

ISLAMIC RITUALS IN PLURAL SOCIETIES: THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF *TURUN KASUNGE* IN SOSORGADONG



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Abstract

This study examines the *Turun Kasunge* ritual as a unique expression of local Islamic practice within the multicultural society of Sosorgadong, North Sumatra. The ritual involves symbolic elements such as lime water, flour, and incense, each carrying specific meanings related to gratitude, purification, protection, and spiritual renewal. Although the tradition is practiced exclusively by the Muslim community, it is respected and accommodated by people of other faiths in the area, reflecting a culture of tolerance, coexistence, and mutual respect. Using a qualitative approach that includes in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, the research explores how Islamic spiritual values are embedded and negotiated within local cultural frameworks. The findings reveal that *Turun Kasunge* not only reinforces religious identity but also promotes social cohesion and communal harmony. It serves as a living example of how religious rituals can contribute to the values of religious moderation, interfaith understanding, and peaceful pluralism in everyday life. This study contributes to broader discussions on local Islam, ritual symbolism, and the role of religious practices in maintaining social integration in diverse communities.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji ritual *Turun Kasunge* sebagai ekspresi Islam lokal yang unik di tengah masyarakat multikultural di Sosorgadong, Sumatera Utara. Tradisi ini melibatkan elemen-elemen simbolik seperti air jeruk nipis, tepung, dan dupa, yang masing-masing merepresentasikan makna syukur, penyucian, perlindungan, dan pembaruan spiritual. Meskipun ritual ini hanya dipraktikkan oleh komunitas Muslim, keberadaannya dihormati dan diterima oleh pemeluk agama lain di wilayah tersebut, mencerminkan budaya toleransi, koeksistensi, dan saling menghargai. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana nilai-nilai spiritual Islam diinternalisasi dan dinegosiasikan dalam kerangka budaya lokal. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *Turun Kasunge* tidak hanya memperkuat identitas keagamaan, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai sarana mempererat kohesi sosial dan harmoni komunal. Ritual ini menjadi contoh nyata bagaimana praktik keagamaan dapat berkontribusi pada moderasi beragama, pemahaman lintas iman, dan pluralisme damai dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi bagi wacana yang lebih luas tentang Islam lokal, simbolisme ritual, dan peran agama dalam menjaga integrasi sosial di masyarakat yang majemuk.

INTRODUCTION

For the people of Indonesia, traditions or customs are not a rare thing in social life. Indonesian society is very rich in cultural issues and places of tradition. Culture and local traditions in Indonesian society not only provide color in the state arena, but also influence the beliefs and religious practices of the community. The cultural diversity that develops in each region of Indonesia has an influence on the pattern of life of the people in the region, for example the way of dressing, the language used, the ethics and norms



that apply, the rules even affect the spiritual beliefs and worship carried out. Despite the diversity of ethnicities, languages and races, Indonesia has the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which means "different but still one". *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a reflection of the balance between the elements of difference that characterize diversity and the elements of similarity that characterize unity (Mustansyir, 1995). As the motto of the nation, the context of the problem is not only about religious tolerance but much broader as commonly referred to as ethnicity, religion, race, and) intergroup (Pursikarnal, 2009).

Islam, as a religion practiced by the majority of Indonesians, has a close relationship with local cultures or traditions in the archipelago. The relationship between Islam and local issues is a never – ending passion. Religion and culture are two important elements in society that influence each other. When religious teachings enter a cultured community, there will be a tug of war between religious interests on the one hand and cultural interests on the other. This is also the case with Islam, which was revealed in the midst of Arab society which has customs and traditions for generations. Like it or not, the Prophet's Islamic propagation must always consider the cultural aspects of Arab society at that time. In fact, some verses of the Qur'an were revealed through the stages of local cultural adjustments (Buhori, 2017).

From an Islamic perspective, the Qur'an and hadith as the main source of Islamic teachings have provided direction regarding the position of traditions or customs in people's lives. This is because many of the values contained in a tradition are believed to bring blessings, progress, prosperity, and success to the community that lives it. However, it cannot be denied that the existence of customs in society sometimes raises problems, especially when the values adopted contradict or are not in line with the principles of Islamic teachings.

