep supernatural beings from getting in the way.

Material elements

During the Tolak Bala ritual, the materials used symbolized different aspects of life. The symbols are depicted below: Banana: To show that a year has 12 months. Bunga rampai (flowers): offerings to gods. A Dupa represents a fortress protecting ritual participants against evil spirits. As a connection between the ritual participants and the Prophet Adam, the mantra (spell) is used. The holiness of prophet Adam and Muhammad is symbolized by coconut water. A cigarette as a sign that the ritual is going on. The yellow rice symbolises the equipment used to find life's necessities.

The values in the implementation of Malay healing treatment:

Social Values

A tolak bala ritual is performed by a family member as a healing treatment. There are a lot of factors that support the forming of social value within the family, which leads to cooperation and cohesiveness within them. Groups that come together with the same goal can form emotional bonds. They'll realize how important they are to each other. In terms of social values, they're centered around a variety of social relationships, a responsible attitude toward groups, affection, loyalty, and a willingness to sacrifice. It's only when someone feels the need for others to be important to him that he'll have social value.

Psychological and Pedagogical Values

There's a lot of reasons why people or groups act arrogant, but the main thing is that they become self-obsessed and ignore their shortcomings as human beings. In order to become big-

hearted and to recognize others as equals, humans make a lot of efforts with formal and non-formal education.

The non-formal path starts with getting to know your family and community. He can also learn about the values that need to be firmly held as an individual in group life through these two environments. Through various social activities, like traditional healing rituals, we get to know this value. The ritual teaches the person who owns it about God's power over his creatures, and about other abstract powers (beyond what our five senses can see). It can keep the tradition from being arrogant. A pedagogical value is also a teaching value. Through their principles or rules, you can get inspiration or ideas for fulfilling human needs.

#### Religious Value

In Tolak Bala, the mantra (spell) used for healing treatment has a religious significance. The following excerpt shows it.

*Bukan aku nan punya  
Penawar Tawar Allah tawar  
Rasulullah Kabul berkat  
Lailahaillallah...  
Muhammadurasulullah.*

According to lines 1 and 2 of the mantra fragment above, a spell caster doesn't have the power to grant the wish of the person reading it because his legs and arms don't. It's God Almighty who has that power. The mantra reader in line 4 asks God Almighty to grant human requests because he's the ruler of nature.

As you listen to this mantra, it's obvious that the ritual mantra in the Serdang Malay community doesn't just ask for daily life needs, but also for strong faith to be given to the ritual participants. Humans are bound to obey their religion if they do this.

When it comes to mantras, they can be sounds, movements, feelings, thoughts that are sounded, moved, felt, and/or thoughts that are said, moved, felt and processed so that they reach our conscious, subconscious, and nervous systems, so we get meta-energy. It's possible to get spells from religious sources, get them inspired by humans, or make them yourself. Psychologist Alix Needham recommends making your own good luck spells to the National Council of Hypnotherapists. "Start and end each day by repeating a positive thought. For example, 'Good things must come to me.' Make that a mantra. If you say it often, it will sink into your subconscious and blend with your body. In turn, you will alter the way you interact." Mantras require Cognitive Exercise, Affective Exercise, Deep Psychomotor Exercise, and Spiritual Practice, so that a metaresonance is created between the mind-body, conscious state, and subconscious with the Primal Cause.

It's a tradition in Serdang Malay to read mantras. They're usually recited at first working, to make work easier. In some cases, self-protection spells are used to make work easier, because job spells are less common than clothing and personal protection spells. The 'sweetener' spell, for instance, is often chanted by someone who wants other people to like him, so work gets easier. In most cases, the mantra is recited to fulfill daily needs, such as farming, hunting, trading, fishing, etc.

In Malay culture, land, water, the sun, the moon, plants, animals, jinn, and other things have spirits (spirits). To make sure a creature's spirit is positive, you have to read mantras. Malay isn't just genetic. They claim to be Malay even though their ancestors were Javanese, Mandailing, Bugis, Keling, etc. There are several Batak communities in North Sumatra that claim to be "Kampong Orang" - Puak Melayu. It's all because they're all bound by the same religion, Islam, and Malay Resam culture.

The Malay people have a tradition of reading incantations, which are supposed to help make work easier, and are usually recited when you start work. There's not as many job spells as clothing and personal protection spells, and sometimes they overlap, so self-protection spells are used to make work easier. For example, someone often recites the 'sweetener' spell in the hope that other people will like him, so that work becomes easy and smooth. The work for which the mantra is recited is usually related to work to fulfill daily basic needs, such as farming, hunting, trading, fishing and so on.

