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***Songkabala Tradition in the Makassar Society:
Local Values and Messages of the Al-Qur'an an Anthropological
Perspective on Islamic Law***

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Abstrak: Local traditions as religious practices in Indonesian society experience dialectic and integration of Islamic teachings. Every ethnicity in Indonesia has socio-cultural mechanisms in dealing with calamities and disasters which are influenced by religion and customs. This then dialectic with the practice of Islamic law. The study seeks to examine songkabala, a tradition of mutual acceptance in the Makassar society. These traditions are local values that contain Al-Qur'anic teachings. This is an empirical legal study employing an anthropological perspective on Islamic law. In-depth interviews and literature reviews focused on three districts inhabited by Makassar, namely Maros, Gowa, and Takalar, were employed to collect data. The study indicates that songkabala is the spirit of Al-Qur'anic verses associated to human responses to calamity, including remembrance of Allah, gratitude, and ritualized prayer. Songkabala is a Makassar folk tradition that contains Al-Qur'anic themes. The verses of the Al-Qur'an indicate that the command to pray and the remembrance of Allah are incorporated into the songkabala ritual. Consequently, there is no incompatibility between the songkabala tradition and the teachings of the Al-Qur'an.

Keywords: Songkabala tradition, Makassar ethnicity, local values, messages of the Al-Qur'an, anthropology of Islamic law.

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Abstrak: Tradisi lokal sebagai praktik keagamaan dalam masyarakat di Indonesia mengalami dialektika dan integrasi ajaran Islam. Setiap etnis di Indonesia memiliki mekanisme sosial-budaya dalam menghadapi musibah dan bencana yang dipengaruhi oleh agama dan adat. Hal tersebut kemudian berdialektika dengan praktik hukum Islam. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membahas suatu tradisi tolak balak dalam masyarakat Makassar yang dikenal dengan nama songkabala. Tradisi ini merupakan nilai-nilai lokal yang mengandung pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an. Studi tersebut merupakan kajian hukum empiris dengan menggunakan pendekatan antropologi hukum Islam. Teknik pengumpulan data yang dipakai adalah wawancara mendalam dan studi literatur yang difokuskan pada tiga wilayah, yaitu Kabupaten Maros, Gowa dan Takalar yang didiami oleh etnis Makassar. Kajian menyimpulkan bahwa songkabala adalah representasi sekaligus implementasi perintah ayat terkait cara-cara menghadapi musibah, yaitu berzikir, bersyukur, berdo'a yang dibarengi ritual. Songkabala merupakan tradisi lokal masyarakat Makassar yang mengandung pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an. Pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an yang dimaksud bahwa perintah untuk berdo'a, berzikir dipadukan dalam proses ritual songkabala. Karena itu, tidak ada pertentangan antara tradisi songkabala dan pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi songkabala, etnis makassar, nilai-nilai lokal, pesan-pesan al-Qur'an, antropologi hukum Islam.

Introduction

Human life has never been immune to catastrophe or *al-bala'*. According to the Al-Qur'an, *bala'* signifies that testing and trials are inevitable in human life. In the Al-Qur'an, a test or trial is referred to as *lafadz al-bala'*, which, depending on the context, can refer to a good or negative test.¹ Testing and trials are a necessary part of our lives.² In this regard, the social and cultural practices of the Indonesian people tend to indicate that the term *bala'* (test) is perceived as negative. This interpretation represents the word *bala'*, which attributes a negative connotation. At the very least, this suggests that the Indonesian people cultural-wise regard the term *bala'* as bad or hardship. However, *al-Bala'* in the Al-Qur'an is interpreted differently from what have been commonly understood in the

¹Al-Fakhr al-Razy, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, Jilid II (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1985), p. 74. M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah, Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Vol. I (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), p. 438-439.

²M. Quraish Shihab, "Musibah dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* I, No. 1 (2006), p. 11

Indonesian contexts. *Al-Bala'* signifies a kind of "test" in the context of the Al-Qur'an, although the form of the test varies. The commonly used term *al-Bala'* is typically taken as a negative term, such as catastrophe. Yet, Muslims believe that all disasters are the result of Allah's might and consent.³

Related to the view of *bala'*, inhabitants of the South Sulawesi province hold firm on cultural values that have been passed down from generation to generation. This preservation shows a sign of respect for the ancestors and is seen as something precious; if it is not preserved, it will negatively affect their offspring. In addition, tradition-related studies are constantly discussed, both in practice and in actual traditional topics. The ceremonial of rejecting the *bala'* is a vital aspect of the local cultural values.⁴ Tradition is also a condition carried out by a group of individuals who have treated something as sacred from the past to the present and have even taken root inside society, resulting in the establishment of a culture or culture in which the community participates. It is contained in QS.al-Baqarah/2:170 and relates to passing on traditions and culture from generation to generation. When it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they reply, "No! We 'only' follow what we found our forefathers practicing." Would they still do so, even if their forefathers had 'absolutely' no understanding or guidance?"⁵

This verse shows that mankind has an inclination to preserve and propagate their forefathers' ideas, regardless of whether or not these behaviors are in accordance with Shari'a. This is due to the preservation of the ancestors' beliefs and history, which became known as local traditions or local wisdom.

Local traditions as religious activities in Indonesian society exhibit dialectics and Islamic incorporation. This is demonstrated by the slametan tradition in Javanese culture. This custom is typically observed at birth, marriage, and death, and is marked with prayer, tahlilan, and a communal meal.⁶ East Javanese people also observe the *nyadran* or almsgiving

³Abi Fadl al-Din Muhammad bin Mukrim Ibn Manzur al-Misri, *Lisan al-Arabi*, Vol. 7 (Libanon: Dar Sadir, 1414 H.), p. 304.

⁴Sutikno, "Function and Meaning of *Tolak Bala* (Ward of Misfortune) Ritual in Malay Serdang Indonesia," *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 4, No. 8, (2017).