Koentjaraningrat as a cultural expert in his book *Introduction to Anthropology* (Koenjaraningrat, 2009) It is explained that traditions or customs are divided into three forms of culture including the following:

1. The form of culture as a complex of ideas, ideas, values, norms, rules and so on. Human thoughts and ideas that live in a society appear to be organized because each has a natural mind, the natural mind is actually an individual milkik, but the individual is bound by a unity of both the unity of the community, ethnicity, race and language, so that the idea forms a system known in anthropological terms cultural system.
2. The form of culture as a complex of activities and patterned actions of humans in social life. The second aspect of the form of culture is activity or called the social system.
3. The form of culture as a result of work in the form of objects, goods that are material. The works appear so concrete because they are realized in material form. Both objects of human work are still simple and have reached the most advanced form.

Each ethnic group or community group will have a variety of distinctive patterns of traditional ceremonial rituals that are different from other communities. Likewise, the procedures for implementation vary based on the values and rules that exist in the community where the culture is located. Indonesia is known to have a diversity of cultures, customs and various traditions that inhabit and are attached to community life. There are so many customs or traditions that are made a special pride in carrying out these cultural traditions for the people of Indonesia. Likewise with North Sumatra, precisely in Central Tapanuli Regency, Sosorgadong District.

Sosorgadong Sub – district consists of 1 sub – district and 8 villages, with a total area of 143.14 KmÄ, almost the entire area of Sosorgadong Sub – district is on the

mainland of Sumatra Island, which is one of the 20 sub – districts in the Central Tapanuli Regency area. Siantar Dolok Village is the largest village with an area of 30.64 Km². Kecamatan Sosorgadong is classified as a tropical climate area and there are only two seasons, namely the dry season and the rainy season. The people in Sosorgadong Sub – district mostly make their living as fishermen, farmers and traders (Tapteng, 2024). They have strong traditions and culture, which are reflected in their daily activities. One tradition that is still preserved by the community here is the *Turun Kasunge* tradition. This tradition is a series of traditional processions carried out in welcoming and celebrating important events in life, such as 40 days after the birth of a child, marriage, and circumcision. Based on observations and interviews in the field, the implementation of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is actively carried out by people who are Muslim. This is part of a religious cultural practice that grows from the combination of religious values and local customs (sumutprov.co.id, 2024).

The *Turun Kasunge* tradition, although practiced by the Muslim community, was not born from a homogeneous cultural space. It grows in a multicultural society that socially and spiritually interacts with each other and shares a common living space. In this context, the symbols present in the tradition are not only a mirror of Islamic values as a moral guide for Muslims, but also part of social dynamics that are inclusive and accommodating of diversity. Therefore, it is important to see this tradition not merely as a local ritual, but as a cultural construction that reflects the synthesis between Islamic values and the reality of a plural society. This research offers an analysis of the symbolic meaning of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition as a form of religious expression that is inseparable from its plural social environment, so as to bridge the understanding between religious identity and cultural values that live together. The *Turun Kasunge* tradition has various symbols in each of its rituals which each symbol has a meaning contained therein so that the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is used as a medium of communication from the generation before them. The previous generation tried to form various symbols that contained their own meanings in it, so that these meanings were carried out through the *Turun Kasunge* procession which was still preserved and carried out from generation to generation.

Previous studies focused more on the historical or descriptive aspects of the tradition without elaborating the symbolic meaning in religious and social contexts in depth. In comparison, a similar tradition such as *Turun Mandi* in Minangkabau is also a traditional ritual performed after the birth of a baby, but with different symbols and values. In the *Turun Mandi* tradition, the newborn baby is taken to the river by those who have an important role in the birth process. During the journey from home to the ceremony site, the newborn is also escorted by those involved in this tradition. This process shows respect and attention to the important roles played by the various parties in the birth (Yohana, 2024). The *Turun Kasunge* tradition, on the other hand, is not only performed on newborns but also on weddings, circumcisions and the birth of babies. This comparison is important to show that although there are similarities in function, each tradition contains unique and contextual symbolism. Filsuf Susanne K. Langer menyatakan bahwa setiap manusia itu memiliki kebutuhan terhadap lambang dan simbol sehingga dari hal tersebut dapat membedakan antara manusia dengan makhluk lainnya (Mulyana, 2010).

