

The Harmony of Sharia and Culture: A Living Hadith Study on Tepuk Tepung Tawar Tradition in the Riau Malay Community

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Received: 12/09/2025

Revised: 18/05/2026

Accepted: 03/06/2024

Abstract

This article examines the tradition of tepuk tepung tawar in the Malay community of Riau as a cultural practice that represents the close relationship between Islamic Sharia and local customs from the perspective of living hadith. This study is important because in the midst of modernization, cultural globalization, and religious purification trends, many local traditions are seen as separate practices from Islamic teachings, even considered irrelevant. The main problem of this study is how the tradition of Pat tepuk tawar reflects the values of the Prophet's Hadith and how the community maintains the religious legitimacy of the tradition in social life. This study uses qualitative methods with an ethnographic approach. Data were collected through participatory observation on traditional ceremonies such as weddings, welcoming guests of honour, and Thanksgiving; in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, scholars, and the community; and documentation studies on traditional manuscripts and supporting literature. The results showed that this tradition contains prophetic values in the form of prayers of blessing, gratitude, symbolic protection and strengthening the relationship in line with the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. This finding confirms that the living hadith is present not only textually, but also through symbolic cultural practices. The tradition of Pat tepuk tepung tawar shows a dialogical relationship between Hadith and adat, where local culture becomes a medium for internalizing Islamic values. This approach shows that adat and Shari'a can work harmoniously and strengthen each other.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji tradisi tepuk tepung tawar dalam masyarakat Melayu Riau sebagai praktik budaya yang merepresentasikan hubungan erat antara syara' Islam dan adat lokal dalam perspektif living hadith. Kajian ini menjadi penting karena di tengah arus modernisasi, globalisasi budaya, dan kecenderungan purifikasi agama, banyak tradisi lokal dipandang sebagai praktik yang terpisah dari ajaran Islam, bahkan dianggap tidak relevan. Permasalahan utama penelitian ini adalah bagaimana tradisi tepuk tepung tawar merefleksikan nilai-nilai hadis Nabi serta bagaimana masyarakat mempertahankan legitimasi religius tradisi tersebut dalam kehidupan sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif pada pelaksanaan upacara adat seperti pernikahan, penyambutan tamu kehormatan, dan syukuran; wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh adat, ulama, dan masyarakat; serta studi dokumentasi terhadap naskah adat dan literatur pendukung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa



tradisi ini mengandung nilai profetik berupa doa keberkahan, rasa syukur, perlindungan simbolik, dan penguatan silaturahmi yang sejalan dengan hadis Nabi Muhammad Saw. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa living hadith hadir tidak hanya secara tekstual, tetapi juga melalui praktik budaya simbolik. Tradisi tepuk tepung tawar menunjukkan hubungan dialogis antara hadis dan adat, di mana budaya lokal menjadi media internalisasi nilai Islam. Pendekatan ini memperlihatkan bahwa adat dan syariat dapat berjalan harmonis serta saling menguatkan.

Keywords Sharia, Malay Culture, Living Hadith, Tepuk Tepung Tawar

Introduction

The Riau Malay community strongly preserves traditional values while remaining deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. One enduring tradition is tepuk tepung tawar, a ritual rich in symbolic, religious, and social meaning. Performed during weddings, circumcisions, and other important events, it represents prayers and blessings through symbols such as turmeric rice, rose water, and setawar leaves.¹

Marriage customs in Malay society existed long before the arrival of Islam, so many traditional practices originally reflected pre-Islamic beliefs. Over time, however, these customs underwent a process of Islamization. For instance, the tepung tawar tradition, once associated with seeking blessings from gods and goddesses, was transformed so that all prayers and intentions were directed solely to Allah Subhānahu wa Ta'ālā. In Malay society, especially among the Riau Malays, adat holds a central role as a social value system. Since the spread of Islam, adat based on Islamic teachings has become the primary foundation for communal life. This is reflected in the proverb, "*adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitābullāh*," which emphasizes that custom must be grounded in sharī'ah. Therefore, all cultural values and social norms must align with Islamic teachings, making Islam inseparable from adat and deeply embedded in Malay identity itself.²

As the dominant religion in Riau, Islam has significantly shaped the meaning and structure of local traditions. The values of sharī'ah, derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, are integrated with adat, creating harmony between religion and culture. This is reflected in the Malay philosophy, "*Adat Bersendi Syara', Syara' Bersendi Kitābullāh*," which emphasizes that custom must be based on Islamic teachings.³ From the perspective of Living Hadith, the tepuk tepung tawar tradition becomes a medium for internalizing hadith values in everyday life. Through inherited cultural practices, Prophetic teachings are not only understood textually but are also embodied in rituals rich in religious and social significance.

The study of Living Hadith views hadith not only as a normative written text but also as a lived social reality that is practiced, interpreted, and given meaning by Muslim

¹ Zainal, *Adat Istiadat Melayu Riau Dan Makna Simboliknya* (Pekanbaru: UNRI Press, 2019).

² Ferawati, Erdianto, and Martojo, "Prosesi Perkawinan Menurut Hukum Adat Melayu Indragiri Hilir Riau Sebagai Salah Satu Aset Budaya Indonesia," *Journal of Education and Culture* 3, no. 1 (January 2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.58707/jec.v3i1.297>.

³ Abdullah, *Falsafah Adat Melayu: Adat Bersendi Syara', Syara' Bersendi Kitābullāh* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2017), 54.

communities in daily life.⁴ In the context of the tepuk tepung tawar tradition, the recitation of du‘ā’, ṣalawāt, and blessings led by cultural and religious figures reflects the practical embodiment of the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad Ṣallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam. These practices represent values such as praying for goodness, strengthening silaturraḥim, and sharing barakah with others.⁵

This study is particularly important in the context of globalization, which may weaken local cultural identity and traditional wisdom. Examining tepuk tepung tawar is not only an effort to preserve Malay cultural heritage but also to demonstrate that Islam can harmoniously integrate with local culture without compromising the purity of its teachings. This research focuses on three objectives: (1) identifying the syara‘ values contained in the tradition; (2) explaining their relevance to the hadith of the Prophet; and (3) analyzing the harmonization between Islamic teachings and Riau Malay adat.

