

The Ratib Samman Ritual and Its Social Function in the Sei Paham Community, Sei Kepayang District

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ABSTRACT

The Ratib Samman ritual is a highly popular tradition among the people of Sei Paham, Sei Kepayang District, and it has socially important functions. The purpose of this research is to reveal the social function of the Ratib Samman Ritual of Sei Paham Community, Sei Kepayang District. This research method is qualitative with data collection techniques through interviews, observations and document studies. Research activities are directed to find social facts that are happening in accordance with existing reality. The results of the study show that the community does not know when this ritual is interpreted as a practice of zikr and to get closer to oneself. Zikr as a Religious Tradition and Art in Sei Kepayang Village. The social function of the Ratib Samman ritual is as a form of solidarity and social integration, as well as a means of overcoming various problems that arise in the form of epidemics or diseases, famine, crime, and disturbances from supernatural beings.

Keywords: *Religious Ritual, Ratib Samman, Community, Sei Paham, Social Function*



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1. Introduction

The Ratib Samman ritual is already a form of public Ratib that is open and followed by anyone, even though it is not part of the practitioner group of the Tarekat. The Ratib Samman ritual is performed by the people in this area at special times as a religious expression of certain conditions, such as in disaster situations. In situations of calamities and disasters, such as disease outbreaks or rampant forms of criminal acts in the village, people believe that through the practice of rituals, Ratib Samman can be overcome and resolved.

The Ratib Samman ritual is very popular and well-established among the people of Sei Paham, Sei Kepayang District, and it also serves important social functions. Existence, as stated by Anwar (2003, p. 132), can be interpreted as an entity, a state of being, or a phenomenon. Based on the meaning of that meaning, what is meant by existence is a form of existence, and the position for an event is still visible and visible from ancient times to the present and accepted in the environment of the community, and also its position is still known or relied on in the environment of the community.

Sei Paham Town is one of the towns in Sei Kepayang Locale, Asahan Rule, North Sumatra Area. The majority of the residents in this town practice Islam, although the population is comprised of Batak and Javanese individuals who have identified themselves as Malay. At that point, from the overall population of Sei Paham, they are by and large old-fashioned. And the Tarekat convention is exceptionally solid among the ancient school Muslims here. This becomes one of the benchmarks for the position within the social structure in this village, where Tarekat individuals, such as the Tuan-Tuan Master, hold a position that's highly highly regarded by the community.

The existence and social function in this context is that the existence of Ratib Samman in Sei Paham, Sei

Kepayang District, in addition to being a religious function, also has other practical functions that have been used as local wisdom that has their respective roles in forming beliefs and responding to the entirety of all events that occur, then often represented as a ritual to get protection, and expressions of gratitude and preventing disasters and disasters that occur in the community. The study of the function of ritual practices is certainly interesting and important to be carried out to see how individuals and social groups utilize religious ritual practices to function and work and also need to be examined more deeply what is the background of the community so they believe in the influence of the Ratib Samman ritual on practical forms in people's livelihoods.

Previous studies related to ritual practices and the like such as Ratib Samman have been widely carried out, including Suyatin (2013) focusing his research on the art form and form of the Samman dhikr tradition and its growth in Caidur village, Saketi District, Pandeglang Regency; Aulia (2020) focuses her research on the form of implementation and views of the Qur'an regarding the Ratib Samman tradition located at the Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokaan Foundation in Pekanbaru and Hasan (2017) which focuses her research on the meaning and function of the Samman Tradition.

This study differs from the trend of previous studies in that it examines the social function of Ratib Samman's ritual in various practical contexts related to disasters and disasters within the Sei Paham community, Sei Kepayang District. Therefore, this phenomenon is important to be studied further in order to increase the treasures of science, especially in the Sociology of Religion. The purpose of this study is to determine the social function of the Ratib Samman ritual in the Sei Paham community, Sei Kepayang District.

Discussing ritual theory, as stated by Robertson Smith in Koentjaraningrat (2007), is interpreted as a symbol of a very important social reality. Furthermore, Robertson Smith in Koentjaraningrat, (2007) provides key ideas that contribute to the understanding of rituals as a religious ritual system, namely: a) Regarding the question, that in addition to belief and doctrine systems, ritual systems are religions or forms of religious manifestation that require special study and analysis. In religion, the ritual is fixed, but the background, beliefs, goals or direction change, and b) Religious rituals are usually carried out by many members of the religion or community that adheres to the religion and also has a social function. Strengthening the solidarity of the community, believers carry out rituals earnestly, and some do it half-heartedly. They see rituals as personal religious satisfaction and social responsibility.

