

Cultural Tradition of Safar Bathing in Air Hitam Laut Sadu Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency (Tradisi Budaya Mandi Safar di Desa Air Hitam Laut Sadu Kabupaten Tanjung Jabung Timur)

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Abstract. This research aims to determine the development of the Safar bathing tradition in Air Hitam village, Sadu District, East Tanjung Jabung Regency in the form of the nature of the Safar bath and the processions involved in it. The method used in this research is literature study in the form of articles, books, magazines, and journals obtained from the results of previous research. The results of this research are; First, Safar bathing is a celebration or form that is closely related to belief which creates respect for ancestors in the sense of a sacred experience. Safar bathing is an activity that is usually carried out in the month of Safar as a form of getting rid of bala' (disasters). Second, the Safar bathing tradition involves several actors in carrying out the procession. This requires a long period of preparation to meet the required facilities and infrastructure. Such preparations are usually made one or two months before the celebration. The hope of this research is that readers can gain insight into the Safar bathing tradition, which is one of the cultures in Jambi

Keywords: Safar bathing, ritual, Cultural tradition, Tanjung Jabung

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui perkembangan tradisi mandi Safar di Desa Air Hitam, Kecamatan Sadu, Kabupaten Tanjung Jabung Timur, dalam bentuk hakikat mandi Safar dan prosesi yang terlibat di dalamnya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah studi literatur berupa artikel, buku, majalah, dan jurnal yang diperoleh dari hasil penelitian sebelumnya. Hasil penelitian ini adalah; Pertama, mandi Safar merupakan perayaan atau bentuk yang berkaitan erat dengan kepercayaan yang menciptakan rasa hormat kepada leluhur dalam arti pengalaman sakral. Mandi Safar merupakan kegiatan yang biasanya dilakukan pada bulan Safar sebagai bentuk pengusiran bala' (bencana). Kedua, tradisi mandi Safar melibatkan beberapa aktor dalam melaksanakan prosesi. Hal ini membutuhkan persiapan yang lama untuk memenuhi fasilitas dan infrastruktur yang dibutuhkan. Persiapan tersebut biasanya dilakukan satu atau dua bulan sebelum perayaan. Harapan dari penelitian ini adalah agar pembaca dapat memperoleh wawasan tentang tradisi mandi Safar, yang merupakan salah satu budaya di Jambi.

Kata Kunci: Mandi Safar, ritual, Tradisi budaya, Tanjung Jabung



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Introduction

Air Hitam Laut village, Sadu subdistrict, East Tanjung Jabung district is a place rich in traditional and religious values. One of the practices carried out by the local community is the Safar bath, a self-cleansing ritual that has spiritual meaning in Islam. Rituals are forms of celebration closely linked to beliefs, fostering respect for ancestors and providing sacred experiences for those who participate (O'Dea, 2014). Rituals are not simply routines, but rather symbolism containing profound meanings about origins, ethics, and humanity's relationship with the universe (Connelly, 2021).

Safar bathing is part of a tradition passed down from generation to generation, reflecting harmony between daily life and religious diversity. In this article, we will explore the meaning and procession of the Safar bath, as well as its impact on the community that carries it out. In every step of the Safar bath, the people of Air Hitam Laut Village, Sadu subdistrict, East Tanjung Jabung district live the values of cleanliness, purity and devotion to God. This process not only cleanses the body, but also cleanses the soul and heart from small sins. This tradition also reflects solidarity within the community. Tradition is not simply a repetition of the past, but rather an adaptive mechanism used by communities to maintain collective identity amidst globalization (Vosloo, 2023). Tradition is how a group of people maintains their values, customs, and stories so that they remain intact over time (Dafirah & Pammuda, Mazurkevych et al., 2024).

Safar baths are often held collectively, creating strong social bonds among village residents. This creates a sense of unity and togetherness which strengthens relations between residents. In the context of globalization, traditions such as the Safar bath are becoming increasingly important as a form of preserving local culture. Air Hitam Laut Village upholds traditional values while remaining open to changing times. By digging deeper into the practice of bathing Safar in Air Hitam Laut Village, we can understand how important cultural and religious heritage is in shaping the identity of a community. Through this ritual, people not only maintain physical cleanliness, but also maintain the spirituality and cultural richness inherent in everyday life.