⁵Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: CV Darussunnah, 2013), p. 27.

⁶Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "Revitalising the Javanese Muslim Slametan: Islam, Local Tradition, Honor and Symbolic Communication," *al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 57, No. 2 (2019).

tradition. This custom is practiced by the community so that they may feel closer to the Creator, be protected from disruptions (*bala'*) and disease, and enjoy increased harvests.⁷

The Malay community of Riau is also familiar with the custom of rejection of the *bala'*, sometimes known as village settlement or village healing. The purpose of the tradition of "remembering the village" is to reject the *bala'* or misfortunes, both personally and communally. The combination of Islam and local traditions is quite strong in this tradition, which can be seen from the prays and rituals led by religious leaders.⁸

Sambas, West Kalimantan's *bepapas* are amiliar with the practice of rejecting *bala'*. The *bepapas* ritual is carried out as an effort to avoid all forms of distress, which is symbolized by leaves and led by *Pak Labai* (a traditional leader). *Bepapas* is a tradition that has been observed for a very long period, and as such, it is revered. Even though opinions range on how to respond to it, this custom still persists and is deemed to have cultural significance. This tradition's Islamic ideals are centered on the monotheistic concepts of keeping a link with nature, fostering friendship, and expressing thanks to Allah SWT.⁹

Residents of Makassar, South Sulawesi, have traditionally referred to the refusal of the *bala'* as *songkabala*. This ceremony is performed by the community in order to repel the *bala'* or disasters. *Songkabala* is a tradition that the Makassar tribe still does today.

This tradition grew and took root in the Makassar tribal society some centuries ago, eventually becoming a belief that is being practiced today. On the other hand, the Al-Qur'an, which contains the Shari'a, emphasizes that those who believe will always acknowledge that only Allah, as the word of Allah SWT, can protect humans from disasters. Say, ask 'them, O Prophet', "Who can put you out of Allah's reach if He intends to harm you or show you mercy?" They can never find any protector or helper besides Allah (Al-Ahzab: 17).¹⁰

⁷ Ichmi Yani Arinda R, "Sedekah Bumi (*Nyadran*) Sebagai Konvensi Tradisi Jawa dan Islam Masyarakat Bojonegoro," *El-Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 16, No. 1 (2014).

⁸Hasbullah, et.al., "Ritual Tolak Bala pada Masyarakat Melayu (Kajian pada Masyarakat Petalangan Kecamatan Kuras Kabupaten Pelalawan)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 25, No. 1 (2017).

⁹Revi Madrian, "Living Teologi Tradisi Tolak Bala *Bepapas* Pada Masyarakat Desa Parit Setia Kecamatan Jawai Kabupaten Sambas Kalimantan Barat," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 1, No. 3 (2021), p. 260-285.

¹⁰Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Cet. XIV; Jakarta: CV. Darussunnah, 2013), p. 34.

According to Shihab, the fact that humanity have no backup or savior other than Allah proves God's omnipotence over all creatures, including humans, when they face uncertainty about whether or not God will bring calamity demonstrates how powerful God is over all living things. God can arrange so that it becomes a cause that cancels the impact of other causes. *Sunnatullah* (recognized natural and social laws) and *inayatullah* or *madad* (the descent of Allah's hand to bestow compassion on whomever He wills without *Sunnatullah*) are responsible for both cancellations.¹¹ In line with Shihab's viewpoint, mankind requires efforts and prayers to prevent the repercussions of a disaster that poses an imminent threat to life. The Makassarese tribe prays for Allah's protection against all potential perils during the *songkabala* rite. *Songkabala* is a formula for maintaining a cosmic-theological balance between man, nature, and the Creator God.¹²

This study aims to fill in existing gaps and situate an analysis of the *songkabala* ritual tradition as a form of meaning by investigating dynamic relationships that continue to evolve not only toward growth but also the regeneration of centuries-old traditions. Harmonization and integration between indigenous practices and Islamic law is beneficial. This is a fascinating study because it combines the *songkabala* tradition as indigenous knowledge with the words of the Al-Qur'an, which are then examined from an anthropological perspective of Islamic law.¹³

This study employs a legal anthropological methodology to conduct an empirical legal examination. In Islamic law, legal anthropology is a method for integrating and understanding societal legal processes. Due to the sociological and anthropological aspects of Islamic law, social theories must be utilized as an analytical tool in Islamic law research. His research focuses on both the formation of Islamic law in the Al-Qur'an and its integration into the local culture. Thus, the study of the *songkabala* tradition in the Makassar

¹¹M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Vol. X, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), p. 434.

¹²Muhammad Sabri, "Tasbih dan Bakul: Studi Antropologi Agama tentang Songkabala," *Jurnal Adyaan* 1, No. 1 (2014). Irman, "Songkabala: Tradisi Menolak Bencana Masyarakat Islam Desa Minasa Upa Kabupaten Maros Sulawesi Selatan," *Action Researh Literate* 5, No. 2 (2021).