Previous studies on the tepuk tepung tawar tradition show that it is not merely understood as a customary ritual, but also as a space for dialogue between Islam, culture, and Malay social identity. However, most studies remain descriptive and have not deeply connected the tradition with Living Hadith and Uṣūl al-Fiqh analysis. Abdullah explains that Malay society upholds the principle of “adat bersendi syara‘, syara‘ bersendi Kitābullāh,” which positions custom as inseparable from Islamic law. He argues that tepuk tepung tawar represents the integration of prayer, blessings, social respect, and communal solidarity, although his study does not yet examine the hadiths as the normative foundation of the practice.⁶

Rahman et al. examine tepuk tepung tawar as a form of cultural acculturation that has undergone a process of Islamisation. They explain that symbolic elements such as tawar water, turmeric rice, bunga rampai, and setawar leaves originally had pre-Islamic cosmological meanings, but were later reinterpreted as symbols of prayer, safety, and blessings within Islam.⁷ The focus of this study lies in the transformation of cultural meaning rather than in the direct construction of Living Hadith. Maulana et al. specifically relate tepuk tepung tawar to Living Hadith by showing that prayers, ṣalawāt, and blessings in the ritual reflect the Prophet’s teachings on du‘ā’, silaturraḥim, and barakah. Their study is important because it frames the tradition as a lived expression of hadith, although it does not deeply analyse its fiqh legitimacy or legal status in Islamic law.⁸

⁴ Ja’far Assagaf, “STUDI HADIS DENGAN PENDEKATAN SOSIOLOGIS: Paradigma Living-Hadis,” *Jurnal Holistic al-Hadis* 01, no. 02 (2015).

⁵ Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah, Bab an-Nahy ‘an al-Qāṭi‘ah, Hadith No. 2557.

⁶ Abdullah, *Falsafah Adat Melayu: Adat Bersendi Syara‘, Syara‘ Bersendi Kitābullāh*, 56.

⁷ Nabilah Cipta Rahman, Normuslim, and Muslimah, “Akulturasi Islam Dan Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Tampung Tawar Di Komunitas Dayak Muslim,” *Kartika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, no. 1 (February 2026): 363–78, <https://doi.org/10.59240/kjsk.v6i1.453>.

⁸ Maulana Maulana, Achmad Ghozali, and Sujai Sarifandi, “TRADISI TEPUK TEPUNG TAWAR DALAM BUDAYA MELAYU RIAU: Sebuah Analisis Dalam Perspektif Hadis,” *Nusantara: Journal for Southeast Asian Islamic Studies* 20, no. 2 (December 2024): 115–27, <https://doi.org/10.24014/nusantara.v20i2.34867>.

Agustina, Erwin Mahrus, and Nopi Purwanti, explain that this tradition functions as a medium of contemporary Islamic religious education by instilling the values of ukhuwah, respect for parents, and social religiosity. They also discuss criticism from puritan groups who consider this practice *bid'ah* when it is understood as part of ritual worship rather than as cultural *adat*.⁹ Furthermore, Oki Ardiansyah and Masrokhin examine the *tepek tepung tawar* tradition in Malay wedding customs in Tanjungpinang through the theory of *'urf* in Islamic law. Their study shows that this tradition can be categorised as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* because it contains values of safety, household blessings, and protection from life's difficulties. They emphasise that as long as it is free from *shirk*, misguided *bid'ah*, and magical beliefs contradicting *tawḥīd*, it remains a valid custom recognised by *sharī'ah*. This provides a strong *fiqh* foundation, although it does not specifically employ the Living Hadith approach.¹⁰

This study employs qualitative research with an ethnographic approach to examine the meaning and practice of *tepek tepung tawar* within the Riau Malay community from the perspective of Living Hadith.¹¹ This method was chosen because it enables direct observation of social interactions, customary symbols, and the internalization of *syara'* values within the tradition.¹² The research was conducted in several areas of Riau Province, particularly in Siak Regency, where the tradition remains actively practiced and supported by both cultural and religious leaders. The research subjects include¹³: (1) Malay cultural leaders involved in conducting the ceremony; (2) religious leaders who lead prayers and blessings; and (3) community members as practitioners and participants, both as givers and recipients of *tepek tepung tawar*. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their deep understanding of the tradition.¹⁴ Data were collected through: (1) participant observation during the ceremony¹⁵; (2) in-depth interviews with cultural and religious leader¹⁶; and (3) documentation studies involving photographs, customary manuscripts, and prayer texts used in the ritual.¹⁷

The Concept of *Adat* in Islamic Law

From the perspective of Islamic law, the term *adat* is often equated with the concept of *'urf*, namely customs or traditions practiced within society, whether in the form of speech (*qaulī*)

⁹ Agustina Agustina, Erwin Mahrus, and Nopi Purwanti, "THE TRADITION OF TEPUNG TAWAR IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION," *Khatulistiwa* 15, no. 1 (March 2025): 89–102, <https://doi.org/10.24260/khatulistiwa.v15i1.3514>.

¹⁰ Ogie Ardiansyah and Masrokhin Masrokhin, "The Tradition of Tepuk Tepung Tawar in Malay Weddings from the Perspective of Islamic Law: A Case Study at Tanjungpinang, Riau Islands," *El-Ussrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (December 2023): 399–410, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v6i2.5391>.

¹¹ Lexy J. Maleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014), 13.

¹² James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2016), 12.

¹³ Rahman, Normuslim, and Muslimah, "Akulturasi Islam Dan Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Tampung Tawar Di Komunitas Dayak Muslim."

¹⁴ Sugiyono, *Metode penelitian pendidikan: (pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R & D)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015), 23.

