

Religious Deviations in the Balimau Kasai Tradition of the Kampar Community 2010-2025

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the forms of deviation that occur in the implementation of the *Balimau Kasai* tradition and examine the factors that cause these changes. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and literature studies. Data were collected using observation, interviews, and a review of relevant literature. The results showed that there were deviations in the implementation of the tradition, including the loss of boundaries for bathing places between men and women, the presence of un-Islamic music entertainment, the use of indecent clothing, and the consumption of liquor that damaged the sanctity of the event. The lack of understanding among the community, especially the younger generation, about the philosophical meaning and spiritual values of the *Balimau Kasai* tradition is the main factor causing the deviation, so that this tradition tends to be seen as a mere entertainment event. This study highlights the need for cultural education about the original values of the tradition, strengthening the role of traditional and religious leaders, and establishing clear rules in the implementation of the tradition to remain in accordance with Islamic teachings, noble customs, and religious values for the younger generation. This study is limited to the perceptions of the general public and has not yet reached an in-depth analysis of the role of customary and religious institutions. Therefore, there is an opportunity for other researchers who are interested in continuing the study in a broader form with more complete references.

Keywords: *Balimau Kasai* tradition, Religious values, Religious deviation, Kampar community, Cultural values.

1. Introduction

There has been a religious deviation in the tradition of Balimau Kasai bathing in the Kampar community. Kampar Regency is an area that is still rich in customs; many foreign customs have entered Indonesia, and they have also been adopted, but the original customs have not been abandoned.¹ As in other areas,² the *Balimau Kasai Bath* is a traditional ceremony that is carried out from generation to generation once a year. This tradition is a form of gratitude for the community because it will enter a holy and blessed month, namely the month of Ramadan. In

¹ Fajri Arman, "Public Perception of the Balimau Kasai Tradition in Kuapan Village, Tambang District, Kampar Regency," *Let's THINK* 2, no. 2 (2015): 1–15.

² Sahri Muharram, "The Tradition of Balimau Kasai in Muara Lembu Village, Singingi District, Kuantan Singingi Regency," *Yudabbiru Journal of State Administration* 1, no. 2 (2019): 46–55.

addition to expressions of gratitude, it is also a symbol of purification or self-cleansing.³ As we know, it is customary for the people of Kampar to do *Balimau Kasai* before the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan. After the Dzuhur prayer, the people of Kampar flocked to the Kampar River to do *Balimau Kasai*. However, as time goes by, the implementation of the Balimau Kasai tradition has increasingly deviated from the actual tradition. One example is that if in the past there was still a 20-meter limit between baths for women and men that were far apart, now there are no more limits for both women and men. This certainly does not show symbolism of purifying oneself in a real way.

Literature: Changes in the Balimau Kasai tradition in the Kampar community pay attention to 2 things: first, there are several deviations from the actual values of the tradition; one example is the tradition that originally there was still a distance between bathing places between men and women, but now it has mixed bathing places between the two.⁴ Including there are also several individuals who often bring liquor and get drunk during the event, so that the sacredness of the event is lost. Second, this tradition is not one of the teachings taught by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. But this tradition has several values that are important enough to be given back to future generations.⁵

This paper aims to complement the existing study by accommodating the perspective of the Kampar community on various existing deviations. In line with that, 3 questions are asked: first, what are the rules in the *Balimau Kasai tradition* that are in accordance with Islamic doctrine? Second, how is the combination of Islamic values with local culture? Third, what are the roles of traditional stakeholders in implementing *the Balimau Kasai* tradition? The answer to this question is intended to explain how these deviations and changes can occur.

This paper is based on the argument that the deviations that exist in the *Balimau Kasai* tradition can be seen from several perspectives. If *this Balimau Kasai* is done with the right intention, which aims to cleanse oneself physically and spiritually before entering the holy month of Ramadan, then there is no problem with the teachings of Islam.