Humans as symbolic beings, because human life is never separated from the symbols in their environment, and these symbols will contain various meanings depending on

perception, because humans do not act on something but based on the meaning they can interpret. Thus the function of the symbol lies with the person concerned, such as the recitation of mantras in a ritual, for example, there are people or social communities who believe that what is chanted by the shaman is very effective to heal, keep away from misfortune and other things that they believe in.

Therefore, this research is focused on analyzing the symbolic meaning of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition not only in the cultural frame, but also in the perspective of Islam as the majority religion that preserves it in the region, as well as in the framework of a multicultural society that coexists in Sosorgadong District. Through this approach, this study seeks to present a complete and contextual understanding of the symbols used, the religious values that accompany them, and how this tradition becomes a space for social and religious dialogue between community members with different backgrounds.

This research is a qualitative field research, with the aim of exploring and understanding (Putra, 2020), (Sina, 2022)' the symbolic meaning(Haris & Amalia, 2018)' of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition in the perspective of Islam and multicultural society in Sosorgadong District. Data is obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews and the aim is to obtain relevant and in-depth information about the context, events, or phenomena that occur in the case (Stake, 1995). Then with documentation of the implementation of the tradition. Informants were selected purposively, namely those who have knowledge, experience and direct involvement in the implementation of the tradition. The number of informants in this study was five people, consisting of two traditional leaders, two Islamic religious leaders, and the community of tradition actors. The data analysis technique used is descriptive-qualitative analysis with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The technique in collecting data is done by observing, recording and studying the object of participation (Nasution, 2012). To maintain data validity, source triangulation techniques were used, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained. Through this approach, a complete and in-depth understanding of the symbolic meaning of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition in a multicultural society is expected.

DEFINITION OF *TURUN KASUNGE* TRADITION

Customary traditions are upheld and preserved for generations as cultural assets. The term customary tradition is interpreted as knowledge, doctrines, habits, and others that have been passed down from generation to generation, which is a habit practiced by the community in the past until now (Wagnals, 2013). Traditions must still be maintained and continued to be preserved so that they are not easily lost in the times, and we as the younger generation should feel that preserving traditions is an obligation and also as a form of our love for the Indonesian nation (Nurkhalida, 2023). These traditions are not only a legacy of the ancestors, but also reflect the values of life, beliefs and identity of the local community. Tradition means everything that is transmitted, passed on by the past to the present. From this understanding, it is clear that tradition is a cultural heritage or past habits that are preserved continuously until now (Rhoni Rodin, 2013). This tradition can take the form of a creation, work, or something created by humans, whether the object is material, belief, or stories of legends and myths.

Turun Kasunge is a cultural process that is one of the symbols of local wisdom in the community of Sosorgadong Subdistrict which is marked by the diversity of the content of the meaning in each string of words in the reading of prayers and praise. This tradition is a tradition carried out from one generation to another. In a religious context, *Turun Kasunge* has a deep and complex meaning. This tradition is a form of worship and respect

to Allah SWT, as well as a form of gratitude for the blessings given. In Islam, gratitude is a very important form of worship, because with gratitude, humans can increase their faith and get closer to Allah SWT. This tradition involves a complex ritual procession, including the use of symbols and sacred objects. However, the symbolic meaning behind this tradition has not been widely understood and researched in depth.

This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and contains religious values that do not conflict with religious teachings. The tradition has been preserved for generations by the community as part of their cultural identity and an expression of gratitude to God Almighty for important phases in life, such as marriage, birth, or the beginning of household life. He emphasized that this tradition is not just a social custom, but is full of spiritual and symbolic meanings that reflect the harmonious relationship between humans, nature and the Creator. In its implementation, this tradition involves prayers, special equipment, and certain movements that are passed down from generation to generation, as a form of request for divine blessing and protection.

Despite the assumption of some that this tradition contradicts religious teachings, that there is no element of worship or deviation of faith, because the essence of this tradition is respect for the values of life and strengthening gratitude to God. Therefore, the local community, including religious leaders, continue to appreciate and support its preservation. The involvement of the younger generation in the implementation of this tradition continues to be pursued, both through direct learning and active involvement in every procession, so that the noble values contained in *Turun Kasunge* are not eroded by the times and remain a living cultural heritage in the community (Hapsiah Simbolon, 2025).