¹⁵ Spradley, *Participant Observation*, 22.

¹⁶ Kristin G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 15.

¹⁷ Maleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, 35.

or actions (*fi'ili*), that are accepted by sound reason and do not contradict the principles of Islamic law (*sharī'a*).¹⁸ This is as stated by Imam al-Qarāfī (d. 684 H) when he defined 'urf as follows:

شيء اعتاده الناس وجرى بينهم، سواء كان قولاً أو فعلاً، لا يرفضه العقل السليم، ويوافق أحكام الشريعة.

Meaning:

Something that has become customary and practiced within society, whether in the form of speech or action, which is not rejected by sound reason and is in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law (*sharī'a*).¹⁹

In another of his opinions, he stated the following:

النَّاسُ عَلَى عَادَاتِهِمْ فِي مَعَامَلَاتِهِمْ وَمُخَاطَبَاتِهِمْ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَدُلَّ دَلِيلٌ شَرْعِيٌّ عَلَى خِلَافِ ذَلِكَ

Meaning:

People follow their customs in transactions (*mu'āmalāt*) and their speech, except when there is a shar'ī evidence that indicates otherwise."²⁰

Another opinion, as expressed by Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, is as follows:

الْعُرْفُ مَا اسْتَقَرَّ فِي النَّفْسِ مِنْ جِهَةِ الْعُقَلَاءِ، وَتَقَبَّلَتْهُ الطَّبَائِعُ السَّلِيمَةُ

Meaning:

'Urf is something that has become firmly established in the human soul based on the judgment of rational people and is acceptable to a sound disposition.²¹

Another opinion, as expressed by Shaykh Abū Zahrah (d. 1394 H), is as follows:

الْعَادَةُ هِيَ السُّلُوكُ الَّذِي يَتَّبِعُهُ النَّاسُ دَائِمًا أَوْ أَكْثَرَ الْأَوْقَاتِ، بِصُورَةٍ لَا تُنْكَرُهَا الْعُقُولُ السَّلِيمَةُ، وَلَا تُخَالِفُ الشَّرِيعَةَ

Meaning:

Adat is behavior that people consistently follow, either continuously or for most of the time, in a form that is not rejected by sound reason and does not contradict the *sharī'a*.²²

From the various opinions of the scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, it can be concluded that *adat* or 'urf may serve as one of the sources of legal consideration after the Qur'an, Hadith, consensus (*ijmā'*), and analogy (*qiyās*), as long as it fulfills the conditions stipulated by the scholars.²³

The Concept of Living Hadith in Contemporary Islamic Studies

Etymologically, the term "living" comes from the English word *live*, meaning active or brought to life. Terminologically, Living Hadith is a field of study that examines how hadith is practiced in social reality. It focuses on lived religious practices, moving from practice to text, and explores hadith phenomena within Muslim communities.²⁴

¹⁸ Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, *Uṣūl Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), 2:25.

¹⁹ Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq*, vol. 1 (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1998).

²⁰ al-Qarāfī, vol. 1.

²¹ al-Zuḥaylī, *Uṣūl Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, 2:26.

²² Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1958).

²³ Amir Syarifudin, *Ushul Fiqih* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2014).

²⁴ Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, *Ilmu living Qur'an-hadis: Ontologi, Epistemologi dan Aksiologi* (Tangerang Selatan: Yayasan Wakaf Darus Sunnah, 2023), 12.

The discourse of living hadith (*sunnah*) is a field within hadith studies that operates on two dimensions: historical analysis and social analysis of contemporary community phenomena, both of which are fundamentally rooted in the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad Saw.²⁵ Living Hadith refers to social phenomena expressed through patterns of behavior rooted in the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad Ṣallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam. These practices reflect how Muslim communities respond to and interact with the Prophet’s sayings and actions in daily life. Hadith studies have therefore expanded from text-oriented analysis toward socio-cultural inquiry, where religious communities become the main objects of observation. Living Hadith is positioned within socio-religious studies because it examines lived practices as manifestations of hadith values. The social sciences, especially phenomenology, provide the most suitable approach. According to G. Van der Leeuw, phenomenology explains phenomena through three principles: (1) something exists, (2) it manifests itself, and (3) because it appears in reality, it becomes a phenomenon understood through human perception.²⁶

The term Living Hadith was first popularized by Barbara Metcalf, although its substance is rooted in the earlier concept of Living Sunnah.²⁷ Its foundations can be traced to the practices of the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi‘īn*, and the traditions of *Madīnah* recognized by Imām Mālik as a legal source.²⁸ Thus, the concept is not new; rather, the novelty lies in the terminology itself. More specifically, Living Hadith can be categorized into four main elements, as follows:²⁹

First, Living Hadith is a modern academic term, although its essence has existed since early Islam through the traditions of the people of Madīnah, known as Living Sunnah. When these practices were documented, the term Living Hadith emerged, reflecting that hadith has a broader scope than sunnah. **Second**, unlike classical hadith studies that focus on matn and sanad, Living Hadith begins with social praxis by examining how communities interpret and practice hadith in daily life. **Third**, while traditional studies classify hadith as mawdū‘, ḍa‘īf, ḥasan, or ṣaḥīḥ, Living Hadith does not prioritize authenticity classification but emphasizes how hadith functions socially. **Fourth**, Living Hadith expands hadith studies from textual

²⁵ Besse Sahidawati, “Fenomena Living Sunnah Pada Masyarakat Bonepute Kecamatan Larompong Selatan Kabupaten Luwu Sebagai Implementasi Hadis Birrul Walidain Setelah Meninggal Dunia” (Skripsi, Fak. Ushuluddin, Filsafat dan Politik UIN Alauddin, 2014).

²⁶ Hasbillah, *Ilmu living Qur’an-hadis*, 12.

²⁷ Barbara D. Metcalf, “Living Hadīth in the Tablīghī Jama‘āt,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 3 (1993): 584–608, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2058855>.