2. Review Literature

Changes in the Balimau Kasai tradition can be seen in the span of around 2010-2025. This study shows that the changes in *the Balimau Kasai* tradition at this time are not fully in accordance with previous traditions and values. In various studies, there are at least 3 conversations related to the change of the Balimau Kasai tradition, namely: first, the rules in the *existing Balimau Kasai tradition* are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Second, the combination of Islamic values and

³ Sri Mawarti, "BALIMAU BATH TRADITION Looking Back at the Value of Islamic Religious Education in Traditions in Riau," *Nusantara; Journal for Southeast Asian Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.24014/nusantara.v17i1.13805>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

local culture. Third, the need for the role of traditional stakeholders in carrying out *the Balimau Kasai tradition*. These three things are discussed as follows:

2.1 The Prohibition of Gathering Men and Women in One Ceremony

Islam expressly commands a person not to mix between men and women. Islam regulates the association between men and women so as not to open the way to heinous acts. As Allah says:

قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم ويحفظوا فروجهم ذلك ازكى لهم ان الله خبير بما يصنعون النور ٣٠

Meaning: Tell the believing men that they should guard their gaze and guard their genitals. Thus it is more holy for them, an-Nur 30.

And the other Allah says:

وقل للمؤمنات يغضضن من ابصارهن ويحفظن فروجهن ولا يبدين زينتهن الا ما ظهر منها وليضربن بخمرهن على جيوبهن ولا يبدين زينتهن الا لبعولتهن او ابايهن او ابناءه بعولتهن او اخوانهن او بنى اخوانهن او بنى اخوتهن او نسايهن او ما ملكت ايمنهن او التبعية غير اولى الاربعة من الرجال او الطفل الذين لم يظهروا على عورت النساء ولا يضربن بارجلهن ليعلم ما يخفين من زينتهن وتوبوا الى الله جميعا ايه المؤمنون لعلكم تفلحون النور ٣١

Meaning: Tell the believing women that they should guard their eyes, guard their genitals, and not show their ornaments, except what is visible. They should cover the veil to his chest. Nor should they show their ornaments except to their husbands, an-Nur 31.

The two verses explain that men and women must close their respective auras and are forbidden to open them except for people who are allowed to open them. This verse implies that it forbids men and women to gather in a certain ceremony or location. The gathering of men and women is very worried that it will cause the rise of the orgasm of both. In another verse, Allah says:

ولا تقربوا الزنى انه كان فاحشة وساء سبيلا

Meaning: Do not approach adultery; indeed it is an abominable deed and the worst way, al-Israk verse 17.

This verse explains to everyone that both men and women are forbidden to approach adultery. If in one place men and women gather, it is feared that orgasm will arise between them, and this can very much trigger the emergence of more desires that can lead to adultery.

The above verse is also supported by a hadith of the Prophet as follows:

خير صفوف الرجال اولها وشرها آخرها وخير صفوف النساء آخرها وشرها اولها. رواه سلم

That is, "The best male shaf is the front, and the worst is the back, while the best female shaf is the most backward and the worst is the front as narrated by Muslims.

The above verses show how Islam emphasizes the importance of separation between men and women; this prohibition is not only limited to the act of adultery, but all forms that can lead to it. This includes promiscuity, looking at each other without limits, and gathering in public places without separation between men and women. The main purpose of this rule is to maintain honor and purity from bad deeds.

2.2 A Blend of Islamic Values and Local Culture

This Balimau Kasai *bath activity* is commonly carried out to welcome the fasting month, followed by people in the Kampar area. Various arts and entertainment attractions are sometimes prepared in the riverside areas to enliven this tradition, even more so in areas such as the Kampar River, which is never deserted by people.⁶ *Bathing Balimau Kasai* is actually not included in the sunnah of the Prophet, but only as a mere tradition that has high philosophical values.⁷ *Bathing Balimau Kasai* is not only to cleanse oneself *zahir*, but it is also a moment to establish friendship and a mutual forgiveness event to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. As Islam teaches to purify the heart and repent before entering and welcoming the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan. A form of gratitude and a feeling of joy to welcome the arrival of Ramadan. Being grateful for all the blessings of Allah SWT. given to all His servants, accompanied by the intention of repentance and commitment to become a better human being.⁸ So this tradition is not a *keyakinan* that has a *naqli* postulate in *qat'i*. But this is more of a custom that is accompanied by *syara'* (Islamic *Shari'a*) based on the *Kitabullah*, which philosophically does not contradict the teachings of Islam.⁹

In addition, there are many varieties of bathing traditions in Indonesia, both those that are combined with Islamic values and those that do not have any connection to Islam. One of the bathing traditions that has no element of Islamic value is *the Flower Lesson* bath; even some people consider that the *Flower Lesson* bath is an act of *shirk*. This *Flower Lesson* bath is a local tradition that is carried out in Gemblengan Village, Wonosobo Regency. Local wisdom is a view of life and science as well as various life strategies in the form of activities carried out by local

⁶ Fathur Rahman Damanik et al., "THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN" 9, no. 3 (2025): 61–67.