¹³Yahdi Dinul Haq, et.al., "Bid'ah in Concept of Masalah Mursalah and Istihsan According to Imam Asy-Syatibi," *Juris (Jurnal Ilmu Syariah)* 20, No. 2 (2021). Faishal Agil Al Munawar, "Abd Al-Majīd Al-Najjār's Perspective on Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah," *Juris (Jurnal Ilmu Syariah)* 20, No. 2 (2021). Rosdalina Bukido, et.al., "Harmonization of Customary and Islamic Law in the Gama Tradition of the Muslim Mongondow Community of North Sulawesi", *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 22, No. 2 (2022).

ethnic community, which consists of the Maros, Gowa, and Takalar in South Sulawesi, is crucial for the implementation of this legal anthropological theory.¹⁴

Local Knowledge, Culture and Religion

Local knowledge is one of the legacies of local wisdom in a community. Local knowledge is acquired wisdom transmitted via community experience that other groups cannot get.¹⁵ Local knowledge as a dynamic knowledge resource owned, generated, and transferred by certain populations and intertwined with their understanding of nature and the cultural context in order to preserve human ties with nature, the environment, and their own culture.¹⁶ According to Vandebroek, local knowledge systems (LKS) consist of the knowledge, beliefs, traditions, institutional practices, and worldviews developed and maintained by indigenous peoples and local communities, and are believed to be adaptive strategies to the living conditions of these communities. According to Setten and Lein, local knowledge is (1) fundamentally co-produced, (2) closely related to institutional structures, (3) vital for the transmission of skills required to manage crises, (4) not limited to small areas, and (5) constructively accessed through narrative.¹⁷

According to Duangta, local knowledge is derived from tradition or experience and is produced, kept, and passed down from generation to generation by the community. Local knowledge occurred in the lives of ancient peoples and continues to exist today; it spontaneously formed within society before becoming civilization.¹⁸ The argument that local knowledge refers to local wisdom possessed by local people as a result of experience accumulation, informal experimentation, and awareness of the environment

¹⁴ Beni Ahmad Saebani and Encup Supriatna, *Antopologi Hukum*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2017). Ali Sodiqin, "Antropologi Hukum sebagai Pendekatan dalam Penelitian Hukum Islam," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 7, No. 1 (2013).

¹⁵ Fibrika Rahmat Basuki, et.al., Identification of Potential Local Wisdom of Senamat Ulu Village (Electrical Independent Village) As A Source of Science Learning, *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1185012102.

¹⁶ Alessandro Demaio, "Local Wisdom and Health Promotion: Barrier or Catalyst?" *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health* 23, No. 2 (2009), p.127-132.

¹⁷ Guind Setten and H. Lein, "We Draw On What We Know Anyway: The Meaning And Rule of Local Knowledge in Natural Hazard Management," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 38, (2019).

¹⁸ Kanchana Duangta, et.al., Knowledge Manadement of Pomelo Production System in Northest Thailand; Case Study of The Pomelo Farmer Group in Ban Thaen District, *Forest and Society* (2) (2018). p. 162-172.

within a particular culture caused the prior assertion to be retracted.¹⁹ According to Skarbek, local knowledge is an understanding of the distinctive social and economic conditions of a particular time and place. People's desires, cultural norms, religious beliefs, hopes, theories, and educated predictions comprise social conditions. Incorporating supply and demand, local resources, and technology from a commercial perspective.²⁰

The *songkabala* ritual ceremony is one form of local knowledge of a community, which, according to Agus, is a high-awareness attitude that, when executed, may be described as an action that seeks to receive plentiful sustenance from a task and to escape the danger that had been prophesied..²¹ In addition, Thomas F. O'dea believes that ritual is a high-awareness attitude that, by executing the ritual, develop moral traits or, alternatively, as a communal or congregational activity, can rebuild its relationship with sacred objects and strengthen solidarity and cultural values.²² This is congruent with Ramli's belief that tradition is something that is reproduced deliberately. The *songkabala* ceremony is a type of local knowledge that is still regarded as significant by the community and is still performed today, especially by the Makassar tribe as a tradition of rejecting the bala'.²³ This viewpoint argues, at the very least, that the *songkabala* tradition has a relationship between the past and the present that is intertwined with life, so that it continues to exist within the society, notably among the Makassar tribal people.

Songkabala: The Cultural and Religious Perspectives

Culture is a series of beliefs and solutions for survival and reproduction. *Songkabala* is a Makassar tribal community tradition that represents rejection of bala' as part of its culture. This custom has been passed down from generation to generation, and it still exists now. The *songkabala* tradition discuss issues regarding spirit, morals, knowledge, and

¹⁹ Sandie Gunara, et.al., "Lokal Knowledge System of Kampung Naga: A Study to investigate the Educational Values of Indigenous People in Transmitting Religious and Cultural Values *International Journal of Instruction* 12, No. 3. (2019), p. 219-236

²⁰David Skarbek, "Alertness, Lokal Knowledge and Johnny Appleseed," *The Review of Austrian Economics* 22, No. 4 (2019), p. 415-424.

²¹Bustanuddin Agus, *Agama dalam Kehidupan manusia Pengantar Antropologi Agama* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005), p. 96-98.

²²Thomas F. O'dea, *Sosiologi Agama Suatu Pengantar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2001), p. 76.

²³ Muhammad Idrus Ramli, *Membedah Bid'ah dan Tradisi dalam Perspektif Ahli Hadis dan Ulama Salafi* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2000), p. 39

rituals. Spiritually speaking, songkabala suggests that practically all natural disasters, as well as societal catastrophes, arise when the rule of universal law is disrupted and destroyed. Whenever a songkabala ceremony is performed, an offering is made, which is believed to act as a conduit for human desires and prayers to the Creator. Alternately, offerings are also referred to as "a form of spiritual negotiation" with the purpose of preventing all types of tragedies by presenting symbols to be offered to the Almighty. This custom, according to Daeng Kenna, implies that executing the songkabala ceremony comprises requesting God Almighty for protection so that people are spared or kept away from various disasters such as epidemics, floods, etc. In his opinion, songkabala (rejection of *bala'*) is performed at particular times if a disaster is near or during the months of *Muharram*, *Sha'ban*, and *Rajab*.²⁴

The songkabala ceremony is an integral part of the local cultural riches. The macrocosm of inherited perspectives held by those who adhere to ancient traditions and beliefs is complemented by the state of nature as a place to live and earn a living. Natural calamities and diseases are believed to have a divine connection. This is consistent with Sutikno's opinion that refusing the *bala'* is replete with supernatural occurrences.²⁵ Hence, the purpose of performing a ritual based on a high awareness attitude, also known as a rite, is not only to gain bountiful sustenance from a certain effort, but also to avert damage that is anticipated to befall humanity. Because of their tremendous magical worth, the rituals that are performed are likewise governed by specific rules and are formal in nature, so that they cannot be performed hurriedly or carelessly. According to Wahyana, rituals are performed to attain a desire or the material fulfilment of something. Because of this, some individuals believe that providing sacrifices constitutes polytheism. On the other hand, there are people who believe that there is a hidden symbol and significance that must be discovered.²⁶ In the Makassarese tribal community, the practices of observing the tradition of providing sacrifices throughout numerous traditional ceremonies and socioreligious rites (rejection of *bala'*) are known as *Songkabala*.