²⁸In principle, Imam Malik did not codify his legal reasoning (*istinbāt*) in a systematic way. Nevertheless, his students and followers of the Maliki school later formulated his methodology systematically, as exemplified by Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ in his book *al-Muḍārah*. According to this formulation, the methodology of Imam of Dar al-Hijrah involves the following sources: first, the *Kitāb Allāh* (the Qur’an); if a text is not found there, he refers to the Sunnah (the category of Sunnah according to him, including various Prophetic traditions and the opinions of the Companions); then *qiyās* (analogical reasoning); the practice (*‘amal*) of the people of Madinah; *sad adz-dzarā’i*; *al-maṣlahah al-mursalah* (public interest in cases not explicitly addressed by the text); customary practices (*al-‘adat*); and *‘urf* (local customs).

²⁹ Rahmat, “Tradisi Dzikir Bejamaah Tarekat Qadiriyyah Dan Naqsyabandiyah (Suatu Kajian Living Sunnah Di Masyarakat Desa Lampa Kecamatan Mapill Kabupaten Polewali Mandar)” (Skripsi, Fakultas Ushuluddin, Filsafat, dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, 2020).

analysis to socio-cultural observation, similar to Living al-Qur'an, by examining rituals, customs, and religious expressions as lived manifestations of Prophetic teachings within Muslim communities.

Thus, the concept of living hadith represents an approach in hadith studies that emphasizes the observation of social practices derived from hadith or reflecting the values of hadith in daily life.³⁰ This approach views hadith not merely as normative texts recorded in classical books, but also as living social phenomena that are internalized by society.³¹

In contemporary Islamic studies, Living Hadith is relevant for understanding how the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad Ṣallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam are adapted within local cultures. The tepuk tepung tawar tradition among the Riau Malays reflects this through prayers, blessings, and symbolic practices rooted in hadith values.

Sharia Values in the Riau Malay Customary Traditions

The Riau Malay community strongly upholds the principle of "Adat Bersendi Syara', Syara' Bersendi Kitābullāh," which means that customs must be based on Islamic teachings, while Islamic values enrich customary practices.³² This principle creates a harmonious acculturation between Islam and local culture, where traditional symbols are given Islamic meaning.³³

In the tepuk tepung tawar tradition, for example, prayers recited in Arabic and Malay reflect the integration of shari'ah values with local expressions. Symbols such as turmeric rice, rose water, and setawar leaves represent prayers for safety, blessings, and well-being.³⁴ In an interview conducted on August 5, 2025, K.H. Achmad Ghozali, a religious leader and member of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Riau Province, emphasized that Malay culture, especially in Riau, is inseparable from Islam, as reflected in the enduring principle that adat must always follow shari'ah.³⁵

He identified Malay traditions aligned with shari'ah: *first*, tepuk tepung tawar, containing prayers and blessings without shirk; *second*, musyawarah dan mufakat, reflecting shūrā; and *third*, emphasis on manners, polite speech, good character, and respect for elders.

What Ustadz Ghozali conveyed aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's Saw hadith:

أَنَّسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ جَاءَ شَيْءٌ يُرِيدُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَبْطَأَ الْقَوْمُ عَنْهُ أَنْ يُوسِعُوا لَهُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوقِرْ كَبِيرَنَا

Meaning:

Anas ibn Malik reported: An elderly man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the people slowed down to make way for him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "He is not

³⁰ Assagaf, "STUDI HADIS DENGAN PENDEKATAN SOSIOLOGIS: Paradigma Living-Hadis."

³¹ Ahmad Sahiron, ed., *Metodologi penelitian living Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: TH-Press, 2015).

³² Abdullah, *Falsafah Adat Melayu: Adat Bersendi Syara', Syara' Bersendi Kitābullāh*.

³³ Rahman, Normuslim, and Muslimah, "Akulturasi Islam Dan Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Tampung Tawar Di Komunitas Dayak Muslim."

³⁴ Zainal, *Adat Istiadat Melayu Riau Dan Makna Simboliknya*.

³⁵ Interview Result K.H. Achmad Ghozali, a religious leader and member of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Riau Province, on August 5, 2025, in Pekanbaru.

one of us who does not show mercy to our children and does not respect our elders.” (Reported by Ahmad, Al-Darimi, and Al-Tirmidhi).³⁶

A similar hadith was narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوقِرْ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

Meaning:

Ibn ‘Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our children, nor respect our elders, nor enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi)

Fourth, the ceremony to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. The Malay community usually organizes communal activities to clean the mosque and celebrates the early nights of Ramadan with collective *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and prayers. According to him, this reflects both physical and spiritual readiness to observe the fasting ritual in accordance with Islamic guidance. He also concluded the interview by emphasizing:

.....As long as a custom does not contradict sharia, and even strengthens religious values, it is not only permissible to preserve it but also obligatory to maintain it, for it is a living treasure of Islam within the Malay community.....³⁷

History, Description, and Symbolic Meaning of the Tepuk Tepung Tawar Tradition

The tepuk tepung tawar tradition is a long-established Malay custom found in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Kalimantan.³⁸ Among the Riau Malays, it is performed during weddings, circumcisions, and the welcoming of honored guests. Each element has symbolic meaning: turmeric rice signifies nobility, rose water symbolizes purity, and setawar leaves represent protection from misfortune.³⁹ From an Islamic perspective, the accompanying prayers and blessings reflect hadith values that emphasize supplication and concern for the well-being of others.⁴⁰



Figure 1. Illustration of Materials Used in the Tepuk Tepung Tawar Ceremony

³⁶Imam Ahmad, *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith no. 12608; Imam al-Darimi, *Sunan al-Darimi*, Hadith no. 2421, in *Kitab al-Riqāq*; Imam al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, *Kitab al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah*, Bab Rahmat lil-Saghir wa Tawkīr al-Kabīr, Hadith no. 1919

³⁷Interview results with K.H. Achmad Ghozali, a religious leader and member of the Riau Province MUI, on August 5, 2025, in Pekanbaru.