⁷ Putri Rizca Mardeni and Jimmi Copriady, "The Balimau Kasai Tradition of Riau Malay in the Phenomenological Perspective of Edmund Husserl," *Indonesian Philosophy Journal* 6, no. 3 (2023): 493–500, <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JFI/article/view/49267%0Ahttps://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JFI/article/download/49267/27352>.

⁸ Suri Wulandari and Ismail Pane, "The Tradition of Bathing Balimau Kasai in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Prov. Riau," *Borneo : Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 133–41, <https://doi.org/10.37567/borneo.v3i2.1509>.

⁹ M. Ridwan, "Da'wah Advocacy in Local Culture 'Balimau' Welcomes the Month of Ramadan in Padang, West Sumatra," *Scientific Da'wah and Communication* 2, no. 3 (2010): 1–12, <https://ejournal.uinib.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/almunir/article/viewFile/1237/1018>.

communities in answering various problems in meeting their needs.¹⁰ *Mandi Balimau Kasai* is a local wisdom rooted in local or traditional knowledge and management systems.¹¹ *Balimau Kasai* has its own value and meaning for the sustainability of the civilization of the Kampar community.

Many people do not know or even want to know about the benefits and laws of *Balimau Kasai* bathing. If this is ignored, there will be a cultural shift that can eliminate this value-laden tradition, as happened in Java.¹²

Balimau Kasai as local wisdom should not be sidelined in the increasingly sophisticated pattern of people's lives. Local wisdom basically cannot be excluded and eliminated from the layers of Riau society. Because wisdom develops because of an entity and is created because of their life experience. Similar to other local wisdom, *Balimau Kasai* has its own value and meaning for the sustainability of the Riau people's civilization. Although there are those who question whether *the Balimau Kasai* bathing tradition is still maintained, it can still be found in the Kampar Community.¹³

Many people do not know or even do not want to know about the efficacy and law of *Balimau Bath* from a religious point of view. When this happens and is ignored, there will be a cultural shift that can eliminate this *tradition of Balimau Kasai* bathing from Malay civilization¹⁴.

2.3 The Role of Traditional Stakeholders in the Implementation of the *Balimau Kasai* Tradition

One of the causes of the change in values and practices in the *Balimau Kasai* tradition is the weak social control of traditional stakeholders¹⁵ and the ineffective *da'wah* approach that is in accordance with the local culture. As a result, people, especially the younger generation, have difficulty distinguishing between religious values and those that are just entertainment traditions. To maintain the values of local wisdom in this tradition, in its implementation, traditional stakeholders have

¹⁰ Mei Santi, "HONEST PRINCIPLES IN TRADE (EFFECTIVE TIPS TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS LIFE)" 1, no. 1 (n.d.): 35–41, file:///D:/Users/Downloads/4.+Mei+Santi+-+PRINSIP+JUJUR+DALAM+PERDAGANGAN+(Tips+Effective+For+Life+Prosperity).pdf.

¹¹ Yuliatin Yuliatin, "The Relationship of Men and Women in the Domestic and Public Spaces According to the Understanding of the Elite of Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools in Jambi," *Journal of Gender and Islamic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2019): 161, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2019.182.161-171>.

¹² Nuha and Fahrur Nisak, "Local Wisdom: The Value of Leson Bath Tradition in Gemblengan Village, Wonosobo Regency," *ASNA: Journal of Islamic and Religious Education* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–10.

¹³ Mardeni and Jimmi Copriady, "Tradisi *Balimau Kasai* Riau Malays in the Phenomenological Perspective of Edmund Husserl"; Ridwan, "Da'wah Advocacy in Local Culture 'Balimau' Welcomes the Month of Ramadan in Padang, West Sumatra."

¹⁴ Nuha and Nisak, "Local Wisdom: The Value of Bath Flowers in Gemblengan Village, Wonosobo Regency."