²⁴Interview with Daeng Kenna, Community Figure in Batangkaluku, Somba Opu, Gowa Regency, September 2021.

²⁵Sutikno, "Function and meaning of Tolak Bala (World of f Misfortune) Ritual Malay Serdang Indonesia," *The International Jurnal of Social sciences and Humanities Invention* 4, No. 8 (2017).

²⁶Wahyana Giri MC, *Sajen dan Ritual Orang Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2010), p. 76.

Songkabala cannot be isolated from its function as a tradition originated from the Makassar tribe. This tradition refers to behaviors believed to be the truth and is merged with traditional and religious ceremonies. The tradition is transmitted from one generation to the next by oral or written information recorded in ancient texts and inscriptions.²⁷ Rather than merely illustrating that the present arises from the past, tradition has a strong connection between the past and the present, which involves the continuation of the past for the present.²⁸ The purpose of tradition for society is to supply useful historical heritage fragments, legitimate worldviews and beliefs, serve as a symbol of collective identity that can persuade and strengthen allegiance to the nation, community, and group, and deliver either life fulfillment or disappointment.²⁹

It is acknowledged that ceremonies and rituals performed by the community are significant and functional. It is certainly that no community group or ethnic community will undertake a traditional ritual or event that is thought to have no value or purpose, and so is the practice of distributing gifts. In the Javanese religion, the lives of the Javanese people are almost inseparable from the practice of offering sacrifices as a means of dealing with invisible entities. In this scenario, the offerings are viewed as slametan in order to avert danger, and this suggests that making offerings or gifts is a must in the Javanese culture as reiterated by Endraswara. Hence, this tradition is maintained by the Javanese communities in all respects.³⁰ For this purpose, every tribe needs a medium or method of communication. For the Makassar tribe, for example, *Songkabala* is used as the medium of communication with invisible entities, and thus communication symbols should represent certain cultural values, in which the practice of offerings is performed.

According to Smith, there are three concepts in religion: first, the ceremonial system, which is a manifestation of religion; second, religious ceremonies performed by community members serve a social function to maintain their solidarity; and third, the function of offerings (*saji*) in religious ceremonies.³¹ The entirety of the sacrifice bears certain functions,

²⁷Muhaimin, *Islam dalam Bingkai Budaya Lokal: Potret dari Cirebon*, (Ciputat: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), p. 11.

²⁸Piotr Sztompka, *Sosiologi Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Prenada, 2004), p. 70.

²⁹Edward Shils, *Traditions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 21.

³⁰ Suwardi Endraswara, *Agama Jawa: Ajaran, Amalan, dan Asal-Usul Kejawen*, (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2015), p. 53.

³¹Edward Shils, *Traditions*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).

meanings and benefits. In a way, everyone needs a medium of communication. This kind of medium should be inseparable to the cultural values of the tribes performing the sacrifice and (hopefully) readily understood by others. The sacrifices are regarded metaphorically and viewed as a means of approaching God Almighty.³²

Songkabala as a Tolak Bala in Makassarese Culture

Makassar tribal civilization has a lengthy history of the songkabala tradition. However, according to Alimuddin, a Religion Counselor in Maros, it is also important to realize that not everyone wants to perform the songkabala ceremony, as they believe it is a waste of time and money with no effect or benefit on human life, and that religious teachings do not require it.³³ Some people believe that the songkabala ritual is essential for repelling the *balas*' since the ritual contains positive values and is advantageous to human life. *Songkabala*, through the prayers recited during the songkabala ceremony, is considered to be able to repel the *bala*' and bring benefits in life, as it will make life serene, comfortable, and free of disasters, misfortunes, and bad lucks. According to Abdul Latif, the former priest of Nisombalia Village in the Marusu Subdistrict, the commencement of the prayer ritual was known as *pa'nganro-anro* (Sincere supplication) and was accompanied by worship at sacred sites. Observing the phenomena and the strengthening of the Islamic community's faith, one of the Islamic mass groups, the Anshor Youth Movement, took efforts to end the practice of worshiping in sacred places and replaced it with a songkabala ceremony that was performed as a form of remembering the creator.³⁴

The *songkabala* ceremony in Minasa Upa Village, Bontoa, Maros Regency is typically performed not only when a horrible tragedy is imminent, but also in other months such as Muharram. During such instances, the village priest announces that the songkabala rite would be performed. Those who conduct the songkabala ritual believe that prayer is both a conduit for energy and a means of communication between a servant and his Creator. Prayer is also a desire for the fulfillment of all hopes, goals,

³²Ayatullah Humaeni, *Menelusuri Makna dan Akar Tradisi Sesajen Masyarakat Muslim Banten dan Masyarakat Hindu Bali*, (Serang Banten, LP2M UIN SMH Banten), 2021, h. 43.

³³Interview with Alimuddin, Religious Counselor in Maros Regency, October 2021.