Turun Kasunge is actually the same thing as the *Turun Mandi* tradition carried out by the Minangkabau people with only a difference in language. And the difference lies in the place of implementation. *Turun Mandi* can only be done in the Batang Aia or river while *Turun Kasunge* is done in the mosque.

As described above, the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is carried out when there are important moments of life in the form of marriage, child birth and circumcision. In marriage, the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is believed to be a form of self – purification of the bride and groom before entering a new life in marriage. While in the birth of a child called *bacungak* this has become a hereditary tradition and has even been done hundreds of years ago to newborn babies (Febriana, 2017), and for circumcision the meaning of *Turun Kasunge*, which is a process of cleansing and purification for the child to be circumcised. This ritual is considered as a way to cleanse the child from sins and mistakes, and prepare him to become a child who grows up. In its implementation, this tradition is carried out with stages or processes and customary and religious methods inherited from the past which have existed until now still survive and preserve these cultural values as a form of local cultural identity of the people of Sosorgadong District.

ELEMENTS AND SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF *TURUN KASUNGE* TRADITION

In understanding symbolic interactionism, humans or individuals essentially live in an environment full of symbols. Every living individual responds to existing symbols, such as evaluating individual responses to a stimulus from something physical. According to Mead, individual understanding of symbols is the result of learning to interact in society by communicating symbols that are around them, both verbally and nonverbally (Siregar, 2016). Every symbol has a meaning Culture is also a means of communication

that can provide information directly or implicitly to others. The culture of a particular society uses many symbols and symbols that have certain meanings. Whether we realize it or not, there is a lot of tacit communication about the symbols and symbols used by certain cultural actors. Therefore, knowledge of cultural symbols and signs is important to facilitate communication between cultural groups and other groups (Sulastri, 2024).

The *Turun Kasunge* tradition not only involves oral processions and symbolic gestures (sumutprov.co.id, 2024), but is also supported by various traditional equipment and symbolic elements that have important meanings for the people who carry it out (Latora, 2024). The equipment is not just ritual equipment, but a means of communication between humans and transcendental values, both from religious teachings and from local customs. Each of these elements is deeply interpreted by the community as a symbol of purity, salvation, social unification and blessing of life. The presence of these elements in the tradition not only strengthens spiritual values, but also strengthens social cohesion between community members, especially in the midst of a multicultural society that coexists in a spirit of tolerance. Thus, the utilization of symbolic elements in *Turun Kasunge* reflects the combination of local beliefs, religious values and cultural identity that the people of Sosorgadong District continue to maintain to this day. The following are some of the main elements used in this tradition.

1. *Beras Kuning* (Yellow Rice)

Yellow rice is rice that has been colored yellow using natural ingredients such as turmeric, and is commonly served at traditional ceremonies or celebrations as a symbol of happiness and blessings. The yellow color symbolizes prosperity, so this rice is often part of cultural traditions in various regions of Indonesia (Ristuati & Lailiyah, 2021). Along with the times, the use of yellow rice is still maintained and carried out, because it has its own meaning which is quite high. According to Mrs. Juriani Saruksuk as the perpetrator of the tradition, she explained that yellow rice in the *Turun Kasunge* tradition has a high symbolic value and is understood as a symbol of glory, blessing, and hope for a prosperous life. The ingredients contained in yellow rice are rice and turmeric. Each ingredient has its own meaning. The yellow color that comes from the turmeric mixture symbolizes majesty, goodness, and light, so its use in rituals is considered a form of prayer so that individuals who undergo a new phase of their lives obtain safety and happiness and symbolize the balance of human life, such as day and night, good and bad, men and women. Then rice is interpreted as the staple food of humans, which is then given a yellow color indicating the cleanliness of the heart (Juriani Saruksuk, 2025).

2. *Tepung Tawar*

Tepung tawar is a mixture of water mixed with finely ground rice (flour), flowers, and certain spices, used in Malay tradition as a symbolic means of offering prayers, blessings, and protection. The rice flour sprinkling ceremony is typically performed during traditional ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions, and the reception of distinguished guests, as an expression of hope for safety, blessings, and happiness (Batubara, Badrun, & Ahmad Muhajir, 2022). *Tepung Tawar* has a high value and meaning in the *Turun Kasunge* tradition. *Tepung Tawar* is a form of symbol to pray for someone for the success they have achieved. In addition, "fresh flour" also has a meaning or symbol to treat sick people and remove bad luck (*tolak bala*). *Tepung tawar* can be found at certain events or at certain rituals. *Tepung tawar* itself is a medium used to carry out the ritual process or as a medium for treatment and taking the spirit (Linyang & d, 2021).