¹⁵ Journal of Social and Humanities, "ISLAMIC VALUES IN CUSTOMS *BALIMAU KASAI* ON" 3, no. 1 (2025): 388–96; Arzam Arzam, "The Role of Customary Regents," *Iain Kerinci* 07 (2012): 119–30, <https://ejournal.iainkerinci.ac.id/index.php/alqisthu/article/download/1169/550/4659>.

a very large authority in the implementation of this tradition. The Traditional Ruler is an elder in the community; he leads the guild as the head of a large family. He is the leader of the fellowship living in the community.¹⁶ The role of traditional stakeholders in maintaining the values of this tradition includes providing understanding to the community about the separation between customary law and religious law, the firmness of leaders, and the role of the community in maintaining customs.¹⁷

3. Method

3.1 Type and Scope of Research

This research uses a qualitative approach and focuses on an in-depth understanding of the implementation of *the Balimau Kasai* tradition in Kampar district. Especially in the context of changing values, especially in terms of deviations in the implementation of traditions, as well as reduced public understanding of the values contained in *the Balimau Kasai* tradition. The data in the study were collected through direct observation in the field and interviews with several people, such as religious leaders, residents, and children in the area. In addition, the researcher also collected data from online sources. All the data collected were then analyzed and grouped based on relevant themes, such as religious values, the existence of deviations that occur, and the loss of the meaning of holiness in this tradition.

3.2 Research Participants

Participants in the study on *Balimau Kasai* involved several people from the Kampar community who participated in or who knew about *the Balimau Kasai tradition*. Data obtained from observations and literature studies were confirmed with religious leaders, the general public, and especially the younger generation as the main participants in the research. These participants came from the Kampar regency area. If there is a statement that has a similar meaning or content to the answer, then in this writing it is only represented by one of them.

3.3 Research Instruments

In collecting data in the research on *the Balimau Kasai* tradition, interview guidelines were used as a reference in formulating questions. The questions are open-ended and cover several key areas. First, data on the understanding of the community, especially the younger generation, of the meaning and value of religion in the *Balimau Kasai* tradition. Second, data on changes in the implementation of traditions, including deviations that occur in *the Balimau Kasai tradition*. Third, data

¹⁶ Arzam, "The Role of Customary Regents."

¹⁷ Ismail Pane, "The Deviation of the Traditional Values of Baths *Balimau Kasai* On Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province Deviation of Traditional Values of *Balimau Kasai* Bath Against Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village , Bangkinang," *EDUCATE: Journal of Education and Culture* Vol. 01, no. 02 (2023): 108–14.

on the role of religious leaders, traditional leaders, and communities in maintaining the original values of the tradition.

3.4 Research Procedure

This research will take place in May 2025. People who were participants in this study were interviewed based on their willingness and awareness of various information. Questions were asked openly one by one, either directly when the opposition is willing to be met, or through communication media such as telephone and WhatsApp. Participants were asked to share their experiences while following the *Balimau Kasai* tradition, their views on the changes in this tradition, and their understanding of the religious and cultural values contained in it.

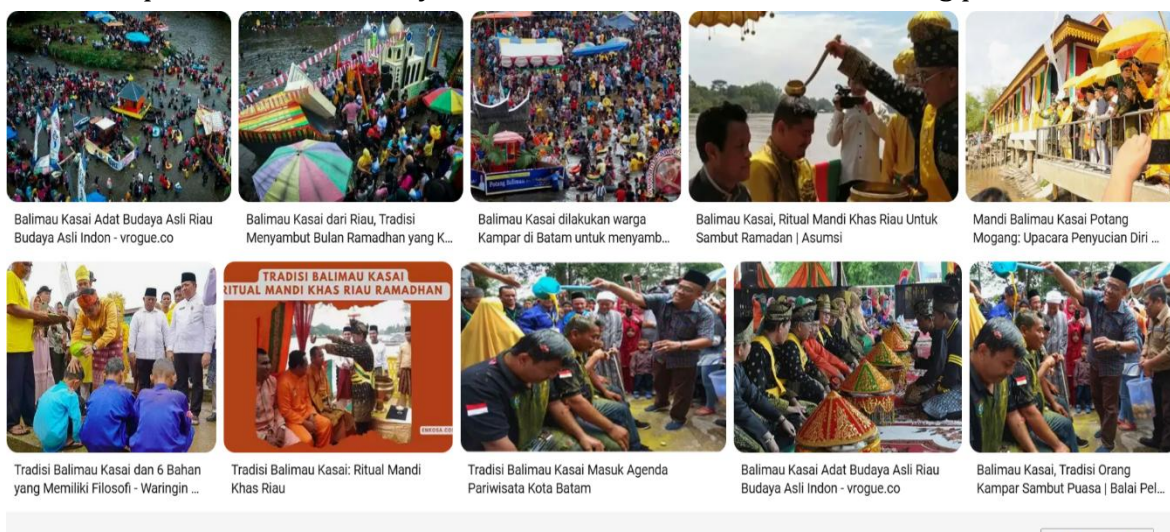
3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was carried out by compiling and grouping interview results and observations based on themes that emerged from the participants' stories. The data that have been collected is then rearranged according to the content of the discussion, such as how the community now views the *Balimau Kasai tradition*, whether it is still in accordance with traditional values and religious teachings, or whether there have been changes. After that, the data were interpreted by looking at the respondents' background, such as age, education, and their understanding of customs and religion. From this process, the researcher can then conclude the extent to which the *Balimau Kasai tradition* is still understood and carried out correctly by the community, especially the younger generation.