Several previous studies have explored this ritual from various perspectives. In her thesis, Ampa (2018) discussed the Mandi Safar ritual in Air Hitam Laut Village and noted differing views (pro and con) within the community. Some consider it a religious tradition, while others categorize it as heresy because it lacks an explicit basis in the Quran or Sunnah. Bahtiar et al (2008) highlighted how the Mandi Safar tradition is a blend of Islamic teachings and local customs in Sadu District. Furthermore, Arsyad (2015) documented the Mandi Safar ritual and its relationship to fishermen's thanksgiving, which was published through the Culture and Tourism Office of East Tanjung Jabung Regency.

The procedure for bathing on Safar is to have mutual understanding with the residents of the zone, city by going to the washing place and providing various food needs at that place. It is known that this month contains many failures, so that people can learn lessons from the incidents that happened to many prophets and apostles during their time. Disasters must be kept at a strategic distance by continuing to ask forgiveness from Almighty God. This activity is realized not by importing but by carrying out washing customs. Regarding the presence of the Safar Cuci convention, this certainly raises pros and cons among the community itself. On the one hand, there are those who believe that sin should not be committed because it is contrary to Islamic wisdom which teaches superstition and superstition and contains an element of avoidance, even though on the other hand there is an element of avoidance. are those who argue that the Safar Washing custom is just a tradition passed down from generation to generation with an Islamic background. Carrying capacity must be maintained, of course by prioritizing Islamic adjustments and turning off the element of attraction.

The Safar Bathing tradition is still routinely held by the community in Bahas Laut Hitam Village, Sadu District, East Tanjung Jabung Regency. From the discussion of the reasons above, researchers will look at bathing habits while traveling in the Black Sea Discuss City, Sadu Area, East Tanjung Jabung Regency. with the title "Progress of the Cuci Safar Social Convention in Discussing Black Sea City, Sadu Region, East Tanjung Jabung Government". This convention could be a convention passed down from generation to generation from the Malay tribe. This traditional ceremony may be a very interesting and unique social and cultural miracle. Based on this miracle, the presence of the Mandi Safar custom is interesting to develop as an ethnographic thought. Although several studies have addressed the acculturation of Islam and local traditions in Mandi Safar, research into the details of the collective preparatory process and its transformation from a magical ritual to a cultural-economic identity remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the development of the nature and process of Mandi Safar more comprehensively.

Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative methods are used to conduct research in natural settings, where the researcher is the key instrument, and the research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Furidha, 2023). In the context of the Mandi Safar research, this method aims to explore and describe in depth the social phenomena occurring in Air Hitam Laut Village. The data obtained were analyzed by describing words, narratives, and images of ritual processions, the roles of actors, and the transformation of cultural values contained within them. This allows the researcher to present the complex reality of the tradition in a comprehensive and detailed manner, consistent with the literature found.

The data collection technique used in this research is literature study. Literature study can be interpreted as a series of research that is closely related to the activity of collecting library data sources, then managing them critically, systematically, and objectively regarding the concept and implementation of multicultural education in learning in Indonesia. Basically, literature studies are the same as other research, what differentiates this literature study is the data collection method obtained from research reading sources first. This literature study research is intended to analyze in depth to obtain maximum results. The data collected and analyzed can be said to be a secondary data source. According to Louis Gottschalk (2016:35) secondary data sources are the testimony of anyone who is not an eyewitness. This source contains original materials that have been worked on previously which are relevant to the research in the form of documents containing a problem such as articles, textbooks, magazines, scientific journals and various other sources as support.

The technique used in this research is technical analysis (Content Analysis). Analysis is a process of systematically searching and compiling the data that has been obtained so that it can be easily understood and then informed to other people. This technique is carried out by analyzing research data from the most relevant, relevant to least relevant, by looking at the most reliable research year, namely the most recent research, and going back to previous research years. The results of this research were obtained from the suitability of the problems that will later be solved in this research.