The ingredients used in tawar flour are *hanjuang* leaves, white sugi – sugi leaves, talcum powder and water. The ingredients are placed in a plate and the powder is dissolved with water so that the flour is made by sprinkling it. According to the explanation of Mr. Sulaiman Sihombing as a community leader in Sosorgadong District he explained:

"Tepung tawar is used to mark the beginning of a new phase of life so that it is free from disturbances, both outward and inward. For the people who support this tradition, the provision of fresh flour is a symbol of self-purification, cleansing from all things that are not good, as well as prayers that individuals who undergo the procession are given safety, smoothness, and blessings in their lives going forward. The act of sprinkling or sprinkling fresh flour is not just a hereditary ritual, but also contains a deep spiritual message. Tepung tawar symbolizes the goodwill of the family and community to the person being delivered in the procession. In practice, this procession is also accompanied by prayers or words of hope that are sacred and contain moral values. Thus, the use of flour in Turun Kasunge is not only part of the completeness of a procession, but also a symbolic expression that unites elements of spirituality, culture and human values that live in the community" (Sulaiman Sihombing, 2025).

3. Kemenyan (Incense)

Kemenyan is the resin or sap of a tree of the *Styracaceae* family that is commonly used for incense or fragrance production. Frankincense is a naturally occurring aromatic substance derived from the sap of certain trees, mainly of the *Styrax* genus, which, when dried, produces hard yellowish – white or brown granules (Muhammad Syukur, 2022). When burned, frankincense emits a distinctive fragrant smoke and has long been used in various traditions and ritual practices, both in cultural, spiritual and religious contexts. In the traditional society of the archipelago, frankincense has an important position as a means of creating a sacred atmosphere, a medium for purifying the environment, and a symbol of respect for divine or ancestral powers. This frankincense has existed since the ancestors and was passed down to their children and grandchildren so that until now, the tradition is still maintained by the legacy of the ancestors.

The implementation of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition, it is known that burning incense has an important role and is full of symbolic meaning. According to her, incense is burned as part of the ritual of purifying the atmosphere, calming the soul, and inviting a sacred atmosphere in the implementation of the procession. The distinctive aroma of frankincense is believed to create inner calm for ceremony participants and bring solemnity to the implementation of the custom. Although in general incense is often associated with mystical elements, in the context of *Turun Kasunge*, incense is not interpreted as a means of summoning spirits or supernatural powers, but as a symbol of silence, purity, and respect for traditional values inherited by ancestors. He added that the presence of incense also serves as a form of respect for nature and the life energy that surrounds humans, as well as part of the cultural heritage that has long been preserved by the community.

The procession of burning incense is carried out at certain moments in the ceremony, especially before the core of the *Turun Kasunge* implementation, with the intention that all stages of the activity take place in a peaceful and meaningful atmosphere. Therefore, incense is not just a burning material, but a symbolic element

that reflects the harmony between humans, nature and the noble values that live in indigenous communities.

The purpose of burning incense is the direction, aim, intention (Pena, 2005), desire, or goal . In the transition period between one level of life to the next, parties or ceremonies are usually held and are universal in nature. In many cultures, there is an assumption that the transition period is a time of real and supernatural danger, so life cycle ceremonies often contain elements of repelling supernatural dangers. In relation to their belief system, the worries they feel are attributed to the power of God and supernatural forces, so they organize life cycle ceremonies to ask for salvation. They organize ceremonies as prescribed by their customs and belief system. In addition, the organization of these ceremonies is also considered a form of devotion to God (Yunus & d, 1993).

