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RATEB BEJALAN: THE BODY OF DHIKR, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND MONOTHEISM IN THE MALAY SOCIETY OF TAMIANG

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes Rateb Bejalan in the Malay Tamiang community as a collective rite that links the relationship between humans, the environment (nature), and God within the framework of the Triloka/Tri Patrit aesthetic, which is a concept that states the triadic relationship between the physical world, the metaphysical world, and the divine world. This rite is carried out in the last week of the month of Safar for three consecutive nights through a procession of walking while chanting dhikr from the border to the end of the village, with the aim of asking for divine protection, rejecting danger, and praying that nature and the environment are protected. Unlike previous studies that focused more on folklore or historical aspects, this study offers an aesthetic-anthropological reading that connects symbolic, social, and spiritual aspects in a single triadic framework. This study uses a qualitative-interpretive approach based on literature review and analytical reading on the description of the ritual stages (deliberation, village cleaning, use of torches and monotheistic banners, and closing feast). The analysis draws on classical ritual anthropology: Durkheim to explain how collective rites strengthen solidarity and renew collective consciousness; Turner to interpret the procession as a liminal situation that gives rise to communitas; and Geertz to read dhikr, banners, and processions as a system of symbols that shaped the religious atmosphere and encouragement of social action. The interpretive findings show that the aesthetics of Rateb Bejalan are not merely the beauty of form, but the social-emotional mechanism that organizes Safar's vulnerability into the regularity of meaning, strengthens communal cohesion, and affirms the ethics of human-nature balance under the principle of monotheism.
Keywords: Walking Rate; Tamil Nadu Malays; Safar; collective rituals.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisis Rateb Bejalan pada masyarakat Melayu Tamiang sebagai ritus kolektif yang menautkan relasi manusia, lingkungan (alam), dan Tuhan dalam kerangka estetika Triloka/Tri Patrit, yakni konsep yang menyatakan hubungan triadis antara dunia fisik, dunia metafisik, dan dunia ilahi. Ritus ini dilaksanakan pada minggu terakhir bulan Safar selama tiga malam berturut-turut melalui prosesi berjalan sambil melantunkan zikir dari batas hingga penghujung kampung, dengan tujuan memohon perlindungan Ilahi, menolak marabahaya, serta mendoakan agar alam dan lingkungan dilindungi. Berbeda

dari kajian sebelumnya yang lebih fokus pada aspek folklor atau sejarah, studi ini menawarkan pembacaan estetis-antropologis yang menghubungkan aspek simbolik, sosial, dan spiritual dalam satu kerangka triadik. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-interpretatif berbasis telaah literatur dan pembacaan analitis atas deskripsi tahapan ritual (musyawarah, pembersihan kampung, penggunaan obor dan panji tauhid, serta kenduri penutup). Analisis memanfaatkan antropologi ritual klasik: Durkheim untuk menjelaskan bagaimana ritus kolektif memperkuat solidaritas dan memperbarui kesadaran kolektif; Turner untuk menafsir prosesi sebagai situasi liminal yang memunculkan communitas; serta Geertz untuk membaca zikir, panji, dan prosesi sebagai sistem simbol yang membentuk suasana religius dan dorongan tindakan sosial. Temuan interpretatif menunjukkan bahwa estetika Rateb Bejalan tidak semata keindahan bentuk, melainkan mekanisme sosial-emosional yang menata kerentanan Safar menjadi keteraturan makna, menguatkan kohesi komunal, dan mengafirmasi etika keseimbangan manusia-alam di bawah prinsip ketauhidan.

Kata kunci: Rateb Bejalan; Melayu Tamiang; Safar; ritual kolektif.