³⁸ Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984).

³⁹ Zainal, *Adat Istiadat Melayu Riau Dan Makna Simboliknya*.

⁴⁰Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, *Kitab al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah*, Bab an-Nahy ‘an al-Qāṭi‘ah, Hadith No. 2557.

Based on an interview with Datuk Zainul Akmal, Head of PBH LAMR in Siak Regency, he explained that the *tepek tepung tawar* tradition is one of the Riau Malay cultural heritages, rich in religious and social values. According to him:

“...The *tepek tepung tawar* is a symbol of prayers, blessings, and well-wishes for someone entering an important phase of life. The *tawar* powder signifies purity, while the act of patting symbolizes the reaffirmation of intentions and the strengthening of spirit. This tradition does not contradict Islam; rather, it reinforces religious teachings, as the core of the ceremony is to pray for goodness....”⁴¹

He explained that *tepek tepung tawar* is commonly performed during weddings, as a prayer for a blessed family and righteous children; circumcision ceremonies, as gratitude and supplication for the child’s well-being; welcoming honored guests, as respect and prayer for safety; and Hajj or ‘Umrah departures, as a blessing for a safe and successful journey.



Figure 2. Prof. Drs. Suwardi, MS, Giving *Tepung Tawar* to a Newlywed Couple in Pekanbaru.

He explained that several materials in the *tepek tepung tawar* tradition carry symbolic meanings: turmeric rice represents sustenance, prosperity, and happiness; fragrant flowers (*bunga rampai*) symbolize sweetness of character and good manners; and *tawar* water reflects purity of heart. He emphasized that as long as the ritual is accompanied by prayers to Allah and free from shirk, it remains consistent with the principle of “Adat Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Bersendi Kitābullāh.” He also stated that this tradition strengthens social bonds, preserves togetherness, and transmits Islamic teachings through custom to younger generations.⁴²

Sharia Elements in the Tepuk Tepung Tawar Tradition

Although rooted in local custom, *tepek tepung tawar* contains strong shari‘ah elements reflected in prayers based on Qur’anic verses and hadith concerning blessings, safety, and goodness. The recitation of *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet strengthens its connection to the Sunnah and shows the internalization of Islamic values.⁴³ Many Malay scholars and cultural experts argue that this tradition is not a form of shirk, but a symbolic expression of *du‘ā* and

⁴¹Interview with Datuk Zainul Akmal, Head of PBH LAMR, Siak Regency, on August 7, 2025.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³ Rafiqah Rahmadhanty, Richa Dwi Rahmawati, and Triska Gustiwi, “TEPUK TEPUNG TAWAR: TRADISI KEBUDAYAAN MASYARAKAT MELAYU RIAU,” *TSAQIFA NUSANTARA: Jurnal Pembelajaran Dan Isu-Isu Sosial* 3, no. 01 (March 2024): 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.24014/tsaqifa.v3i1.23450>.

blessings for the recipient. Tepung tawar symbolizes purity, barakah, and good wishes. Prof. Dr. Wan Hashim Wan Teh views it as a prayer for safety and well-being within Malay-Islamic tradition⁴⁴, while Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasizes the Islamization of culture by removing shirk elements and reinforcing values of compassion, prayer, and blessings.⁴⁵

Tengku Luckman Sinar, a cultural expert and specialist in Malay customs, wrote that tepung tawar is a tradition that serves as a ritual to ward off misfortune and as a sign of blessing in Malay society. However, he emphasized that within Islam, its meaning is Islamized, focusing more on prayers for goodness rather than on magical beliefs.⁴⁶ Traditional scholars from Riau, such as H. Tenas Effendy, mention that tepuk tepung tawar is a “prayer in symbolic form.” It teaches the importance of maintaining social bonds, customs, and togetherness within the community.⁴⁷

Thus, tepuk tepung tawar becomes part of the harmony between *sharia* (religion) and *‘urf* (customary practices). In Islam, we are also encouraged to pray in all circumstances, whether in ease or difficulty. One of the hadiths illustrating this is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَسْتَجِيبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَ الشَّدَائِدِ وَالْكَرْبِ، فَلْيُكْثِرِ الدُّعَاءَ فِي الرَّخَاءِ

Meaning:

From Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever wishes that his supplications be answered by Allah during times of hardship and distress, let him increase his prayers in times of ease.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, No. 3382)⁴⁸

This hadith emphasizes that supplication should not only be performed during times of difficulty, but also in times of ease, so that Allah will answer our prayers during hardship. Another hadith encouraging prayer is as follows:

عَنْ الثُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ: ﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ﴾ [غافر: ٦٠].

Meaning:

From al-Nu‘man bin Basyir, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Supplication is an act of worship.” Then he recited the words of Allah: “Call upon Me;

⁴⁴ Wan Hashim Wan Teh, *Adat Resam Melayu: Suatu Sorotan* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1988).

⁴⁵ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993).

⁴⁶ Tuanku Luckman Sinar Basarshah II, *Adat Budaya Melayu: Jati Diri Dan Kepribadian* (Medan: Forum Komunikasi Antar Lembaga Adat, 2018).

⁴⁷ H. Tenas Effendy, *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu* (Yogyakarta: Balai Kajian dan Pengembangan Budaya Melayu, 2006).

⁴⁸ Imam al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1998).