³⁴Interview with Abdul Latif, ex religious cleric in Nisombalia village, Marusu, Maros Regency, August 2021.

and ideals.³⁵ According to Daeng Kenna, the reader (*pabbaca*) of the traditional songkabala ritual prayer has deep roots in the Batangkaluku population in the Somba Opu Gowa District. The songkabala ritual is performed with the intention of averting various disasters, both natural disasters and disease outbreaks that afflict the community, such as smallpox outbreaks, as it has been observed that this illness frequently strikes during certain seasons.³⁶

The *songkabala* procession for the Makassar tribe, both in Maros, Gowa, and Takalar, requires the preparation of a variety of components for the dish, and is normally conducted at night after sunset. The preparations for the residents of Minasa Upa Maros consist of a *Kappara'* (a large round tray), candles, incense, bente, plantains, a glass of water, and the required foods: *massingkulu kaddo'*, *umba-umba*, *lappa-lappa'*, and *apang* cake. The food items utilized by the people of Maros, Gowa, and Takalar are practically the same, and only slightly differences. In addition to *kaddomasingkulu'*, *lappa-lappa*, *umba-umba*, bland rice porridge, and sweet rice porridge, Batangkaluku Gowa residents consume *kope'langi* (a cake consisting of sticky rice wrapped in grated coconut and topped with granulated sugar) and *tumpi* (made of fish and pounded grated coconut and then fried). While in Takalar, it was conducted in Patte'ne, Polongbangkeng Selatan, Takalar Regency. Similar to that of the Maros and Gowa regions, the materials in Takalar needed to be prepared with the addition of *pangngajai* stones and *bosara* (containers for placing cakes). According to a *tupanrita* (traditional leader) in Pangkabinanga, Gowa Regency,³⁷ the presence of all *songkabala* equipment and food variety is essential for the ritual to go successfully, as everything presented in the songkabala ritual has significant philosophical importance. For human life, as stated in "*Toangngani syara ka na Bacayya*" (more primarily the philosophical meaning contained in a symbol rather than reading prayers or sayings).³⁸

Songkabala performance necessitates the use of items or dishes with philosophical significance. Most of the time, it is performed at night after

³⁵ Irman, "Songkabala: Tradisi Menolak Bencana Masyarakat Islam Desa Minasa Upa Kabupaten Maros Sulawesi Selatan," *Action Reseach Literate* 5, No. 2 (2021).

³⁶ Interview with Daeng Kenna, Community Figure in Batangkaluku, Somba Opu, Gowa Regency, September 2021.

³⁷ Interview with Lawi Daeng Sakking, Community Figure, in Patte'ne, South Polongbangkeng, Takalar Regency, September 2021.

³⁸ Interview with Daeng Gassing, *tupanrita* (Cultural Figures) in Pangkabinanga Gowa, September 2021.

sunset. Others believe the significance of meal service under the Songkabala tradition is as follows:

1. *Ka'do'* massingkulu is a triangle delicious traditional Makassar dish, made of rice. This cuisine connotes a certain meaning, specifically "*ka'do*" means to eat and "*massingkulu*" means to prevent all disasters, or its philosophical meaning as a symbol of preventing all disasters from occurring
2. *Umba-Umba* or *onde-onde*, a type of traditional Makassar cake, signifies a sign of contentment that is unaffected by anything that can bring unhappiness to society.
3. *Lappa-lappa*, a famous dish from Makassar meaning "folding," represents the folding or crushing of oncoming disasters, and preventing them from occurring
4. The aroma of *Apang* Cake, which is composed of rice flour, brown sugar, and grated coconut, represents the desire for a tranquil, secure, and trouble-free existence
5. Candles (*Taibani*) are typically a source of illumination. Some individuals see that as a symbol of optimism and direction, it also represents life, knowledge, and leadership. Moreover, candles are viewed as a symbol of sacrifice
6. *Incense* is essential in the songkabala tradition because it is utilized to produce a fragrant aroma
7. *Bente*, which is fried rice, is a vital component of the songkabala ceremony that aims to prevent and alleviate future catastrophes
8. *Pisang Raja* (sweet banana) is referred to as *unti te'ne* in Makassar, and the locals see it as a symbol of uniqueness
9. Water, a glass of water, is a vital component of the *songkabala* ceremony, as it is seen as a source of peace and always flows downward, instructing humans to always be humble.

According to traditional leaders, the food and other symbols shown in the *songkabala* ritual fulfill the following purposes:

1. Getting nearer to God
The performance of songkabala is a form of prayer to God Almighty for salvation, and the prayer also expresses a desire to be shielded from impending disasters. In other words, the most important part of *songkabala* is praying to Allah and surrendering to Allah in order to prevent things that are hated or despised. QS Gafir/40:60 encourages prayer, stating, "Pray to Me, and I will certainly be pleased with you."
2. Techniques for Preserving Regional Knowledge

Local wisdom, as practiced by the Makassar ethnic community, is a type of wisdom founded on excellent principles and applied and maintained for generations by a particular group of people.

3. The social reflection of family relationships

A particular society was developed through ingrained norms of a tradition, customs or habits. Customary rules are the most important element that determine the ethics of decency, and those ethics are assured and preserved, which are founded on *ukhuwah*-a kind of Muslim brotherhood. In the Islamic perspective, the value of *ukhuwah* is essential for establishing human brotherhood. In the *songkabala* tradition, cooperation can awaken the value of *ukhuwah*, which is expressed in the existence of cooperation between parties in the performance of *songkabala*

Views of the Makassar Community on *Songkabala* Practices

The Makassar ethnic group is predominantly Muslim and fervently devoted to religious dogma. Others continue to believe in spiritual phenomena, including spirits, souls, and other entities that have a part in human existence. The Makassar tribe is also renowned for the preservation of its culture and indigenous knowledge, which is carried out by each community in a way that has a unique impact and encourages camaraderie within the tribe. In line with this concept, a particular society is built on ingrained traditions or habits in the form of a tradition, which serves as the basis for determining or acting in order to preserve traditional values in people's lives. As understood from an Islamic perspective, human relations are in accordance with the value of *ukhuwah* between humans, wherein the *songkabala* tradition is considered as an Islamic teaching value, namely establishing friendly relations between people to foster brotherhood and peace in daily life.