INTRODUCTION

Religious and customary rites in the archipelago often show a close intertwining between the human body, ecological space, and the divine dimension. In many communities, this practice is not only understood as a religious expression, but also as a social mechanism that regulates citizens' relationships, builds order of coexistence, and negotiates human relationships with the landscape in which they live (Syahrizal et al., 2024; Marzuki, 2011). Therefore, a rite is not appropriately treated as a static "remnant of tradition", but rather as a dynamic social practice, moving and adapting throughout history to respond to collective needs, while maintaining the continuity of religious values and local knowledge (Hasjmy, 2020; Purwooyuliyanto, 2025).

A number of analyses show that rites play an important role in the maintenance of cultural identity and community resilience. It becomes a medium for managing social anxiety, restoring solidarity, and maintaining resilience when society faces uncertainty or change (Hariadi et al., n.d.; Mardhiah et al., 2024). At the same time, the practice can work as an ecological-cultural tool: it produces moral discipline and a shared orientation towards nature as a living space that needs to be preserved, not just a resource to be exploited. This strengthens that by maintaining harmony with nature, others, and with God, humans create a balanced environmental atmosphere (Sunarmi, 2023). In this perspective, the triadic relationship between humans–natures and God is important to read

how a community integrates material experience, social order, and monotheistic orientation in ritual practices (Dewi & Suja, 2024; Martanti, 2023).

This article places Rateb Bejalan as a rite of the Tamiang Malay community that shows the meeting between the body of dhikr, the space of the environment, and the strengthening of monotheism in a series of socio-religious performances. Rateb Bejalan can not only be understood as a prayer ritual, but also as a praxis that represents ecological wisdom, produces social solidarity, and articulates the divine orientation of the community through movement, sound, and the orderly trajectory of space (Kamal, 2025; Salman et al., 2025). Zikir in this context does not stop only as a verbal text. It becomes an established action, manifested through collective discipline, rhythm of steps, and repetitive spatial experience.

Ethnographically, *Rateb Bejalan* is run by a group of men in the Tamiang Malay community, generally in the last week of the month of Safar in the Islamic calendar or known to the Tamiang Malay community as *Wednesday Habeh*. This rite is carried out by walking through the village area for three consecutive nights while chanting dhikr continuously. In local understanding, the month of Safar is often perceived as a time prone to disasters, diseases, or disturbances that can spread from the personal realm to the social and ecological realm. Therefore, Rateb Bejalan is practiced as a collective effort to ask for the protection of Allah SWT, as well as as a cultural strategy to "clean" the living space and establish common peace.

For the Tamiang Malay community, Rateb Bejalan is also an arena for social relations reform. Collective travel from one point to another activates citizens' encounters, renews social bonds, and unites them in the same religious orientation. In the performative framework, the body, sound, and trajectory of the village act as a spiritual medium that produces meaning: the simultaneous steps and rhythmic dhikr not only build a religious atmosphere, but also present an emotional-transcendental experience that strengthens the cohesion of the community.

In the reading of Islamic anthropology, this kind of practice shows how Muslims in the peripheral regions negotiate the idea of salvation, sacredness, and cosmic order through local expressions that still refer to the principle of monotheism (Asad, 1983; Geertz, 1976). Rateb Bejalan, therefore, can be understood as a form of lived Islam: teachings that do not stop at the textual level, but are manifested in real actions through

movement, sound, and concrete collective experience. However, in the midst of modernity that often judges religious practices with the measure of doctrinal formality, Rateb Bejalan is often considered a syncretic or magical practice. Such an assessment, in our opinion, needs to be read more carefully.

The novelty of this article lies in a deeper reading of Rateb Bejalan as a socio-religious rite that connects the body, space, and monotheism. While previous research has examined this practice more from a folklore or historical perspective, this article offers an aesthetic-anthropological approach that uncovers the role of this rite in renewing social solidarity, affirming cultural identity, and maintaining a relational balance between humans, nature, and the Creator. Thus, we see that Rateb Bejalan is not only a "repellent", but also as a means to strengthen social cohesion based on the principle of monotheism in the context of the Tamiang Malay community.