Koentjaraningrat, (2007; 1990) emphasized that rituals are interpreted as techniques, methods to purify a custom. Rituals can create and perpetuate social and religious myths, which are in the form of prayers, dances, dramas and words. Rituals are also included in a system or action mandated by customs or laws that apply in a society in relation to various events that usually occur in the relevant communities. Rituals can be interpreted as goals such as protection, fertility, guarantors, preservation, respect for the will of ancestors, and control of people's attitudes according to the situation of social life, all of which are related to community relations or in nature. As a social controller, ritual is defined as the control of behavior for personal gain, for oneself as an individual or shadow individual. It is designed to conservatively control the behavior, mood, emotions, and values of the group for the benefit of the community as a whole. (Durheim, 2003).

Rituals have a sacred role in the social and cultural life of a community group, especially traditional communities. According to Clifford Geertz, in his work entitled 'The Interpretation of Cultures' explains that ritual is a symbolic form that allows a person to interpret and integrate experiences in accordance with broader social and cultural structures. Geertz considers ritual as a 'symbolic act' that has a role in affirming cultural meanings and shaping individual and group social identities. According to Emile Durkheim's theory of religion and ritual, rituals serve as mechanisms that revitalize social solidarity by strengthening collective identity, fostering togetherness, and affirming shared values and norms.

In addition, rituals can channel and express a person's emotions, allowing them to release emotions that arise at a certain time during ritual meetings, guiding and strengthening actions, providing support, and bringing about change. In addition, it can determine how one should manage their relationship with sacred things. And most importantly, as a form of worship and as a compliment. Rituals can also be used to maintain the fertility of the soil and ensure a good relationship with the invisible world of ancestral spirits and other supernatural powers.

Ratib Samman consists of the words "Ratib" and "Samman," which originate from Arabic. The word Ratib is a form of arrangement or series, and the word Samman is up. Rati in language is interpreted as organized and orderly (Mahmud, 2015). In terms of *ratib*, it refers to a collection of Qur'anic recitations, dhikr, and prayers that are arranged in an orderly manner. Ratib also refers to a collection of prayers and dhikr that are recited repeatedly.

Meanwhile, in relation to Sufism, Ratib is a form of dhikr used by teachers and great scholars, which can be read by one person or several people at specific times. It is also recited in congregations at certain times,

according to the rules set by its compiler. Then, using objects and equipment to carry out the ritual.

Samman itself is a composition of verses that rise to praise Allah SWT. Judging from the implementation of the formation, Samman forms a circle in a sitting or standing position and walks endlessly by chanting dhikr readings. When standing, moving the hand, foot or body to the right in a circular motion, it is interpreted as the perfection of the universe that comes from divine wisdom. And Samman is said to have two functions: dhikr and art media. It is called the dhikr media because the reading contains sentences of monotheism and prayers of the Prophet PBUH which are read together. As for art, in Samman there is the meaning of beauty. Because the sentence reads is beautiful, and marching is not only sitting in a circle, but standing in a circle with the same movements and steps, crossing and moving sideways like the letters Lam Alif.

From there, Ratib Samman is interpreted as a dhikr reading using movements or dances and the rhythm of holy praise. Where the implementation of the Ratib Samman ritual begins with the recitation of the intention, accompanied by the recitation of *Al-fatihah*, *dhikr*, and recitation of the Qur'an and *Asmaul Husna*, then ends with prayer. The basis of the Ratib Samman ritual is found in Q.S Ali Imran Verse 191 which means "Those who always remember Allah while standing, sitting or while lying down, and they also think about all the creation of heaven and earth. Then he said, O our Lord it would not be possible for You to create all this in vain. Most holy, protect us from your punishment, which is hell."

From this verse, it is stated that the movement of dhikr is not limited to a single position; it can be performed while standing, sitting, or lying down. And there is no restriction on the form of movement nor the time. Because the implementation of dhikr in these various circumstances is due to the principle of obligation to remember Allah SWT and is one of the ways to ask for the protection of Allah SWT. So it is clear that the Qur'an's view of this ritual is permissible, because it is in accordance with the implementation of the ritual with the verses of the Qur'an related to the existing dhikr.

Apart from being a religious ritual, socially, the Ratib Samman ritual also has important functions that have been used as local wisdom that has its own role in forming beliefs and responding to everything that happens and takes place in society. It is often described as a ritual to receive blessings to prevent disasters and catastrophes that occur in the area.

2. Method

This type of research is descriptive, with a qualitative approach, where research activities are directed at finding social facts that are happening in accordance with existing reality. The location of this study is in Sei Paham, Sei Kepayang District. This location is still the place where the Ratib Samman ritual is carried out and is believed to be completely by the community. The research informant is the leader of the Naqsyabandiyah Tarekat, serving as the driving force behind the Ratib Saman ritual, alongside village heads, community leaders, and religious leaders. Research informants were selected based on their knowledge and experience regarding the Ratib Saman ritual. The data collection techniques are interviews, observations and document studies. The analysis technique used is interactive data analysis from Milles, Huberman (1994) which consists of data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing and verification and for data validity through data triangulation.