Result And Discussion

The Essence of Bathing on Safar

Safar bathing is a celebration or form that is closely related to belief which creates respect for ancestors in the sense of a sacred experience (O'Dea, 2014: 5). Safar bathing is an activity that is usually carried out in the month of Safar as a form of getting rid of bala' (disasters). With this Safar bathing celebration, there are many pros and cons. There are those who think that the Safar bathing tradition is a religious tradition, there are also those who think that this tradition has no legal basis, either from the Koran or the Sunnah, thus making it a category of bid'ah (misleading actions) (Ampa, 2018:39). One area in Jambi that still often carries out this tradition is Air Hitam Laut village, Sadu District, East Tanjung Jabung Regency.



Fig. 1 The tradition of Safar Bathing in Air Hitam. (Source: 2024Shttps://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20240828140246-286-1138552/foto-menengok-tradisi-mandi-safar-2024-di-air-hitam-laut-jambi)

In ancient times, the Safar bathing tradition was considered a tradition originating from the teachings of the Islamic religion, namely the Al-Quran and Hadith, which became the benchmark for the implementation of all Shari'a by the residents of Air Hitam Laut Village. However, basically, in these teaching sources there is no explicit recommendation to carry out the Safar bathing tradition, but only the prayers contained in the teaching sources are carried out during this tradition. So if the tradition of bathing on a trip is not carried out, that's okay. The tradition of bathing on the journey for the residents of Air Hitam Laut village is a very important moment once a year in order to strengthen ties of friendship. Nowadays, bathing on travel is considered a cultural tradition that needs to be preserved, no longer just a belief or a recommendation in the Islamic religion.

As time goes by, the Safar bathing tradition continues to be preserved and brought to the fore. This is done because of several motivations; first, as a means to strengthen ties of brotherhood, both religious and social relations (Ukhuwah Islamiyah and Ukhuwah Insaniyah); secondly, making access to economic development such as making it a tourism object; thirdly as a means to accelerate regional development. That motivation is the reason why the tradition of bathing on travel can continue to be preserved. It is not only carried out for Muslims, but also for people of other religions, because with this traditional ritual it is possible for cross ethnicities and religions to come together as one.

In the view of several tribes in Air Hitam Laut Village, it is explained that bathing on safar is a tradition that is worth preserving, this is because the tradition of bathing on

safar is a form that is characteristic of the residents of this village and its implementation is very flexible.

Safar Bathing Tradition Procession

The safari bathing ritual is a celebration; this celebration is considered an important regional event that requires careful preparation. For the people of Air Hitam Laut Village, this ceremony not only requires funds, but also the thoughts of all village residents. Even though the celebration is considered routine, special preparations are made well in advance each year, so that suggestions or suggestions for improvement or development can emerge. Both in terms of facilities and infrastructure as well as the contents of the Safar Bathing ritual event. Such preparations are usually made one or two months before the celebration.

The ritual process involves several actors, each of whom has a role, such as: (1) writing verses on leaves led by the kiyai and assisted by several people, (2) the host who reads the prayers, (3) the leader of the event as the prayer reader, (4) the raft and tower carrier, namely representatives of all the residents of Air Hitam Laut Village, (5) the umbrella carrier to protect the leader, and (6) all groups of residents who make the Safari bath. In addition, the manufacture of ritual materials and tools is divided into two parts according to their function and use. The first are materials and equipment that can be used together by everyone without special requirements. Second, the preparation of materials and equipment must be carried out by certain people in accordance with the provisions.

Equipment provided during the Safar bathing ritual, such as protective umbrellas for the leaders of the ritual procession and rafts with towers carried by groups, as symbols that have certain meanings (Rassuh, 2013:7) are as follows: Rafts and Tower Foundations: Rafts and The foundation of the tower is made in a rectangular shape which has the meaning of "the four elements of human creation" namely fire, wind, earth and water.

Table 1. Complement to tradition Safar Bathing in Air Hitam Laut Sadu Village

Complement to tradition	Description
Seven leaves	These seven leaves are then prayed for as a medium for carrying out the Safar bathing tradition. Seven or pitu in Bugis language means success.
Writing tools	Writing tools are used as a medium for writing on mango leaves. The type of writing instrument used is ink that dissolves easily in water
Chicken eggs	Contain food that every human being needs to carry out their life.