Studies of local Islamic rituals in Indonesia show that the religious practices of the community are not always present as "pure" textual reproductions, but rather as a praxis that negotiates with local history, social structure, and cosmology. In the context of the archipelago, rites are often a meeting point between religious values, cultural identity, and the arrangement of social relations (Syahrizal et al., 2024; Marzuki, 2011). At the same time, a number of studies have confirmed that rites can also be read as a community mechanism in managing uncertainty, restoring solidarity, and nurturing social resilience in the face of change (Hariadi et al., n.d.; Mardhiah et al., 2024).

However, attention to ritual as a practice that integrates body , sound, and space**,** especially in the form of collective dhikr that moves through the village landscape is still relatively limited. The available literature more often emphasizes the doctrinal dimension or ritual forms centered on formal worship spaces, while folk religious practices that take place within ecological spaces and involve the spatial arrangement of communities are still less thoroughly reviewed. Therefore, Rateb Bejalan is an important case to expand the reading of *lived Islam* in peripheral societies, especially in its relationship with the environment and the ethics of living together (Hasjmy, 2020; Purwooyuliyanto, 2025).

Sociologically, rites can be understood as devices that produce and affirm order. It works through repetition, rules, and collective engagement to form a sense of community, cohesion, and shared identity. In many communities, rites are not just "symbols", but social actions that enable citizen gatherings, form moral discipline, and

organize relationships between individuals in the community (Syahrizal et al., 2024; Marzuki, 2011). When societies face social anxiety, for example, periods that are considered to be prone to rites, provide communal mechanisms to manage fear and restore a sense of security through a mutually understood religious framework (Hariadi et al., n.d.; Mardhiah et al., 2024). In the context of Rateb Bejalan, this dimension is relevant because the ritual is carried out repeatedly at a certain momentum (Safar) and is carried out collectively across the village space. Thus, the rite has the potential to function as a medium for restoring social order: citizens are united by the rhythm of movement, the sound of dhikr, and the experience of the same space.

The human-nature-God triadic framework is important to read how rituals mediate not only vertical (human–God) relationships, but also horizontal (human–other) relationships as well as ecological (human–nature) relationships. In a number of studies, this triadic relationship is understood as a cosmological foundation that places nature as a meaningful living space: a space that is not neutral, but has a moral and spiritual position in social life (Dewi & Suja, 2024; Martanti, 2023). Within this framework, the rite can serve as a "relational structuring practice": it brings ecological ethics to life through symbolic actions that affirm that living spaces (villages, territorial boundaries, trajectories) must be maintained as part of the cosmic order. The Walking Rate can be analyzed through this lens because it takes place in a rural space trajectory, is repeated over three nights, and departs from a local understanding of Safar's vulnerability. This means that "protection" is not only understood personally, but also socially and spatially regarding the safety of shared living spaces.

Zikir in Rateb Bejalan does not stop at the verbal dimension, but is present as an *embodied practice*. The body becomes the primary medium: the rhythm of steps, physical endurance for three nights, the repetition of readings, and group coordination are forms of collective discipline that shape religious experience. At this point, sound (dhikr) and movement (walking) work together to produce a sacred atmosphere, bind collective attention, and present a sense of togetherness. In addition to the body and sound, space also plays an important role. The village trajectory from the entrance to the end of the territory is not just a practical route, but a meaningful space that is traversed as part of a spiritual action. Thus, Rateb Bejalan can be understood as a ritual that builds meaning

through the encounter of body-sound-space in one socio-religious performance (Kamal, 2025; Salman et al., 2025).