3. Result and Discussion

The Ratib Samman ritual was originally a ritual related to religion, namely a form of self-approach to Allah SWT carried out by the Tarekat group, but as time went by, this ritual expanded its functions, not only related to religious functions. Not only that, the ritual process also involves a large audience that can be followed by anyone without exception. The Ratib Samman ritual, in addition to serving as a means of dhikr and art, which is a cultural practice in society, also has a social function. A culture is the creation of a society that comes from the form of feelings and then manifests into a very expressive form of symbol. Then it is continued with various forms of functions. One of the basic functions is the social function.

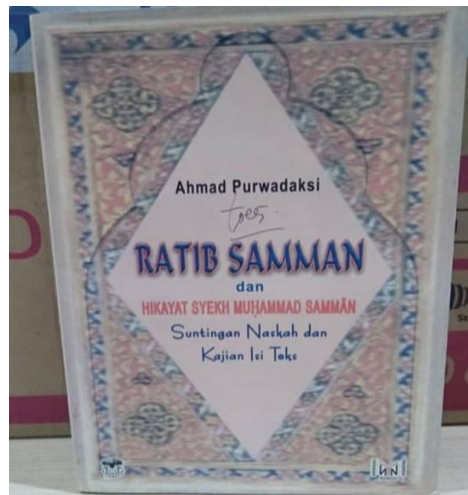


Figure 1. Kitab Ratib Samman recited

Recounting the recitation of verses that are within the collection of Qur'anic lafaz that have a place to the chosen surahs and supplications. Contains a shape of commend or supplication for Allah Swt, which is presented over and over such as the words Lailahailallah and Allahu Akbar and dhikr. (Dendy Sugono, 2008, p. 1175). Perused concurring to the arrangements that have been articulated by the compilers. As well as utilizing objects or gear in carrying out the custom. Ratib Samman was compiled by an awesome instructor in Tarekat, but the honor of Ratib Samman customs within the community in Asahan is no longer part of gathering customs; it can be said to be something more than just a bunch of customs.

The Ratib Samman custom is widely practiced among the people of Sei Paham Town, Sei Kepayang District, Asahan Regency, and holds important social functions. Presence itself is characterized as a presence, a state, a presence. (Anwar, 2003, p. 132). Based on that meaning, what is meant by existence could be a frame of presence and position for an occasion that's still visible and acknowledged within the community, and its position is still known or relied upon within the community.



Figure 2. Ratib Samman weekly dhikr agenda

The social function of the Ratib Samman ritual lies in fostering collective solidarity (Campbell, 1994:182), as the community shares a mutual understanding that their participation serves a common purpose, the smooth execution of the ritual. The community also understands that everything done will ultimately return to its respective owner. Social integration can be seen when social relationships that are starting to strain are strengthened by reestablishing connections.

The ritual activities of Ratib Samman also strengthen social bonds, in the form of the *Hablumminannas*, which means that people who do not know each other gather to get to know one another. This feeling can be seen when there is a break after the reading of the Ratib Samman ritual. The worshippers will reprimand and greet each other. And if among the pilgrims who have often participated in these activities, but did not participate on that day, are sick or have problems in terms of the economy. Then the pilgrims will feel sympathy for the pilgrims. This form of sympathy can be implemented by collecting infak and reciting prayers to worshippers.

The Ratib Samman ritual is held when there is an outbreak of a disease that afflicts the villagers or a disease that simultaneously attacks the residents in the village. Because diseases that can quickly transmit and attack many people in an area are events that can cause panic and fear for villagers. From the implementation of previous activities, it can be seen that the Ratib Samman ritual is used as a means of overcoming as well as treating outbreaks or diseases. Namely, *Tha'un* or infectious diseases such as malaria, skin or *ardom* diseases, measles, chickenpox, and as recently carried out in the village, there is an outbreak of diseases caused by the Corona virus which has become the enemy of people around the world. The use of water and materials used in the Ratib Samman ritual functions as medicine or disease prevention.

The Ratib Samman ritual, in addition to functioning as a means of overcoming plagues or diseases and as a treatment, also serves to help individuals overcome difficulties when the global economy is challenging or the community's economy is struggling. Such as the implementation of the Ratib Samman ritual when the community experiences a long drought, pest attacks on plants, and the decline in community crop yields from rice, palm oil, areca nuts and coconuts. With the implementation of the Ratib Samman ritual, the villagers hope that rain will be brought in, pest attacks will be eliminated from their crops, and the prices of crops to be sold will remain stable, allowing the community's economy to return to normal.