4. Air Limau

Air Limau is made from the juice of limes (usually kasturi limes, limes, or kaffir lime), mixed with clean water (Ishak, Kasman, & Chandra, 2020). However, in the *Turun Kasunge* tradition the oranges used are purut oranges. Belly oranges symbolize fragrance. This symbolization is based on the fragrance of the kaffir lime. In the implementation of the *Turun Kasunge* tradition, the community still upholds ancestral values which are full of symbolic meanings. One of the important elements used in this procession is lime water, which is believed to have its own spiritual power. Lime water is not only seen as a refreshing natural substance, but as a symbol of self – purification and protection from negative disturbances.

Lime water has been used in the purification stages, especially when someone is about to enter a new phase of life, such as when a baby is born, someone recovers from a serious illness, or even when starting a new role in social life. In the procession, lime water is mixed with plain water, then sprinkled or used to wash the body of the person being "lowered kasunge". This reflects the belief that the person's body and soul must be cleansed of all forms of physical and mental impurities before living the next life.

Air limau is also interpreted as a symbol of freshness and hope. After undergoing this ritual, it is hoped that the individual can start a new life with a cleaner, fresher spirit, and in harmony with nature and their social environment. The use of lime water is a concrete form of human relationship with the surrounding nature, because people believe that nature has the power to heal and purify. Thus, the presence of lime water in the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is not merely cosmetic or complementary. It is an element rich in symbolic meaning, showing how the local community interprets cleanliness, safety and spiritual harmony in every step of their tradition (Nursina Matondang, 2025).

ISLAMIC AND MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES ON THE *TURUN KASUNGE* TRADITION

The *Turun Kasunge* tradition, when viewed from Islamic and multicultural perspectives, reflects a harmonious blend between religious values and cultural heritage. In Islam, this tradition is considered acceptable as long as it does not conflict with core beliefs such as tawhid and *syariah* principles. Meanwhile, in a multicultural society, *Turun Kasunge* is respected as a cultural expression of the Muslim community that does not impose on others, promoting mutual tolerance and social harmony. This indicates that local traditions can coexist peacefully within a diverse community when practiced with awareness and respect for differences.

1. Valuing Traditions Based on Islamic Values

Cultural traditions have been one of the strategic tools in the process of proselytizing Islam since the time of Walisongo in the 16th century (Sholihah, Agustiananda, Junanah, & Setiawan, 2019). At the beginning of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, the process went through various dynamics in the context of local cultural traditions. Conceptually, Islam provides norms and rules that govern human life (Ridwan, Umar, & Ghafar, 2021).

In the study of Islamic law (fiqh), the values of tradition, customs and culture known generally as local wisdom are categorized under the concept of '*urf*'. *Urf* is the customs or traditions that develop in people's lives that are prevalent in their daily lives, which can be in the form of words or actions that are universally applicable and hereditary, customs or traditions (Hidayat & dkk, 2023). '*Urf* refers to customs or social practices that are widely recognized and accepted by the local community because they contain constructive good values. In the perspective of fiqh, '*urf* has legitimacy if it does not contradict the basic principles of *syariah*. Therefore, '*urf* can be seen as an accommodative concept that opens up space for dialogue between Islamic teachings and local cultures that live in the community. Culture has values that are in harmony with Islamic law and local traditions, the harmony that exists can provide values or principles of Islamic law to create a life that coexists and synergizes with the values of local traditional practices without any problems or conflicts. This shows how different values can still be maintained and complement each other in community life and create a sustainable principle (Oktavia et al., 2023).

In assessing a tradition such as *Turun Kasunge*, the approach that must be used is not a black – and – white approach, but a value and meaning approach. The question is not simply "is this tradition Islamic or not", but rather is the value contained in it in line with Islamic teachings or does it deviate from the principles of *tauhid* and *syariah*? (Sahrudin Nasution, 2025). The *Turun Kasunge* tradition commonly practiced by the Sosorgadong community is basically a form of cultural ritual that contains many symbolic values. One of the central values is gratitude. This gratitude is a fundamental value in Islam, as affirmed in many verses of the Qur'an that humans are commanded to be grateful for all of Allah's blessings.

In addition, *Turun Kasunge* also shows the value of social togetherness, such as the involvement of extended family, neighbors, and community leaders in the procession. This value is very much in line with the spirit of friendship and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in Islam. In many traditions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, establishing friendship and maintaining social relations is considered a form of social worship that has great rewards. Thus, if this tradition is oriented to build solidarity and brotherhood among the community, then its essence is very close to Islamic values (Sahrudin Nasution, 2025).