In the framework of Islamic anthropology, practices such as Rateb Bejalan can be read as expressions of *lived Islam*, Islam that is lived in real actions and social experiences, not merely carried out as textual obedience (Asad, 1983; Geertz, 1976). This framework helps explain why a rite can still be considered important by the community even though it is debated in more formal religious discourse. Rateb Bejalan shows this dynamic: it refers to the principle of monotheism (a request for protection to Allah SWT) but is manifested in the form of local performance rooted in the historical experience, the social structure of the village, and the cosmology of Safar. Therefore, the analysis is inadequate if it stops only at the label "syncretic" or "magical", but rather it is necessary to place these practices in the meaning that lives within the community, including its social, moral, and ecological functions.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic design, because it seeks to understand *Rateb Bejalan* as a ritual practice whose meaning is formed through collective experience, body performativity, and socio-spatial relations in the community. The research was conducted in Pekan Seruway Village, Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, which is one of the bases of the Tamiang Malay community with Islamic traditions and customs that are still strong in daily life. The unit of analysis of the research is the practice of Rateb Bejalan as a collective rite, which includes ritual actors, stages of implementation, symbols used, and the social and ecological context that surrounds it.

Data was collected through participatory observation**,** in-depth interviews**,** and documentation. Participatory observation was carried out during the three-night ritual to record the procession route, participant formation, rhythm of dhikr, important points on the trajectory, and social interactions that emerged throughout the implementation. In-depth interviews were conducted purposively with 30 informants who were selected based on their involvement and knowledge, including 10 ritual actors, 5 religious leaders, 5 traditional leaders, and 10 residents who witnessed or were directly affected by the implementation of the rite. Documentation includes field notes, track maps, and audio recordings of remembrance, to the extent permitted by the community.

Data analysis was carried out by thematic analysis through the stages of data reduction, coding, categorization, and theme withdrawal. The analysis process is directed at four main clusters, namely: (1) body, dhikr, and collective discipline; (2) ecological space, trajectory, and meaning; (3) monotheism, legitimacy, and divine orientation; and (4) social solidarity and cultural resilience. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation**,** triangulation techniques, and member checking limited to the summary of the main findings. Ethically, this research applies the principle of informed consent, maintains the anonymity of informants upon request, and respects the boundaries of ritual sacredness, especially in parts that are not allowed to be recorded or documented.

Ethnographic Overview of Rateb Walking

In the local understanding of the Tamiang Malay community, the month of Safar is often perceived as a time prone to calamities, diseases, and disturbances. This vulnerability is not understood only as an individual risk, but can spread to the social realm (village peace) and ecological (living space as a place where life takes place together). Therefore, Rateb Bejalan is positioned as a collective effort to ask for the protection of Allah SWT as well as reorganize the sense of communal security.

Rateb Bejalan is run by a group of men, generally those who are considered physically capable and have ritual commitments. In practice, there is a division of roles, at least in the form of: dhikr leaders **(**regulating reading, tempo, and coordination**),** banner bearers, parties who perform the adhan, and members of the ranks (dhikr followers and rhythm guards) involving youth and adults in the village.

Rateb Bejalan is carried out by walking through the village from the entrance to the end of the area. This trajectory can be read as an affirmation of a shared living space: village boundaries, main roads and certain points become not only a physical space, but also a symbolic space where rituals present the meaning of protection and order.

In general, the rites are performed for three consecutive nights on the Wednesday of the last week of Safar. The implementation structure can be written systematically like this (please adjust the field):

1. The initial stage (opening): the gathering of participants at a certain point after the Isha prayer [the initial location at the entrance of the village]**,** the preparation

of the line, the determination of the dhikr leader, and the affirmation of collective intentions.

2. Core stage (dhikr journey): the line moves along the route; dhikr is chanted continuously with a certain tempo; there is rhythmic discipline so that the sound and steps are in harmony.
3. Final stage (closing): return to the end point, closing prayer, and dissolution of the line.

Beyond the spiritual meaning, Rateb Bejalan activates citizens' encounters and renews social bonds through shared experiences. The presence of a collective rhythm and the same trajectory produces a sense of togetherness and cohesion. At the same time, because the ritual takes place in the village space and is interpreted as the protection and "cleansing" of the living space, it contains an ecological-cultural dimension: the environmental space is treated as something that needs to be morally and spiritually protected. With this foundation of theory, method, and ethnographic description, the next discussion section can show more analytically how Rateb Walks: establishing dhikr through body and voice discipline, activating the village space as a spiritual medium and structuring ecological relations, and affirming monotheism as an orientation of meaning and legitimacy of practice.