I will respond to you." (Qur'an, Ghafir [40]: 60). (Narrated by Abu Dawud, No. 1479; al-Tirmidhi, No. 2969).⁴⁹

It also includes the encouragement to increase the recitation of blessings upon the Prophet (*salawat*), as in the following hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِمَا عَشْرًا

Meaning:

From Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever sends blessings upon me once, Allah (SWT) will send blessings upon him tenfold." (Narrated by Muslim, No. 408).⁵⁰

Another hadith encouraging the recitation of blessings upon the Prophet Saw is as follows:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً

Meaning:

From Abdullah bin Mas'ud, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The person closest to me on the Day of Judgment is the one who sends the most blessings upon me." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, No. 484).⁵¹

Those who consistently recite blessings upon the Prophet (*salawat*) will be kept away from Hell, as stated in the following hadith:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ قَالَ: «مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرَ صَلَوَاتٍ، وَحُطَّتْ عَنْهُ عَشْرُ خَطَايَا، وَرُفِعَتْ لَهُ عَشْرُ دَرَجَاتٍ

Meaning:

From Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever sends blessings upon me once, Allah will send down ten mercies upon him, erase ten sins from him, and raise him ten degrees in rank." (Narrated by Abu Dawud, No. 1481).⁵²

The Relationship Between the Tepuk Tepung Tawar Tradition and Living Hadith

The concept of living hadith refers to the phenomenon in which the teachings or messages of hadith are not merely understood as texts, but are also brought to life through the socio-cultural practices of the community.⁵³ In the context of the tepuk tepung tawar tradition, the Prophet's hadiths containing prayers for blessings, exhortations to pray for one another's

⁴⁹ Imam Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 2009); Imam al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidh*.

⁵⁰ Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayyibah, 2006).

⁵¹ Imam al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidh*.

⁵² Imam Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*.

⁵³ Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Subkhani Kusuma Dewi, *Living Hadis: Praktik, Resepsi, Teks, Dan Transmisi* (Yogyakarta: Q-Media, 2018).

well-being, and guidance on maintaining social bonds are implemented symbolically and ritually.⁵⁴ For example, the hadith narrated by Muslim from Abu al-Darda' is as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو لِأَخِيهِ يَطْهَرُ الْعَيْبَ إِلَّا قَالَ الْمَلَكُ وَلَكَ بِمِثْلِ

Meaning:

From Abu Ad-Darda' he said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'No Muslim prays for the good of his brother (another Muslim) in his absence except that an angel will also pray: "And for you the same." (Narrated by Muslim, No. 2732).⁵⁵

The conformity of the tepuk tepung tawar tradition with the Prophet's hadith does not lie in the ritual form itself, but in its substantive values, namely prayer, blessings, silaturrahim, and social respect. According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, hadith should be understood through a maqāṣidī approach, which emphasises the objectives of sharī'ah rather than the literal form of the text.⁵⁶ Therefore, tepuk tepung tawar can be understood as a cultural medium for realising the Sunnah of prayer and tabarruk, rather than as an act of 'ibādah maḥḍah. This is consistent with the concept of 'urf ṣaḥīḥ in fiqh, which permits custom as long as it does not contradict sharī'ah.⁵⁷

First, Central elements of the ritual include prayer, seeking barakah, and strengthening solidarity, as the Prophet encouraged Muslims to make *du'ā'* for one another as an expression of care and communal support;

عَنْ التُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ { وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ }

Meaning:

From Al-Nu'man bin Basyir, the Prophet Muhammad Saw said: "Du'a is an act of worship." Then he recited the verse: "And your Lord says: 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you. Indeed, those who are arrogant to worship Me will enter Hell in humiliation.'" (QS. Ghafir 60) (HR. al-Tirmidhī).⁵⁸

In the context of marriage, for example, the Prophet Muhammad Saw also prayed for the couple:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا رَفَأَ الْإِنْسَانَ إِذَا تَزَوَّجَ قَالَ بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكَ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ

Meaning:

From Abu Hurairah, it is reported that when the Prophet Muhammad Saw congratulated someone on their marriage, he would say: "Baarakallahu laka wa baaraka

⁵⁴ Maulana, Ghozali, and Sarifandi, "TRADISI TEPUK TEPUNG TAWAR DALAM BUDAYA MELAYU RIAU."

⁵⁵ Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

⁵⁶ Yusuf Qaradawi, *Kayfa nata'amal ma'a al-sunnah al-nabawiyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002), 112.

⁵⁷ al-Zuhaylī, *Uṣūl Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, 2:826.

⁵⁸ Imam al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Book of Invocations (*Kitab al-Da'awat*), Chapter *Mā Jā'a anna al-Du'ā' Huwa al-'Ibādah*, no. 2969; also in *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Book of Witr (*Kitab al-Witr*), Chapter on *Du'ā'* (*Bab al-Du'ā'*), no. 1479; and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Book of *Du'ā'* (*Kitab al-Du'ā'*), Chapter on the Virtue of *Du'ā'* (*Bab Faḍl al-Du'ā'*), no. 3828.

'alaika wa jama'a bainakumaa fii khairin." "May Allah bless you, bless upon you, and unite both of you in goodness." (HR. al-Tirmidhi)⁵⁹

Secondly, the purification symbol. The water used in the tepuk tepung tawar ceremony is often interpreted as a symbol of purity. This aligns with the meaning of the following hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِنَّهُ يُسْتَقَى لَكَ مِنْ بئرِ بَصَاعَةَ وَهِيَ بئرٌ يُلْقَى فِيهَا حُومُ الْكِلَابِ وَالْمَخَائِضُ وَعَذِرُ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الْمَاءَ طَهُورٌ لَا يُنَجِّسُهُ شَيْءٌ

Meaning:

From Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah being informed that water from the Bidla'ah well—which was a place where dog carcasses, menstrual waste, and human excrement were disposed of—had been given to him. He replied: "Indeed, the water is pure; nothing can make it impure." (HR. al-Tirmidhi, no. 66)⁶⁰

In this tradition, the sprinkling of water symbolizes purity and serves as a prayer that new stages of life, such as marriage, journeys, or leadership roles, are protected from harm. **Third**, silaturrahim and social solidarity are strengthened through communal gatherings involving family, religious leaders, and the wider community.