4. Results

The implementation of the *Balimau Kasai* tradition, which is held every year, has even been shown in various moments.

The picture of the activity can be seen as shown in the following picture:



Pictures of various activities at the *Balimau Kasai* event

4.1 Deviations in the Balimau Kasai Tradition

As time progressed, the implementation of the *Balimau Kasai tradition* in Kampar began to experience various deviations, both in terms of implementation and purpose. The implementation of *the Balimau Kasai tradition*, which was once sacred, is now starting to see significant changes; the religious values in the tradition are beginning to be neglected.¹⁸

One of the most striking forms of deviation is the disappearance of the boundaries between men and women at the bathing site. In fact, in the past there was still a barrier between men and women, but now, the mixing between the two is infinite in public bathing places; it has become something we usually see. This can cause slander and vice.¹⁹

In addition, the nuances of entertainment in this event have also changed. If in the past the music entertainment that was listened to had Islamic nuances, but now the musical entertainment presented is far from Islamic nuances, for example, dangdut music with swaying that can cause passion in the opposite sex.²⁰

Even more tragic changes, now there have been many people who brought liquor and got drunk during the implementation of *Balimau Kasai*. This change is very concerning because these deviations are very far from the Islamic values in this tradition, because this tradition should be a means of cleansing ourselves physically and mentally before we enter the holy month of Ramadan.²¹

From year to year, the tradition of *bathing in Balimau Kasai* has been tarnished and lost its sacredness due to behavior that is contrary to Islamic law, such as hurrah, riding between men and women who are not mahram, mass bathing mixed between men and women, bathing on benen (tire buoys) in the Kampar river, and hugging, drunkenness accompanied by music, and others.²²

One of the Kampar community members interviewed by the researcher, Mrs. Dias, expressed her view: "The *Balimau Kasai* tradition has been made by the Kampar people since ancient times. As a resident of the Kampar community, I am happy to carry out this tradition because we can connect to fellow residents of the surrounding community. However, after the COVID outbreak yesterday until this year, there are not many people who hold this *Balimau Kasai* activity. Furthermore,

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰ Sulis Anggraini Lopa et al., "Balimau Bath as a Community Tradition in Minangkabau," *Jurnal Ilmiah Language and Word* 7, no. 1 (2023): 16–20, <https://doi.org/10.36057/jilp.v7i1.611>; Mardeni and Jimmi Copriady, "The Tradition of Riau Malay Balimau Kasai in the Phenomenological Perspective of Edmund Husserl."

²¹ Pane, "Deviation of Traditional Values of Balimau Kasai Baths to Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province Deviation of Traditional Values of *Balimau Kasai* Bath Against Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang."

²² Razali Pebrianto, Heri Saputra, and Nurhasanah Bakhtiar, "Local Wisdom in the Tradition of Bathing *Balimau Kasai*: The Role of Traditional Stakeholders to Maintain Islamic Values in Alam Panjang Village, Rumbio Jaya District, Kampar Prov. Riau," *JUSPI (Journal of the History of Islamic Civilization)* 3, no. 1 (2019): 17, <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v3i1.3172>.

he also expressed his concern: "There are indeed irregularities in the implementation of this tradition, such as the mixing of men and women who are not mahrams.²³ I also see that some of them wear immodest clothes in the implementation of this tradition, plus there are dangdut music that is far from Islamic elements, I am also concerned to see it."²⁴ Dr. Azhari. LC, MA, a leader of the Anshor Al-Sunnah Air Tiris Kampar Islamic boarding school also commented in this case he said that "if indeed this tradition is colored by many things that are contrary to Islam, such as entertainment that contains elements of immorality, mixing between men and women who are not mahram without any restrictions, even until someone brings liquor, then we are worried that this can even become a place of immorality before fasting, no longer self-purification".²⁵

Seeing this reality, all parties, including traditional leaders, religious leaders, and the general public, should start paying attention to and restoring the original meaning of this tradition, namely as an Islamic self-purification ritual, full of spiritual value and in accordance with this custom carried out so that the deviations that occur can be eliminated so that the original purity of this tradition remains sustainable.