White cloth	White cloth is used to carry mango leaves on which prayers have been written. This white cloth has the meaning of purity.
Umbrella	The umbrella used must be yellow. The yellow umbrella means the loyalty of a community or population,
Tray	Tray as a container to place the mango leaves.
Bamboo	This bamboo will later be decorated with flowers as a place to hang chicken eggs

Residents who perform the Bath Safari are not allowed to swim before the leader starts the ceremony. After reciting the prayer followed by immersing oneself, then all participants in the ceremony can participate together. All participants in the ceremony were part of the community present at that time.

After pouring it over the mango leaves, then place it on a plate (small plate) tied with a white cloth. In the middle of the ceremony, the mango fruit that has been cleaned is brought to the ceremony location and seen by the selected kiyai who is then carried in a white cloth. There are flat boats and towers decorated with ready-made egg flowers. Housewives and young women can usually be relied on to enlighten their improvement. The flat boat and its tower were installed at the ceremony site some time ago a traditional ceremony was held and on the last Wednesday morning month of Safar on the Hijri calendar, residents of the Black Sea Discussion City and other nearby tourists. was in the Black Sea Discussion City, Babussalam Coastline at 07:00 WIB. The moderator in charge of carrying the flat boat, tower and umbrella, sat cross-legged in front of the pontoon. The pioneer of this traditional ceremony is separate from other traditional and devout figures. The position of the Traditional Ceremonial Pioneer is coordinated to face each other with the Ceremonial Performer who sits in front of the Raft/Tower. Meanwhile, residents who took part in the ceremonial parade sat/stood behind the raft/tower.

When the Traditional Ceremony is about to start, the Ace of Ceremonies gives a signal to all the artists and members appearing that the Traditional Ceremony will begin soon. The stages of carrying out the ceremony started with a lecture by the head of the committee, a lecture by sub-district officials, followed by reading prayers and encouragement from the ceremony leader, followed by all the ceremony participants. The moderator takes a mango leaf containing a prayer, carries it, then faces the raft/tower, followed by other traditional and pious figures.

Upon arrival in front of the raft/tower, an umbrella is needed to cover the pilot. At that time, the raft/tower was brought to the shoreline where the safar washing was placed (Babussalam beach) accompanied by prayers and tambourines. It was at that point that it was launched with a reinforced turret. After that, the washing process on

the shoreline finally began, and seven clean waters containing seven verses of the Koran were dipped into the water and immersed in the water under the direction of the pioneer of the bathing visit. Then the community will sprinkle water on the pioneer amidst the pounding of the tower as a form of appreciation and appreciation for the pioneer, as well as giving back inflated chicken eggs to the community as a form of love and warmth towards the individual.

What is even more extraordinary is that in this ceremony there is an unwritten running performance, that is, anyone who is near the Babussalam beach at the time of the ceremony should not feel disturbed if other people splash and throw water at them, because those who come to the beach with ferocity, they were willing to take part in the safa bathing event. After this event is over, we will greet each other and apologize. We continued eating together, reminiscing about the traditional sports activities we completed. Usually, the committee prepares small amounts of food, some of which is brought directly by each family attending the ceremony. The food served is the backbone of the residents of Dark Ocean Talking City. Then the activities continued with competitions such as kite competitions, boat repairs and so on and continued with various festivities and bazaars.

Discussion: The Meaning of the Safar Bathing Tradition for the Community

Formally, an action is categorized as a tradition if it has a basis for legitimacy derived from historical aspects or past precedents (Mulianto & Fikri, 2018). The legitimacy of a tradition is often measured not solely by technical efficiency or functional logic, but rather by symbolic value and adherence to ancestral heritage, considered authoritative (Prasetyo, 2023).

The Safar bath in Air Hitam Laut Village is understood by the community not simply as a physical activity, but as a sacred ritual with a metaphysical purpose, as a form of "tolak bala" (warding off disaster). Phenomenologically, this ritual creates a profound sacred experience for those who perform it. This discussion highlights that despite theological debate (pros and cons), local communities view the Safar bath as a means of seeking protection from God to avoid illness and calamity believed to occur during the month of Safar. This aligns with the statement by Hobson et al. (2018) that rituals function as psychological and social defense mechanisms in the face of uncertainty.