The Makassar society believe that *songkabala* is the union of Islam and culture, which represents Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin*. People will quickly accept Islamic teachings that are inclusive of a pluralistic culture and based in local communities. If, on the other hand, Islamic teachings do not consider the coexisting local cultures, Islam will not be well accepted in Indonesia. Islam is a religion that teaches universal standards inherent in cultural norms that govern all human acts associated with human connections with other humans, human relations with nature and the surrounding environment, including animals and plants, and human relations

with God. Religion and culture that the Prophet Muhammad brought to humanity are intertwined.³⁹

In addition to being believed to be a means of praying for assistance and protection from Allah SWT and preserving traditions, the *songkabala* tradition is believed to foster mutual cooperation, as Islam teaches individuals to respect one another and to possess a high level of social awareness. This can be considered in light of the values of the Songkabala tradition. The relevance of gotong royong or cooperation, for example, arises from the fact that it encourages cooperation toward a shared aim and interest. This is exhibited beginning with the preparation for the *songkabala's* performance, which was conducted collaboratively in order to prepare everything required for its implementation. There are also religious or spiritual elements, like as the ritual *songkbala* tradition that draws humanity closer to God. It is frequently held following the evening prayer on the tenth of *Muharram*. This songkabala begins with the reading of the holy verses of the Al-Qur'an by religious leaders (*ulama*) or village priests, is followed by prayers for the safety and well-being of the entire community, and concludes with a procession of all participants. In addition, dialogue is significant since the adoption of *songkabala* reflects a community-wide effort to confront upcoming challenges.

The Makassar tribal people believe that the songkabala persists as a result of the myths that are frequently told and performed. For this reason, the community believes that the songkabala rite is advantageous. Although not all residents of Patte'ne, Takalar Regency, choose to partake in the songkabala rite, they nevertheless pray for the safety of the community. The Makassar tribal people who continue to practice the songkabala rite believe that doing so will protect them from all forms of natural calamities, including as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and many diseases. As proof of the Covid-19 outbreak, the villagers of Batangkaluku were instructed to perform the songkabala ceremony to prevent the outbreak. According to religious officials in Patte'ne, Takalar Regency, the repetitive prayers within the *songkabala* tradition protect the people from danger and disease. According to him, this was evidenced by the fact that no residents of the Patte'ne subdistrict were infected with Covid-19.⁴⁰

³⁹Nurul Jeumpa, "Nilai-Nilai Agama Islam," *Pedagogik: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Fakultas Tarbiyah Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh* 4, No. 2 (2018).

⁴⁰Interview with Daeng Kenna, Batangkaluku Residence, and interview with Ganna Daeng Nyampo, Religious Figure, in Patte'ne, Takalar Regency, September 2021.

The community hypothesize that due to the deep belief in ancestral traditions, the community attempt to continue preserving local customs and culture that have been passed down from generation to generation. Moreover, the songkabala contains the ukhuwah values, which are extremely significant in social life. The value of *gotong royong*, for example is shown very clearly in the *songkabala* ceremony, which promotes cooperation in its performance, i.e., aiding one another in during the performance of Songkabala. It also demonstrates communicative and relevant values, such as the inseparability of society in achieving its human values and a sense of brotherhood in fostering constant connection between individuals who are part of the same community and share the same ideas and goals. According to Islamic beliefs, the same applied to a conventional concept. The group believes that the Songkabala rite is carried out in accordance with conditions involving symbols with philosophical significance. The songkabala ritual is typically performed at night after the evening prayer on the 10th of Muharram or in other months if a natural disaster or disease epidemic is predicted. Starting with burning coconut husk in a bowl-shaped incense burner (paddupang), the embers are sprinkled with incense and placed next to the prepared offerings as a prayer for protection is read aloud.

***Songkabala* and How to Respond to Disasters**

Musibah yang juga bermakna ujian berupa nikmat seringkali membuat manusia terpedaya dan lupa terhadap Allah swt. Musibah dapat menimpa akibat perilaku dan perbuatan manusia sendiri dalam menjalankan kehidupannya. Bahkan dengan nikmat akal yang telah diberikan kepada manusia, dengan sadar atau tanpa disadari pengetahuan yang dimiliki oleh manusia itu sendiri telah menjadikannya sebagai perusak. Ada dua bentuk perusakan yang dilakukan oleh manusia yakni fisik dan psikis. Seperti Firman Allah QS. Asy-Syura/42:30

Certain disasters, which are seen as benefits frequently deceive and cause people to forget Allah SWT. As a result of human behavior and activities in living their lives, catastrophes might occur. Even with the favor of thinking ability that has been granted to humanity, the information they possess has rendered them destructive, whether knowingly or unconsciously. There are two types of human destruction: physical and psychological. As God's Word QS. Ash-Shura/42:30.

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبْتُمْ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَيَعْتُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

Meaning: And whatever misfortune befalls you is due to your own actions, and Allah is most kind (of your faults)

According to Mardan, *wa ya'fu 'an katsirin*, which means "God forgives many of (their) sins," reveals the essence of ar-Rahman and His ar-Rahim that are given upon humanity. As a manifestation of His love, Allah swt forgives mistakes and misdeeds, despite the fact that Allah Almighty is so powerful that He destroys everything, including every animal on earth.⁴¹ This verse is intended at the polytheists of Mecca from the standpoint of its context, but from the perspective of its content, it is directed at humanity individually and collectively.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلٍ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

Meaning: As stated in the al-Qur'an, the term disaster encompasses all events, both positive and negative, both grace and calamity. QS. al-Hadid/57:22.