4.2 Limited public knowledge of religious rules

One of the cultural traditions that is typical for generations in the Kampar regency area is *Balimau Kasai*. This tradition is one of the cultural heritages that is still widely known by the people of Kampar. As a community that upholds traditional and religious values, most Kampar residents have a good basic knowledge of the meaning and purpose of implementing the tradition. However, this understanding has also changed with the times, especially among the younger generation.²⁶

In general, the people of Kampar understand that the *tradition of Balimau Kasai* is an activity to cleanse themselves by bathing in the Kampar River to welcome the holy month of Ramadan.²⁷ This activity is carried out the day before the first day of fasting. Self-purification activities are carried out by bathing using water or fragrances²⁸ as a form of welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. They know that

²³Pane, "The Deviation of the Traditional Values of Bathing *Balimau Kasai* On Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province Deviation of Traditional Values of *Balimau Kasai* Bath Against Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village , Bangkinang."

²⁴ Diaswati, *interview*, February 6, 2025.

²⁵ Azhari, *interview*, February 8, 2025.

²⁶ Hesti Asriwandari, Rina Susanti, and Rian Hidayat, "The Meaning of Tradition *Balimau Kasai* In Tanjung Berulak Village, Kampar District," *Satwika : The Study of Cultural Sciences and Social Change* 7, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v7i2.28629>.

²⁷ Angraini Lopa et al., "Mandi *Balimau* as a tradition of the people in Minangkabau"; Mawarti, "BADI BALIMAU TRADITION looks back at the value of Islamic religious education in tradition in Riau"; Yasirrudin et al., "Balimau Kasai in the Normative Apologetic Approach," *IHSANIK: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 244–53, <https://doi.org/10.59841/ihsanika.v2i2.1161>.

²⁸ Ridwan, "Da'wah Advocacy in Local Culture 'Balimau' Welcomes the Month of Ramadan in Padang, West Sumatra"; Gina Novia Utami, Iskandar Syah, and Muhammad Basri, "Tradition *Balimau* "To the people of Minang in Rajabasa District, Bandar Lampung City," *Journal of Historical Education and Research* 6, no. 2 (2018): 1–12; Social and Humanities, "ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE BALIMAU

traditionally, this activity has symbolic values, namely the cleansing of the body and mind so that they enter the fasting month in a holy and clean state.²⁹ This activity is usually carried out together in the river or a public bathing place, one or two days before Ramadan. This tradition, practiced by the Malay people in Kampar, is held on the Kampar River.

However, among today's younger generation, this tradition is beginning to lose its meaning and symbolism. They tend to see this tradition as a gathering moment, entertainment, or even as an opportunity to "wash their eyes". They know this tradition is observed before Ramadan, but many do not understand its philosophy. Some of them don't even know that this tradition has strong roots in Islamic customs and teachings. This has an impact on the occurrence of various forms of deviation that occur due to the lack of understanding of the younger generation of the original values of the *Balimau Kasai tradition*. Like, they don't know that in the past this activity was carried out full of sacredness,³⁰ separated between men and women³¹, with a calm and prayerful atmosphere.³² Many of the Kampar people follow this tradition in addition to their habits, also because of their understanding of values.³³ The knowledge of the Kampar people about *the Balimau Kasai tradition* in general still exists, especially among parents and traditional leaders. However, the understanding of the younger generation³⁴ is beginning to decline and is affected by changes that exist with the times.

This is strengthened by the results of the researcher's interviews with several community members in the Kampar area. A teenager, Riki, when asked why he

KASAI ON CUSTOM"; Sahri Muharram, "Tradition *Balimau Kasai* In Muara Lembu Village, Singingi District, Kuantan Singingi Regency"; Nurhafifah Siregar, Yusra Dewi Siregar, and Jufri Naldo, "The Dynamics of Marpangir Tradition in North Padang Lawas Regency, 1990-2000," *Local History & Heritage* 3, no. 2 (2023): 79-88, <https://doi.org/10.57251/lhh.v3i2.1104>.