DISCUSSION

Rateb Walking as a rite that "establishes": discipline, rhythm, and dhikr work on the body

Rateb Bejalan shows that dhikr is not just a verbal practice, but a practice that "works" through the body. In the walking procession, dhikr is produced and maintained through coordination of breath, rhythm of steps, and the harmony of the rows. At this point, the body is not merely a "vessel" for prayer, but a medium of religious experience itself: piety is not only expressed, but is exercised through physical endurance, regularity of movement, and continuous repetition of recitation for three nights. Such a structure reinforces the argument that collective rituals work through a process of *embodiment* that results in religious experience as well as social order. In Durkheim's framework, the coherence of the body and the repetition of the reading can be seen as mechanisms that awaken and renew collective consciousness.

When individuals enter into a common rhythm, through regular steps and repeated dhikr they experience "moral togetherness" as something real, not just an abstract idea. This explains why Rateb Bejalan is not just a personal worship that is done en masse, but a worship that is designed (and experienced) as a communal affair: the safety of the village is understood as a shared responsibility, so that religious actions take a collective form. The social effect of this ordination can be seen in the way the rite forms discipline and a sense of bonding. The line, tempo, and regularity of the route require each participant to adjust to the rhythm of the group; individuality "softens" for the sake of mutual motion stability. This process is not merely technical, but meaningful: the body that adheres to the collective rhythm produces the experience that "order" is a form of worship, and that social order is part of the salvation that is invoked. At this level, Rateb Bejalan presents a religious *habitus*: piety is felt through exercise, repetition, and bodily involvement in social space.

In the field findings, it can be seen that one of the main strengths of Rateb Bejalan lies in its performative composition, namely the rhythmic chanting of dhikr, the light of moving torches, and the banner of monotheism carried in the procession. These three elements form a ritual aesthetic that cannot be understood solely as an element of visual and auditory beauty, but rather as a symbolic device that produces affect, forms a collective inner atmosphere, and directs the orientation of religious meaning.



Figure 1. Preparation for the procession of the procession



Figure 2. The banner of Tauhid used in the procession of the rateb



Figure 3. The procession was carried out by the community around the village by using torches

In Clifford Geertz's perspective, religious symbols as seen in figures 1, 2, and 3 work not only as representations of ideas, but also as a means of forming *moods* and *motivations*, i.e. moods and impulses to act that make a belief system seem real and reasonable to its adherents (Geertz, 1973). In this context, dhikr and salawat that are chanted repeatedly not only bring solemnity, tranquility, and spiritual vigilance, but also mobilize the social involvement of citizens to attend, walk, and take part in communal safety efforts. This dimension is further emphasized by the use of torches in the procession.

In figure 3. In practice, the torch does function as a means of illumination, but symbolically it marks the ritual journey as a form of "sacred movement" that enlivens the village night in an atmosphere of collective worship. This procession can be read through Victor Turner's framework as a form of liminal experience, which is a threshold situation when participants temporarily exit the rhythm of daily life and enter symbolic space-time that is different from the usual routine (Turner, 1969). In such a liminal state, shared engagement in movement, sound, and light allows for the formation of a community, that is, an intense sense of togetherness born of collective participation in sacred experiences. Thus, the light of the torch moving with the line not only marks the course of the procession, but also shows that the sacredness in the Farewell is produced through collective action, not merely fixed attachment to a place. Sacredness is present as a result of the repetition, movement, and involvement of the bodies participating in the ritual.