Villagers also often feel disturbed by the existence of criminal acts, both committed by villagers themselves and by outsiders. The Ratib Samman ritual has been carried out due to the rampant crime in the village such as the theft of money, the theft of motorcycles taken from the residents' houses at night, the theft of the residents' crops in their respective fields, the theft of community boats taken from the mooring, fraud by hypnotizing the residents without realizing that someone will hand over their property, the kidnapping of children to be used as a *tumbal* and *pesugihan* in demanding black magic. Spreading village poison or often known in the community as poisoners, so that if ingested, it will cause pain that is difficult to cure, and cases of adultery are rampant. This ritual is carried out as a village cleansing function, namely to purify it from all criminal acts. And those who commit such crimes can open their hearts to end and confess the crimes they have committed.

Villagers, especially in Sei Paham Village, still believe in the existence of spirit creatures that cannot be seen but can be felt. An example of the disturbance caused by spirit creatures in this village is the disturbance of *tuyul*. This *tuyul* is a supernatural creature, resembling a small human child, who is usually tasked by the owner to steal residents' money. Then the disturbance of the *begu ganjang*, this *begu ganjang* is a supernatural figure who has a terrible existence, tall and terrifying, which the more you look at it, the taller it gets, and can suffocate people who see it.

Through the content of the reading contained in the dhikr ritual of Ratib Samman, which is based on the holy verses of the Qur'an, and the overall expectations of the community. It is believed that with this ritual or activity, the problems faced by the community will gradually begin to be resolved. And all affairs are expected to be facilitated and granted by Allah SWT, as well as to facilitate all life affairs that the community lives.

Essentially, the Ratib Samman ritual in Sei Paham Village is a religious ceremony that embodies the community's belief that everything, when involving Allah SWT, can solve all problems, such as through dhikr or praising Allah's name in the Ratib Samman ritual. In addition, in the Ratib Samman ritual, there are values of a society that can be integrated into an order or system through the Ratib Samman ritual activities. It is then that the people who follow this ritual can unite in one direction in their behavior or a state that may not have been achieved perfectly before. And it can also generate a sense of security for every community in the village.

Departing from that, the Ratib Samman ritual in Sei Paham Village is one of a series that has important and useful elements or values in life that will always be supported and maintained by the people of Sei Paham Village. In this case, the explanation is in line with Robertson Smith's theory in Koentjaraningrat (2007) about ritual theory, where in this theory it is said that ritual is a symbol of a very important social reality that, based on arbitrary rules or symbols, has the highest value in society as a spiritual reality.

Furthermore, Robertson Smith in Koentjaraningrat (2007) emphasized that rituals provide important ideas that contribute to understanding as well as a religious ritual system. In religion, the ritual is fixed, but the background, beliefs, goals or direction change. The second idea is that religious rituals are typically carried out by many members of the concerned religion or communities that adhere to it, and also serve a social function by strengthening community solidarity. They see rituals as personal religious satisfaction and social obligation.

4. Conclusion

The description above leads to several conclusions. Firstly, the Ratib Samman ritual functions as a form of dhikr to draw closer to Allah SWT. As a religious tradition, it has evolved into a cultural practice distinguished by the unique meanings embodied in each movement. Secondly, the recitation during the Ratib Samman Ritual

includes the Prophet's Prayer, Qur'anic *surahs*, *dhikr*, and *Asmaul Husna*. The readings read are believed to be the main spearhead for the effectiveness of these activities. Because these readings are believed to provide protection, as well as safety to avoid all kinds of evil and can also increase the sense of faith in the creator. The equipment used in the *ratib samman* ritual also helps the worshippers of the *ratib samman* ritual to be more solemn in *dhikr* in remembering Allah SWT or more conclusive. Lastly, the social function of the *Ratib Samman* ritual fosters solidarity and social integration within the community, as people share a mutual understanding that their actions serve a common purpose. Then social integration appears when social relationships that are starting to strained are strengthened again by strengthening the relationship of friendship. And from the existence of *Ratib Samman* ritual activities, it can strengthen social awareness. In the form of the *Hablumminannas* bond, it means that people who do not know each other gather to know each other. And the ritual is a means of overcoming plagues or diseases, famine seasons, crime, and the disturbance of spirit creatures.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to preserve and introduce the *Ratib Samman* ritual to the younger generation, enabling them to learn about the culture in Sei Paham Village. So that they are aware of the history, the procedures for running the activity, and the functions contained in each series of activities of the *Ratib Samman* ritual event. So that young people are not only spectators but also actors, according to their respective abilities and talents. The Sei Paham Village officials are expected to be more incentivized in fostering and maintaining the *Ratib Samman* ritual, as well as providing more intensive moral and material assistance, so that the implementation of the ritual runs smoothly.

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