²⁹ Abdul Rahman, Muhammad Syukur, and Abdul Aziz, "Suru Maca: The Tradition of Welcoming the Month of Ramadan for the People of Pakkabba Village, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi," *SMART Journal* 6, no. 2 (2020): 277-91; Fatma Fazira, Yurisman Yurisman, and Yade Surayya, "The Balaho Tradition in Welcoming the Month of Ramadan," *Journal of Education, Cultural and Politics* 3, no. 2 (2023): 332-44, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jecco.v3i2.281>; Social and Humanities, "ISLAMIC VALUES IN CUSTOMS *BALIMAU KASAI* ON"; Asriwandari, Susanti, and Hidayat, "The Meaning of the Balimau Kasai Tradition in Tanjung Berulak Village, Kampar District."

³⁰ Sahri Muharram, "The Tradition of Balimau Kasai in Muara Lembu Village, Singingi District, Kuantan Singingi Regency."

³¹ Kartika Chairu and Nissa Br, "Perception of Javanese Ethnic Adolescents About the Pangir Bath Tradition," 2024; Mardeni and Jimmi Copriady, "Tradition *Balimau Kasai* Riau Malays in the Phenomenological Perspective of Edmund Husserl"; Wulandari and Pane, "The Tradition of Balimau Kasai Bathing in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Prov. Riau."

³² Dinda Puspita et al., "Mandoa Sambareh Bulan Rajab as a Tradition to Welcome the Holy Month of Ramadan in Padang Pariaman," *Jurnal Ilmiah Language and Word* 7, no. 1 (2023): 21-27, <https://doi.org/10.36057/jilp.v7i1.612>.

³³ Marzuki Marzuki, "The Meugang Tradition in Acehese Society: An Interpretation of Religion in Culture," *EL-HARAKAH (ACCREDITED)* 16, no. 2 (2014): 216, <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v16i2.2781>.

³⁴ Puspita et al., "Mandoa Sambareh Bulan Rajab as a Tradition of Welcoming the Holy Month of Ramadan in Padang Pariaman"; Sahri Muharram, "Tradition *Balimau Kasai* In Muara Lembu Village, Singingi District, Kuantan Singingi Regency."

participated in the activity, said, "When I was a child, I followed this tradition because my parents invited me, but now I used to go with friends. When it comes to meaning, I also don't understand it. He said it was for self-cleaning before fasting. So far, I have never searched deeply about its history".³⁵

The same thing was also conveyed by Fitri Ayu, saying: "I know that *the Balimau Kasai* bath is a tradition of bathing in the river before fasting. But to be honest, I joined only because it was fun, crowded, and had many friends. I didn't understand the value of religion and customs; so far, I have never heard anyone who really explained the history."³⁶

In addition, Cici, who knows this tradition from her family, gives a different view. According to him, "I participated in this *Balimau Kasai bath* because it has become a hereditary tradition in the village. I learned about this tradition from my grandmother; she said that if you want to enter the fasting month, you have to take a *balimau* bath, because we believe that taking a *balimau* bath is a form of gratitude in welcoming the month of Ramadan. I follow it so that this tradition does not disappear just like that, all as a gathering place". He also added, "From my perspective, now children born in 2000 and above don't seem to feel like we used to; now *balimau* is just for entertainment, going to the river, at least not bathing, just watching the event."³⁷

From the results of the three interviews, we can see that the understanding of traditional values and Islamic teachings in the tradition is still minimal among the younger generation. Traditions, which were once carried out with full sacredness, now tend to be seen as an annual entertainment event. The lack of cultural education in conveying the true meaning of this tradition is one of the main causes of this. This is a big challenge in an effort to preserve local cultural heritage so that it remains with noble Islamic and traditional values.

5. Discussion

This paper examines the deviation of religious values in the *Balimau Kasai* tradition, which has now given birth to a map of the importance of maintaining Islamic values and local culture in the *Balimau Kasai tradition*.³⁸ Every activity must have a meaning and purpose, as well as this *traditional Balimau Kasai* event.³⁹ In the implementation of traditions, the difficulties and problems faced by the community cannot be solved because there is no institution that consistently pays attention to the problems of

³⁵ Interview with Riki, 17 years old, on February 8, 2025.

³⁶ Interview with 20-year-old Fitri on February 10, 2025.

³⁷ Interview with Cici, 27 years old on February 15, 2025.