One crucial finding in this study is the complexity of the preparations, which take one to two months before the actual event. This demonstrates that the Mandi Safar is a collective event requiring careful coordination. The involvement of specific actors, such as umbrella bearers, leaf writers (who write the verses of Salamun), and raft carriers, is not merely a technical complement, but a representation of a social structure that fosters cooperation. The writing of leaves containing special prayers demonstrates the internalization of Islamic values into local cultural symbols (leaf), which reinforces the

Islamic-Malay identity in the region. This process results in a syncretic tradition, blending Islam and local culture (Al Hazmi, 2023).

This research reveals a significant shift in the ritual's function. While initially highly private, sacred, and imbued with magical nuances, the ritual has now undergone a process of "magical devaluation" to become more public or profane. This transformation was triggered by government intervention since 2003, which established the Mandi Safar as a regional tourism event. Massive subsidies and promotions have transformed this ritual from a mere domestic religious rite into a cultural commodity that attracts tourists from across regions, ethnicities, and religions.

The establishment of Mandi Safar as a zonal/regional event has a direct impact on infrastructure development and economic growth in Air Hitam Laut Village. The public space created during the procession becomes an area of cross-identity interaction. This discussion emphasizes that despite the commodification of culture for tourism purposes, the core values as a unifying community (remain). This tradition has become a bridge for accelerating regional development in Sadu District. In line with the opinion of Saputra et al. (2024) that local traditions can be a driving force for regional progress in the contemporary era. Well-managed traditions can help in improving regional progress (Kasmahidayat & Herliawan, 2023).

Government intervention through subsidies and infrastructure provision has commodified culture. This process is not always negative; although its magical value is considered to be declining, it actually prolongs the tradition's relevance to the younger generation. This ritual now serves as a widely marketed "regional identity," transforming Air Hitam Laut from a remote village into a cultural hotspot in Jambi Province. This tradition also has a significant economic impact on the community. During the month leading up to and during the event, massive money circulates through the informal trade sector. Local and out-of-town traders take advantage of the crowds of thousands of visitors to sell food, handicrafts, and transportation services (water and land motorcycle taxis). The government subsidy allocation is not only used for the ceremony but also stimulates the creative sector (raft builders, logistics providers, and local artists). The presence of inter-regional tourists generates income through fees and parking fees, which cumulatively improves the economic well-being of households around the beach.

Conclusion

The Safar Bathing Ritual is a traditional ritual that has been carried out in Air Hitam Laut Village, Sadu District, East Tanjung Jabung Regency for many years and is believed to have spiritual and social benefits. The ritual is believed to protect humans from disaster, disease and disaster. It is also seen as a way to unite society and strengthen social ties. The ritual has changed over time, and its religious meaning has been replaced by a more secular interpretation in recent years.

Safar Cuci is an attraction for visitors and is used as a celebration of the Safar Bathing Custom in the Black Sea Discussion City. The increase continues in the element

of involvement starting from the execution, especially in terms of members taking part, singing or backup, decoration. Apart from that, this custom also experienced a change in terms of work from being sacred (magical) to degrading (common/ordinary/no longer having too many magical elements). This energy is of course also driven by various internal variables (from the perpetrator) and external variables (from external impacts).

At first, Safar Bathing was not carried out by all residents of the city and was only carried out in their claimed homes. At that time in 1986 Safar Bathing was carried out en masse on the beach, but the implementation was still simple and the traditional members still came from residents of the Black Sea City of Discuss. In terms of decorations such as mangoes, they are taken off, but they are not accessible, and in terms of clothing, ceremonial entertainers are still free. Then the song/accompaniment to start the Safar Bath is also not yet available. Since entering 2003 or when Mandi Safar was designated as an event zone, Mandi Safar has been known to people from outside the zone such as neighboring cities and has even been known to sub-districts and regions. Additionally, there are many additional opportunities within the circle. Because since it was made a territorial opportunity, the government has made a difference by providing subsidies.

This research focuses specifically on the Air Hitam Laut Village area. Given that the Mandi Safar tradition is also practiced in other areas with different characteristics, the results may not be fully generalizable to describe the Mandi Safar phenomenon in other locations. Based on these limitations, further researchers are advised to conduct field research to capture the latest dynamics, and use a quantitative approach to measure the real economic impact of this ritual transformation on the welfare of local communities.

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