عَنْ ابْنِ شَهَابٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُبَسِّطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي آتَرِهِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحْمَتَهُ

Meaning:

Whoever wishes for his sustenance to be expanded and his lifespan to be prolonged, let him maintain ties of kinship." (HR. al-Bukhārī and Muslim)⁶¹

The conformity of tepuk tepung tawar with the Prophet's hadith does not lie in symbolic elements such as rice, leaves, and flowers, but in the maqāsid al-sharī'ah values it contains, namely du'ā', silaturrahim, and social solidarity. Jasser Auda emphasises that Islamic law should be understood through a maqāsid approach oriented towards maṣlaḥah, rather than merely through the outward form of ritual.⁶² Therefore, tepuk tepung tawar represents a cultural medium that actualises the Prophet's social Sunnah within the context of Malay custom, rather than a new ritual in 'ibādah maḥḍah.

Harmony between Syara' and Culture in the Tepuk Tepung Tawar Tradition

The presence of syara' elements in the tepuk tepung tawar tradition reflects the harmonization between Islamic teachings and Riau Malay culture. Islam does not abolish this tradition but reinterprets it according to the values of sharī'ah, in line with the principle of al-'ādah muḥakkamah, where custom is recognized as long as it does not contradict

⁵⁹ Imam al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidh*.

⁶⁰ Imam al-Tirmidhi.

⁶¹ Imam al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab, Bāb Man Bāṣaṭa lahu fī Rizqihi bi Ṣilat Rahimihi*, no. 5986. See also Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah wa al-Ādāb, Bab Faḍl al-Ṣilah wa 'Uqūbah al-Qāṭi'*, no. 2557.

⁶² Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 23.

syara'.⁶³ Anthropologically, the tradition strengthens social ties, seeks blessings, and symbolizes purity. From the perspective of Islamic law, it is generally understood as part of 'ādāt rather than 'ibādāt, making it permissible as long as it remains within the boundaries of sharī'ah.

To answer this question, the Ushul Fiqh approach—particularly the concept of 'urf (custom)—can be applied⁶⁴, *maqāsid al-syarī'ah*⁶⁵, *maṣlaḥah mursalah*⁶⁶, *sadd al-dharī'ah*⁶⁷, and the fiqhī principles—can be used as an analytical instrument.

First, through the Ushul Fiqh framework, which includes concepts such as 'urf and the principle of *al-'ādah al-muḥakkamah*. Within this Ushul Fiqh framework, customary practices ('urf) can be considered in legal rulings as long as they do not contradict the syarī' texts (nash). The fiqhī principle states:

الْعَادَةُ مُحْكَمَةٌ

Meaning:

Customary practices can be used as a basis for legal rulings.⁶⁸

Based on this concept, scholars differentiate 'urf into two categories: 'urf *ṣaḥīḥ*, which does not contradict the sharia and is therefore acceptable, and 'urf *fāsid*, which contradicts the

⁶³ Rahman, Normuslim, and Muslimah, "Akulturasi Islam Dan Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Tampung Tawar Di Komunitas Dayak Muslim."

⁶⁴ Etymologically, the term 'urf (العُرْف) originates from the root '-r-f (ع ر ف), which means "something that is known," "good custom," or "prevailing tradition." In the Qur'an, this term appears, for example, in QS. al-A'rāf [7]:199:

Meaning: Be forgiving, enjoin what is right ('urf), and turn away from the ignorant.

In terminology, 'urf, as stated by the jurist Al-Amidi (d. 631 AH), is:

ما استقر في النفوس من جهة العقول وتلقته الطباع السليمة بالقبول

Meaning:

Something that has settled in the human soul based on sound reason and is accepted by a proper natural disposition (fitrah). (Al-Amidi, 1982)

⁶⁵ Etymologically, *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* derives from two words: *maqāsid*, the plural of *maqṣid*, meaning purpose, objective, or goal, and *al-sharī'ah*, which literally means the path leading to a water source. In Islamic legal terminology, *al-sharī'ah* refers to the divine law revealed by Allah *Subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā* to regulate human life and ensure well-being in this world and the Hereafter. (See Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1990); Terminologically, *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* refers to the fundamental objectives intended by Islamic law in establishing legal rulings. Imām al-Shāṭibī defines it as *al-ma'ānī allatī ra'āhā al-shāri' fī jamī' aḥwāl al-taklīf*, namely the purposes considered by the Lawgiver in all legal obligations (See Imam Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Syari'ah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifat, 1997).

⁶⁶ Linguistically, *maṣlaḥah* denotes benefit or welfare, while *mursalah* means unrestricted. Terminologically, *maṣlaḥah mursalah* refers to a public interest not explicitly regulated by textual evidence but consistent with *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, including *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl*. (See Imam Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Syariah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifat, 1997); See also Imam Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustashfa*, Jilid 1 (Kairo: Dar Al-Kutub al-Islamiyah, 1993).

⁶⁷ Linguistically, *sadd* means "to close," while *al-dharī'ah* means "a means" or "a medium." Thus, *sadd al-dharī'ah* refers to closing the means that may lead to something prohibited (*mafsadah*). This concept emphasizes that an action which is originally permissible (*mubah*) can be prevented or prohibited if it has a strong potential to lead to harm (*mafsadah*) or violation of Sharī'ah law. See Imam al-Qarāfi, *al-Furūq*, (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1998).