³⁸ Pane, "Deviation of Traditional Values of Balimau Kasai Baths to Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province Deviation of Traditional Values of Balimau Kasai Bath Against Islamic Teachings in Batu Belah Village, Bangkinang."

³⁹ Asriwandari, Susanti, and Hidayat, "The Meaning of Tradition *Balimau Kasai* In Tanjung Berulak Village, Kampar District."

tradition with religious teachings.⁴⁰ The limited knowledge of the public about Islamic values contained in tradition and the pressure of changing times result in the neglect of religious rules in the implementation of *Balimau Kasai*.

In its development, the sacred value of *the Balimau Kasai* bathing activity has been tainted by actions that are contrary to Islamic law, so that the value of spirituality in this activity is shifting.⁴¹ In this condition, the treatment of the community is manifested in the form of using tradition as a mere entertainment venue, so that it loses its true spiritual essence.⁴²

As for people who have awareness of religious values in tradition, try to find alternatives by continuing to carry out traditions but with modifications in accordance with Islamic sharia. The disclosure of information from religious leaders to the public about the reality that the *Balimau Kasai* tradition in the initial concept does not contradict Islam is a way to avoid total abandonment of tradition. However, the way to maintain such a tradition cannot be the right step to avoid deviation of religious values in the implementation of *the Balimau Kasai tradition*.

The results of this study show that it is very difficult to avoid deviations from religious values in the *Balimau Kasai tradition*. One of the main causes of this deviation is the lack of understanding of the public, especially the younger generation, about the meaning and philosophy of the *Balimau Kasai tradition*. Most of them only know this tradition as a joint bath activity before fasting, without knowing the Islamic values and customs contained in it. This is exacerbated by the absence of continuous education from traditional leaders and religious leaders about the importance of maintaining the sacredness of traditions according to Islamic teachings.

Based on the results of the research, an awareness movement is needed about the importance of freeing tradition from deviations from religious values. Five ways can be taken. First, providing education to the public about the original meaning of *the Balimau Kasai tradition* as a form of physical and mental purification in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. Second, restoring the implementation of traditions according to Islamic values, such as separating the location between men and women to avoid mixing that violates the sharia. Third, reduce and avoid entertainment that is not in accordance with religious teachings, such as music that contains immoral elements or performances that invite orgasm. Fourth, increase the active role of religious leaders, traditional leaders, and youth in directing the implementation of traditions to remain within the corridor of Islamic sharia and noble customs. Fifth, strengthen supervision from the authorities over the

⁴⁰ Siregar, Siregar, and Naldo, "The Dynamics of Marpangir Tradition in North Padang Lawas Regency, 1990-2000."

⁴¹ Rahman, Syukur, and Aziz, "Suru Maca: The Tradition of Welcoming the Month of Ramadan for the People of Pakkabba Village, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi."

⁴² Balimau Ritual et al., "The Balimau Ritual Welcoming Ramadan: Its Meaning and Relevance for Us," *AGUNA: Journal of Communication Sciences* 5, no. 02 (2024): 62, <http://ejournal.amikompurwokerto.ac.id/index.php/AGUNA>.

implementation of traditions, as well as take strict action against violations such as bringing liquor, getting drunk, or dressing immodestly.

6. Conclusion

There has been a shift in meaning and purpose in the implementation of the Balimau Kasai tradition in Kampar. A tradition that is actually a means of self-innocence and mental preparation before entering the month of Ramadan. Now, along with the development of the times, many carry it out in a way that is far from traditional values and religious teachings. The deviations that occur include the loss of the barrier between men and women in the implementation of the tradition of bathing baliamu kasai, entertainment music that is not in accordance with Islamic values, even to the point of getting drunk. This is due to the lack of knowledge from the community, especially among young people, about the history and customary values and religious teachings that underlie this tradition. In addition, the weak role of traditional leaders in providing understanding and guidance to the community also strengthens the occurrence of irregularities in its implementation. Therefore, the active role of various parties, ranging from community leaders, religious leaders, to local governments, is needed to restore the Balimau Kasai tradition to its original values.

This research illustrates how deviations and changes in meaning occur in the implementation of the Balimau Kasai tradition, as well as the importance of reviving the original values of the tradition. This research is limited to the perception of the general public and has not reached an in-depth analysis of the role of customary and religious institutions. Therefore, there is an opportunity for other researchers who are interested in continuing this study in a broader form with more complete references, so that the Balimau Kasai tradition remains sustainable and does not violate the traditional values and teachings of Islam.

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