There is no misfortune that befalls the earth or yourselves that has not been recorded in the Book (*Lauhul Mahfudz*) before We created it. Indeed, that is simple for Allah.⁴²

Actually, the term calamity encompasses both positive and negative occurrences, grace and disaster. This passage can be interpreted in a general sense because Allah is indeed All-Knowing. According to al-Zuhaili, there is no disaster in the world that Allah swt has not predetermined. Whether it is a calamity on earth (soil) such as drought, famine, shortage of plants, damage to agricultural crops and fields (harvest failure), shortage of agricultural produce, declining yields of fields, soaring prices the price of needs, and the spread of hunger, or calamities such as disease, poverty and difficult economic conditions, the loss of children and offspring, all of that has been recorded. In accordance with QS Ath-Taghabun/64:11: "No misfortune befalls a person without Allah's permission; and whomever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart, and Allah knows everything." This passage explains that whatever misfortune befalls humanity, good or terrible, nothing will occur apart from God's will.

⁴¹Mardan, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an tentang Malapaetaka*, (Makassar: Pustaka Arif, 2008), p. 92-93.

⁴²Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, (Jakarta: Darussunnah, 2013), p.789

Communities' beliefs surrounding unseen, sacred, and myths entities cannot be separated from the beliefs of the ancestors, which was enculturized, forming a certain habit passed down through generations and is seen to be beneficial and meaningful. These beliefs and values provide a lasting foundation for traditions. Ideas entrenched in the society are typically difficult to alter. However, it does not imply one must accept them. Myth is the original product of human symbolic activities centered on language, and the underlying logical relationship between language and myth serves as the spiritual basis for the evolution of human culture. Therefore, traditions that evolve into myths continue to be created and passed down from generation to generation. Myth also asserts the presence of values that are not communicated through existing social processes.

Myths that exist in multiple forms of sanctity risk violating the *Shari'a*; therefore, religious figures must play significant roles in educating communities by referring to the Al-Qur'an in order to eliminate widespread beliefs in superstition and animosity that are based on a mixture of pure *aqeedah* and superstition. Yet, a religious doctrine respects civilizations and can influence them with cultural values and customs that are more subtle in balancing spiritual requirements, such as incorporating religious elements into communal rituals such as the *songkabala* rite, given that race and culture are fundamentally tied to religion. According to Carbonnier et al., religion is commonly associated with "spirituality," "culture," "civil society," "values," and "ethics," and religion is also associated with traditions held firm in a particular society.⁴³ This is significant, but it does not imply that religion supports or legitimizes beliefs that contradict *aqidah* and *sharia*. Religion merely legitimizes the significance of preserving *songkabala* culture or tradition, which is also a means of comprehending the Greatness and Power of God as the Creator, so that a belief is formed that the preserved *songkabala* tradition is irrelevant to beliefs that can withstand the *bala'*. Yet, discourse is required to clarify that the *songkabala* ceremony has a religious significance in order to draw closer to God and is followed with a prayer for protection from all misfortunes.

The absence of a religious strategy to address cultural trends associated to a tradition would result in the transmission of incorrect beliefs that undermine faith in the purity of *aqidah* and *sharia* from generation to generation. This process has the potential to erode the beliefs of religious adherents and develop erroneous understandings and beliefs if it is not

⁴³Giller Carbonnier (Editor.), *International Development Policy: Religion and Development*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

rectified by faith in God alone, despite the use of ritual methods such as songkabala, which presents symbols in the form of various types of food and other ritual equipment. Despite the fact that religion plays a significant influence in determining a high quality of life. With the deepening of faith, religion guides each individual to act in accordance with the Al-Qur'anic ideals.⁴⁴ In this regard, Khalek noted that religious faith promotes the production of contentment and joy, thereby integrating a high quality of life within religious teachings and doctrines. In the Makassar tribe's songkabala ceremony, human efforts to prevent tragedy take the form of either patience or prayer.⁴⁵

Quranic and Islamic Law Anthropology Perspectives

The *songkabala* ceremony has both benefits and drawbacks. Proponents believe that the songkabala ceremony contains tales that are capable of bringing blessings in the form of warding off the evil. This is due to the fact that the songkabala procession tries to request prayers from Allah SWT. To prevent all disasters, certain instruments and materials must be prepared for the ritual, which is typically performed at night after the Maghrib prayer on the 10th of Muharram or in other months if a natural disaster or disease breakout is predicted. In its procession, it begins with the burning of coconut husks in a container in the shape of a bowl/place for burning incense (*paddupang*) with coals, followed by the sprinkling of prepared offerings with incense and the recitation of a prayer for protection from The Almighty. According to a panrita or someone who is always called upon to lead prayers in specific rites, songkabala is conducted in conjunction with petitions to The Almighty to repel bala'. Consequently, before reading the prayer for safety, the sura al-Fatihah and the sura al-Ikhlâs must be recited, followed by the prayers for safety to avert calamity, and then the sura al-Fatihah must be recited to conclude the ceremony.⁴⁶

In reality, the term refuse reinforcements is not included in the Al-Qur'an; rather, the word *al-Bala'* (Disaster) is present, which has many word derivations and meanings. There are 77 words relating to disasters, of which 33 are past verbs (*fi'il madhi*), 32 are present verbs (*fi'il mudhari*), and 12 are

⁴⁴Celasin, H., Karakoyun, R., Yilmaz, S., Elhan, A. H., Erkek, B., & Kuzu, M.A. (2011), Quality of Life measures in Islamic rectal carcinoma patients receiving counselling. *Colorectal Disease*.

⁴⁵Abdel-Khalek, A.M., "Quality of Life, Subjective well-being, and Religiosity in Muslim College Students," *Quality of life Research*, (2010).