The Malay people believe that everything has a spirit (spirit), including the land, the water, the sun, the moon, plants, animals, jinn, etc. In order to keep the spirit of the creature or object positive for humans, it's good to read a mantra. Here are some of these spells. The incantation is

usually recited on a certain object so it protects you. It can be called an antidote, a deterrent, or an amulet. When you read the spell, you think the object will give you magical powers. You can transform strength and energy into a ward by casting a spell on it. Also, the power in these objects keeps you safe. Penangkals are part of the Malay people's efforts to overcome internal and external challenges, and there are quite a few types, including: (1) restraint or reinforcement; (2) protector; (3) submissive; (4) sweet and loving; (5) hater.

#### Intellectual Value and Intelligence Value

There's no way to separate spiritual values from traditional Malay healing. There's a strong connection between the natural and spiritual in Serdang district. The part of spiritual function is used in life activities. There is a strong faith in the ancestor spirit among the Malay Serdang community that takes part in protecting the environment and caring for it. This tradition also teaches people about God and supernatural beings in their lives by using their minds. It's not the supernatural being that determines the request humans want, it's just a supporting substance.

In the tolak bala ritual, there are religious, social, and economic aspects. Traditional Malay healing isn't just affected by religion or society, but also economics. This healing ceremony has been commercialized by the community, as it turned out. There has been a change in the function and meaning of the tolak bala ritual, which leads to a series of actions, manufacturing, or processes that produce products based on the customer's wants. Production functions include making variants of forms by the handler and marketing the product to consumers who want healing from ritual tolak bala.

For the treatment of diseases in Serdang district, some people still follow the Tolak Bala ritual. Because it's entirely entrusted to the handler from generation to generation, it's an old-fashioned ritual. Richard Winstead clarifies this situation in his book "The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi" as follows. There are different names for magicians in general (pawang) and those who practice only medicine (bomor), and in Perak and Kelantan, there are different names for ordinary magicians (pawang) and shamans (belian) (Winstedt, 1951). Malay healing involves using instruments to perform Tolak Bala Ritual. These instruments get collected on a big plate and are called sesajian (presenting offering). The offerings include yellow bamboo, white cloth, mineral water, young coconut, sulfur, kaffir lime, salt, turmeric, jerangau, ingu, jadam, pepper, incense, bananas, flowers, and white rice. There are a number of factors that affect Tolak Bala's ritual function in Malaysia. It's been transformed from a cultural practice to a commercial one. As explained in the table 1, a change in the meaning and function of tolak bala includes an open attitude, community creativity, mass media, and the economy.

**Table 1**  
**The Change of Tolak Bala Ritual**

Number	Item Changes	Past	Now	Aspects that change
1	Transformation of values	Do not prohibit	Democracy	Open attitude
2	Invention	Monotonous	Various	People's creativity
3	Globalization	There isn't	Growing	Mass media
4	Livelihood	Farming – fishing	Varied	Economy

The Tolak Bala ritual changes the meaning and function of healing treatments in a few ways:

External Factors. Technological and Media, Educational, Economic

Internal Factors The older generation hasn't passed down any culture to the younger generation. Younger generations don't know about tolak bala.

Traditional Factor Malay communities in Serdang District have changed the tolak bala ritual of healing treatment, which includes: Impact : Social Impact, economic impact, cultural impact. Meaning: Religious meanings, solidarity, peace. Commercialization has also changed the meaning of tolak bala rituals and wiped out cultural identities.

#### Cultural Preservation

The article talks about the tolak bala ritual revival and revitalization efforts as part of the inheritance strategy carried out by the Serdang Malay community in order to keep the ritual alive, specifically by (1) empowering, (2) documenting, and (3) developing the ritual. We can also do several things to protect regional culture so that it doesn't disappear along with these 3 ways of preserving culture: Education about regional culture, Recognizing your own regional culture, Holding regional cultural competitions, Supporting efforts to develop regional culture, Holding performances regional art, Choosing foreign culture so as not to kill regional and national culture, Introduce regional culture to others, Holding cultural festivals every year, Incorporating elements of

regional culture into the curriculum, Using locally made products, Incorporating elements of regional culture into films So, preserving existing culture and traditions is a shared responsibility.

These 11 methods are really effective at preserving culture in the midst of modernization of the times, which of course requires many changes. We need to keep our local culture intact in the midst of change.

## **Conclusions**

The editorial team has an authority to edit the article without changing the substance of the article and the author's thoughts and purpose. The editorial team will not return the articles which are fail to be accepted. The process of the acceptance of articles starting with the submitting the article, the reviewing process from peer reviewer, if the article is still in Indonesian language it is need to be translated into English and go through reviewing process again before the writers get the final result of his/her article that has been declared as accepted in MIMBAR The bibliography is compiled with Harvard system that is sorted alphabetically. For example: Muhammad Thaufiq Boesorie, to be written: Sidiq M. T B. (2020). The different shape and form of referral sources should be written according to the guideline as follows references.

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