⁶⁸ Abu al-Hasan Ali Al-Āmidī, *Al-Iḥkām Fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1985).

sharia and is thus unacceptable or rejected.⁶⁹ Besides the rules above, there are other rules, namely:

الأصل في الأشياء الإباحة⁷⁰

The principles of *Ushul Fiqh* state:

الأصل في الأشياء الإباحة حتى يدلّ الدليل على التحريم

Meaning:

The original ruling on something is *permissible (mubah)*, unless there is evidence indicating its prohibition.⁷¹

Based on the principles of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, the tepuk tepung tawar tradition belongs to the category of *‘ādāt* rather than *‘ibādah maḥḍah*, so its original ruling is *mubāḥ* unless it contains *shirk*, *bid‘ah*, *isrāf*, or sinful acts. **Secondly**, through *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and *maṣlaḥah mursalah*, as explained by Imām al-Shāṭibī, the *Sharī‘ah* aims to preserve religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, and this tradition supports these objectives.⁷² **Thirdly**, through *sadd al-dharī‘ah* and *fath al-dharī‘ah*, as emphasized by Ibn al-Qayyim, harmful means must be blocked while beneficial means are allowed; tepuk tepung tawar promotes goodness.⁷³ **Fourth**, *bid‘ah* must be understood by distinguishing between *‘ibādāt*, which are *tawqīfiyyah*, and *‘ādāt*, which are *ijtihādiyyah*. In this regard, the Prophet said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

Meaning:

Narrated by Aisha r.a.: The Messenger of Allah said, “Whoever innovates something in our matters that is not part of them, it will be rejected.” (HR. Muslim, No. 1718)⁷⁴

From the perspective of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, tepuk tepung tawar is classified as *‘ādāt* (custom) rather than *‘ibādah maḥḍah* (ritual worship). Therefore, it cannot be considered *bid‘ah* unless it is believed to be part of formal worship. In the absence of explicit *dalīl* prohibiting it, the practice remains *mubāḥ* based on the principle of *istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl*.⁷⁵

The conformity of tepuk tepung tawar with the Prophet’s hadith must be assessed through its *maqṣad* and meaning, rather than through symbols such as rice, flowers, or tawar water. These elements are merely cultural *wasīlah* that are permissible when they lead to *du‘ā*, *silaturrahim*, and social *maṣlaḥah*. If understood as *‘ibādah maḥḍah*, it may be considered *bid‘ah* due to the absence of explicit *dalīl ta‘abbudī*. However, as part of *‘ādāt*, it follows the principle of *al-aṣl fī al-ashyā’ al-ibāḥah*.⁷⁶ The main issue lies in communal belief:

⁶⁹ Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002).

⁷⁰ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Bahādur Al-Zarkashī, *Al-Manthūr Fī al-Qawā‘id al-Fiqhiyyah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1992).

⁷¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Ashbāḥ wa Al-naẓā‘ir: Fī qawā‘id wa Furū‘ Fiqh Al-Shāfi‘iyyah* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah, 1964).

⁷² Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Syari‘ah*.

⁷³ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Al-Zarqā’, *Sharḥ Al-Qawā‘id al-Fiqhiyyah* (Damaskus: Dar al-Qalam, 1989).

⁷⁴ Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

⁷⁵ Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, *I‘lam al-Muwaqqi‘in ‘an Rabb al-‘Alamin*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1991).

⁷⁶ M. al-Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah* (Amman: Dār al-Nafā‘is, 2006), 251.

if symbols are considered to possess supernatural power, it approaches *shirk khafī*; if they are understood only as symbols of prayer, it remains within the category of *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ*.

Challenges and Contemporary Dynamics of Malay Culture

Although still preserved, this tradition faces challenges in the modern era, such as the influence of global culture, scripturalist interpretations of religion, and a lack of generational continuity among cultural practitioners.⁷⁷ Some groups consider this tradition irrelevant and even tend to label it as *bid‘ah*, while others regard it as a form of local wisdom that strengthens social cohesion and *ukhuwah*. This discourse highlights the importance of cultural dialogue and religious education to ensure that the tradition is preserved without compromising the purity of Islamic teachings.⁷⁸

The *tepek tepung tawar* tradition in Malay society represents a form of local wisdom practiced during significant occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, *khatam al-Qur‘an* ceremonies, *Hajj* departures, housewarmings, and official inaugurations. The ritual involves sprinkling water mixed with flour, rice, flowers, and leaves, accompanied by prayers and blessings from elders and religious leaders. As a form of Living Hadith, it reflects Prophetic teachings on *du‘ā‘*, *barakah*, purity, and social harmony. However, three concerns must be addressed: the risk of *shirk* if symbolic objects are believed to possess supernatural power, *bid‘ah* if the practice is treated as *‘ibādah maḥḍah* rather than *adat*, and *isrāf* if the celebration becomes excessive. When understood as *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ* and free from these elements, *tepek tepung tawar* remains permissible and demonstrates how hadith continues to live within Malay Muslim cultural traditions.

Conclusion

This study argues that the *tepek tepung tawar* tradition among the Riau Malay community is not merely a ceremonial custom, but a concrete form of harmonisation between *syara‘* and local culture through the perspective of Living Hadith. Its conformity with the Prophet’s hadith lies not in symbolic elements such as turmeric rice, *tawar* water, flowers, or *setawar* leaves, but in the substantive values of *du‘ā‘*, *barakah*, *silaturraḥim*, social respect, and communal solidarity. The tradition functions as a cultural medium that actualises Prophetic values in social life. The principles of *al-‘ādah muḥakkamah* and *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ* affirm that such customs are acceptable as long as they do not contradict *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and remain free from *shirk*, *bid‘ah* in *‘ibādah maḥḍah*, and beliefs that deviate from *tawḥīd*. Thus, hadith here legitimises values rather than ritual forms.

The limitation of this study lies in its focus only on the Riau Malay context without comparing similar traditions in other Malay regions. It also prioritises Living Hadith and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* analysis, while symbolic anthropology and contemporary social change are not

⁷⁷ Dewi Romantika Tinambunan et al., “Tradisi Tepung Tawar Sebagai Cerminan Nilai Keagamaan Dan Sosial Pada Masyarakat Melayu Di Batubara,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8, no. 3 (October 2024): 41444–51, <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/20151>.

⁷⁸ Agustina, Mahrus, and Purwanti, “THE TRADITION OF TEPUNG TAWAR IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.”

discussed in depth. Recommendations include preserving the tradition through cooperation between local government, customary institutions, and religious leaders, strengthening cultural-religious education for younger generations, expanding Living Hadith studies on other Malay traditions, and encouraging dialogue between supporters and critics of the tradition to maintain both cultural heritage and the purity of Islamic teachings.

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