⁴⁶Interview with Daeng Gassing, *tupanrita* (Cultural Figure) in Pangkabinanga, Gowa Regency, September 2021.

nouns (*Isim*).⁴⁷ In truth, the term refuse rejection of the bala is not found in the Al-Qur'an; rather, the word *al-Bala'* (Disaster), which has multiple word derivations and meanings, is present. There are 77 calamity-related words, 33 of which are past verbs (*fi'il madhi*), 32 of which are present verbs (*fi'il mudhari*), and 12 of which are nouns (*Isim*). The multiple interpretations of tragedy include wisdom, doom, and a warning or caution. Destruction is derived from the Arabic term *ashaba*, which means to strike, befall, or to destroy. In Arabic, a disaster is any undesirable event that befalls an individual. According to QS.al-Baqarah/2:156 of the Al-Qur'an, it is a form of test and reproof from Allah SWT in the shape of terrible or good incident. The multiple interpretations of tragedy include wisdom, doom, and a warning or caution. Destruction is derived from the Arabic term *ashaba*, which meaning to strike, befall, or destroy. In Arabic, a disaster is any undesirable event that befalls an individual. According to QS. al-Baqarah/2:156 of the Al-Qur'an, it is a form of test and reproof from Allah SWT in the shape of terrible or good things

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Meaning: Those who say "Innalillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiiun" in response to a natural disaster (surely we belong to Allah and to Him we return).⁴⁸

According to Shihab in that case, Allah will act according to His will. Due to Allah's wisdom, His actions must be beneficial and righteous. Hence, any calamity experienced by a particular person is with reason. You belong to Allah, you are all His creatures, and if misfortune befalls someone, it will neither be the first nor the last instance. This will lighten the strain when encountering tragedy, as the more calamity experience by someone, the easier to bear.⁴⁹ Asy-Sya'rawi memahami bahwa musibah tidaklah identik dengan keburukan. Ia lebih identik dengan cobaan dan ujian.⁵⁰ Asy-Sya'rawi understands that disaster and evil are not synonymous. It mimics trials and tests more closely. For example, the emergence of dangerous and contagious diseases, rampant tyranny, and rising crime rates due to the weakening of the culture of mutual respect and mutual aid, and possibly due to the decline in

⁴⁷Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul al-Baqi', *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrazh Al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1992), p. 415-416

⁴⁸Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, p. 29.

⁴⁹M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah...*, p. 438-439.

⁵⁰Muhammad Mutawaali al-Sya'rawi, *Tafsir Sya'rawi*, Translated by Safir al-Azhar, (Medan: Duta Azhar, 2006). p. 497.

morals and coupled with the pervasive practice of corruption, are all harmful to the state.

The practice of songkabala has altered the mentality and religious discourse of the Makassar tribe. In the midst of a religious community, there are nevertheless actions that some consider to be in conflict with Islamic law. To avoid practices that lead to polytheism, it is vital to instill and clarify a Al-Qur'anic and hadith-based knowledge of Islamic beliefs. A lucid grasp of the true teachings of Islam, particularly the subject of refusing supplements, does not undermine faith and conviction in the majesty of God Almighty in relation to the fate of humanity. Those who believe and are plagued with calamity, according to Ibn Kathir, will find solace in the phrase "istirja." As they believe that nothing from Allah is in vain, Allah informs them of the reward they will receive in exchange for their actions.⁵¹

In the context of Islamic legal anthropology, the dialectic between local values in the form of the *songkabala* tradition in Makassar society is a type of harmonization and integration between Islamic law and culture or custom.⁵² This is because the spread of Islam in the archipelago recognizes the existence of local cultural values. However, religious leaders should play a crucial role to purify the aqidah and sharia of the Islamic society, particularly, in the case of songkabala ceremony, which has been believed performed to prevent the tragedies that always threaten humankind.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the *songkabala* ritual for the Makassar tribe is a tradition of rejecting the bala' that has been passed down from generation to generation in order to seek Allah's protection against every catastrophe. In addition to praying to Allah SWT, the practice entails preparing a range of products and delicacies that signify or symbolize mercy, joy, and protection from all calamities. *Songkabala* is both a symbol and an implementation of verse commandments concerning responses toward disaster, such as remembrance, gratitude, and prayer accompanied by rituals. The fact that the songkabala rite is conducted in the mosque following the evening prayer proves that it cannot be separated from patient prayer. During ceremonies,

⁵¹ Abu Fida' Ismail Ibnu Katsir al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, Juz 2, p. 54

⁵² Fajri M. Kasim and Abidin Nurdin, "Study of Sociological Law on Conflict Resolution Through Adat in Aceh Community According to Islamic Law", *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, No. 2 (2020). Suhaimi, et.al., "Binsabin dan Tonggebban as Madurese Local Wisdom: An Anthropology of Islamic Law Analyses", *al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 16, No. 1 (2021).

food-shaped symbols, such as traditional cakes, are offered in the expectation that the food is in agreement with the aim that everything be for the good and happiness. Despite the fact that the Al-Qur'an says that the term *bala'* has both positive and bad implications, the negative connotation becomes a central point that has a direct association with songkabala. The use of prayer and remembrance in the Al-Qur'an is analogous to the execution of songkabala by the Makassar tribal tribe. Hence, there is no conflict between the message of the Koran and the songkabala tradition, as the Al-Qur'an supports prayer and remembering in a generic sense, allowing the Makassar tribal people to develop in accordance with their indigenous cultures.

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Interviews

- Interview with Alimuddin, Religious Counsellor in Maros Regency, October 2021.
- Interview with Abdul Latif, Ex Religious Cleric in Nisombalia Village, Marusu, Maros Regency, August 2021.
- Interview with Daeng Kenna, Religious Figure of Batangkaluku, Somba Opu, Gowa Regency, September 2021.
- Interview with Lawi Daeng Sakking, Community Figure, Patte'ne, South Polongbangkeng Takalar regency, September 2021.
- Interview with Daeng Gassing, *tupanrita* (Cultural Figure) in Pangkabinanga, Gowa Regency, September 2021.