However, Islamic criticism of this tradition needs to be directed not at its external or symbolic forms, but at the meanings attached to these symbols. Islam rejects any form of belief or practice that contains *syirik* (associating partners with God), superstition, or excessive mysticism. Therefore, symbols such as *air limau*, fresh flour, or incense used in *Turun Kasunge* must be studied in depth. If people believe that these objects have supernatural powers or can provide protection by themselves, then it is clearly against the principle of *tauhid*. But if their use is only as cultural symbols of hope, self – purification, or part of hereditary customs that are not cultivated, then this tradition can be accepted as long as it is carried out within the framework of *syariah*.

In classical Islamic literature, it is explained that local culture is acceptable as long as it does not go beyond the boundaries of *Syari'ah* (Tanuri, 2025). Abdul Wahhab al-Sya'rani, a prominent *Sufi* scholar, in his work *Al-Mizān al-Kubrā* (alif.id, 2022) explains that Islamic law provides leeway to its people in addressing customs and traditions, as long as they do not contradict the principle of *tauhid* and do not contain elements that damage the purity of religion.

In the *Turun Kasunge* procession, there are several symbolic elements used, such as lime water, fresh flour, and incense. In the view of Islam practiced by the local community, these elements are not considered as magical media or mystical practices, but rather understood as symbols of self-purification and spiritual refreshment. The use of *air limau*, for example, is interpreted as a symbol of cleansing oneself of negative energy and preparing oneself physically and mentally for the next phase of life. Similarly, fresh flour is used to pray that one will always receive blessings, luck and blessings from Allah SWT. The incense that is burned is not offered to spirits, but is understood as a means of creating a solemn and sacred atmosphere in the procession.

The meaning of these symbols is placed within the framework of Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of *tazkiyatun nafs* or purification of the soul. In Islam, this concept is very fundamental, because a clean soul is a condition for one's spiritual success. This is as Allah says in QS. Ash-Shams ayat:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا (٩) وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (١٠)

"Fortunate indeed is the one who purifies it (the soul), and unfortunate indeed is the one who defiles it."

In the 9th verse Ibn Kasir says that there is a possibility of a lucky person if he purifies himself that is if he obeys Allah as stated by Qatadah, and cleanses him from despicable morals and various despicable things. Then concerning the 10th verse Ibn Kasir said that the one who defiles himself is the one who brings and puts himself in a position that is humiliating and keeps away from guidance so that he commits sin and leaves obedience to Allah swt. And it may also mean that it is fortunate for those whose souls are purified by Allah and miserable for those whose souls are made dirty by Allah swt (Pasaribu, 2018). This verse serves as a theological basis that every human effort to purify themselves, both spiritually and symbolically, is part of worship if the intention is directed to Allah SWT and does not depart from the principle of *tauhid*. Thus, traditional practices such as *Turun Kasunge* can remain in harmony with Islamic teachings as long as they are interpreted as a form of symbolic worship derived from the value of faith, not as a practice of *syirik* or *khurafat*.

Thus, the implementation of *Turun Kasunge* by Muslims in Sosorgadong is a form of accommodation between culture and religion. This tradition is not just a traditional ceremony, but also a medium to express spiritual values in a local form. In this framework, *Turun Kasunge* symbolizes how the Muslim community in the area is able to maintain local wisdom while maintaining the purity of faith.

2. View of a Multicultural Society

Sosorgadong Sub-district is an area that is socially characterized by a multicultural society. A multicultural society is a society that consists of diversity and different types of cultures, and its social life includes values, culture, and customs that prioritize mutual acceptance (Lintang & Najicha, 2022). Bikhu Parekh states that a multicultural society is a society consisting of several kinds of cultural communities with all their advantages,

with slightly different conceptions of the world, a system of meanings, values, forms of social organization, historical customs and habits. Thus, culture and multicultural society are interrelated. In such a society, no one cultural or religious identity absolutely dominates all aspects of life, as each group has the right and space to maintain and express their identity freely.

Although Sosorgadong Sub – district is generally a multicultural area inhabited by various religious adherents such as Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism, the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is practically only carried out by Muslim communities, especially from among the coastal communities. The existence of diversity still provides its own color in the dynamics of social life. In this context, local traditions such as *Turun Kasunge* become one of the cultural representations of the majority community that coexists with other groups (Bps, 2012).

Turun Kasunge is a tradition that is exclusively practiced by Muslim communities. This is not because of any resistance from other religious groups, but because this tradition has grown from the roots of local Islamic culture that has been passed down from generation to generation. The symbols used in this tradition, such as lime water, fresh flour, and Islamic prayers, reflect strong Islamic spiritual nuances. Therefore, it naturally becomes part of the expression of the religious and cultural identity of the Muslim community in Sosorgadong.

In accordance with the explanation from Mr. Sulaiman Sihombing, he said:

"Despite not directly involving people from other religious backgrounds, there has never been any rejection, conflict or social tension related to the implementation of this tradition. Instead, people from other faith backgrounds show tolerance and respect, even if they do not actively participate. They understand that *Turun Kasunge* is part of the Muslim community's value system and expression of gratitude for what Allah has bestowed. In many cases, people from different backgrounds still show social support, for example by offering congratulations, or helping with logistics or labor if needed. This is proof that strong cultural traditions do not always require the involvement of all parties, but simply acceptance, recognition and mutual respect" (Sulaiman Sihombing, 2025).

This phenomenon is in line with the views of Will Kymlicka, a leading multiculturalist thinker, who states that in a plural society, it is important for each group to have the freedom to express their cultural identity (Manfour, 2024). This can be done without having to force the involvement of other groups, as long as the expression does not harm or discriminate against others. In the context of *Turun Kasunge*, the Muslim community in Sosorgadong continues to carry out their traditions with full faith, while other residents show tolerance, thus creating a harmonious social space.

Furthermore, it is important to realize that in a healthy multicultural society, respect for each other's traditions does not mean directly participating in them, but simply maintaining a safe space for the practice to take place. The people of Sosorgadong demonstrate this in a very real way – there is no attempt to erase or suppress the cultural expressions of either the majority or minority groups. Instead, what happens is a form of peaceful coexistence between various cultural and religious expressions. Thus, from the perspective of a multicultural society, *Turun Kasunge* is seen as part of the local cultural wealth that does not have to be shared equally, but still has a respected position in common life. This tradition lives in a social space full of tolerance and respect, making it one example of how local wisdom can survive and thrive within the frame of a pluralistic society.

Furthermore, in the context of a multicultural society, the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is a form of cultural inclusiveness that not only strengthens the identity of Muslims locally, but also enriches the shared cultural repertoire. The existence of a space for mutual respect and the absence of efforts to blame each other in religious practice shows the level of socio – religious maturity of the local community. This is in accordance with the spirit of religious moderation which encourages dialogue between beliefs and cultures, and avoids extreme and exclusive attitudes in religion. As emphasized in the Religious Moderation Guidelines of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019) which states that:

"The character of religious moderation requires openness, acceptance, and cooperation from each different group. Therefore, every individual religious believer, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, and political choice must be willing to listen to each other, and learn to train each other in the ability to manage and overcome differences in religious understanding between them"(RI, 2019)

CONCLUSION

Turun Kasunge is a cultural expression of the Muslim community in Sosorgadong that is rich in symbolic values, such as expressions of gratitude, prayers for safety, and good wishes for the birth of a child. This tradition reflects the community's beliefs and hopes for the new life to come. From an Islamic perspective, this practice is acceptable as long as it does not contradict the principles of *tauhid* and *syariah* teachings. Symbolic elements such as lime juice, plain flour, and incense should be understood as part of local culture, not as a separate form of spiritual belief.

In a multicultural society, *Turun Kasunge* is still valued as a form of cultural identity that does not force the involvement of other parties. Although it is only practiced by the Muslim community, the existence of this tradition does not cause rejection from followers of other religions. This shows an attitude of mutual respect and acceptance of differences that are part of the social life of the diverse Sosorgadong community.

Thus, the *Turun Kasunge* tradition is not only a cultural heritage, but also a means of learning about the importance of living harmoniously in diversity. This practice reflects religious moderation, where the preservation of traditions is carried out with an awareness of boundaries and inclusive values. The presence of this tradition strengthens the growth of tolerance and social harmony in a pluralistic society, making it a real example of peaceful coexistence in diversity.

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