Meanwhile, the banner is inscribed with the words of monotheism as seen in figure 2. condensing the theological dimension into a visible public sign. It makes monotheism not only an inner belief, but also as a center of symbolic orientation that is visually expressed in social spaces. When banners and torches are carried across the village boundaries, the ritual presents a moving logic of guard: Divine protection is not experienced as an abstraction, but rather as a presence that accompanies the journey and marks the space of shared living. At this point, the aesthetic of Rateb Bejalan can be read as a relational aesthetic that brings together the human body, village space, and divine orientation in a single symbolic action.

However, this reading needs to be complemented by critical analysis so as not to stop at the romanticization of rituals. In Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, ritual practice can be understood as an arena for the formation and reproduction of habitus, which is a disposition that is instilled through the repetition of actions, body regulation, and internalization of meaning that then seems natural to the perpetrator (Bourdieu, 1977). From this point of view, Rateb Bejalan is not only an expression of faith, but also works as a symbolic power mechanism that arranges the way the body moves, the way village space is interpreted, and the way collective identity is formed. Therefore, the aesthetics of this ritual are ambivalent: on the one hand it unifies, brings a sense of security, and nurtures the relationship between man and nature and God; But on the other hand he also affirmed certain symbolic orders, including religious authority and the boundaries of the moral community that were accepted as natural precisely because they were wrapped in a sacred and beautiful form of ritual.

The trajectory of the village as a "spatial text": fencing, combing, and sacribing the living space

From data in the field, it is known that the Rateb Bejalan is carried out on Wednesday of the third week in the month of safar or what the local people call habeh Wednesday, the procession is carried out by walking through the village from the entrance to the end of the area for three consecutive nights (Muntasir, 2024). This pattern is anthropologically important because it shows that the village is not just a setting, but a medium of meaning. Routes that circumnate or "comb" a territory can be read as a form of boundary affirmation: geographical boundaries are activated into moral-spiritual

boundaries. The village becomes a living space that is "re-tied" through dhikr, steps, and symbolic marking.



Figure 4. The chanting of the call to prayer is used as a space for



Figure 5. Moving the torch from the previous village to the next village

In Durkheim's perspective, the procession of the procession creates a separation as well as a bridge between the sacred and the profane. The village road that is daily profane (a place to pass, work, say hello) experiences a lifting of meaning when it is passed in a series of collective dhikr. This shows that Rateb Bejalan does not just move in space, but changes the quality of space: from a routine space to a space that undergoes temporary sacralization. This sacralization did not last forever, but it was enough to renew the "sense of security" and communal order, especially in the perceived vulnerable Safar.

Then the analysis is continued using the concept of liminality Turner helps to read this moving procession as a *liminal* (threshold) situation. The procession of rateb walks shifts participants from the daily social rhythm to the ritual rhythm, which is where people get out of daily habits and enter a transitional state. In liminal conditions, social identities that are usually hierarchical tend to soften; What stands out is the identity as a "fellow participant" who walks at the same pace, towards the same spiritual goal. This situation allows for the emergence of *a community*: a strong sense of equality and unity, which is often an essential social energy for the renewal of solidarity after the ritual is over. Furthermore, in the stage of moving the torch and the monotheistic banner at the village boundary as seen in figure 4. And 5, there was a call to prayer as a form of welcoming the group from the previous village. This emphasizes that the boundary is not a dead line, but a meaningful transition point. The boundary becomes a place where "guards" are

negotiated and symbolically "transferred" from one space to another. That way, space is not understood to be neutral; It has a moral-spiritual structure that is strengthened by collective action.

Safar, vulnerability, and the rearrangement of security: ritual as a social technology in the face of uncertainty In the local understanding of the Tamiang people, the month of Safar is often positioned as a time prone to disasters, disease outbreaks, and various forms of social disturbances. This perception was evident in the results of an in-depth interview with one of the informants. Muntasir stated that, *"in the month of Safar, people believe that there are often balas, so that the rate of walking is carried out to avoid all possibilities of disasters, disease outbreaks, including social diseases"* (Interview with Muntasir, September 12, 2024).

This empirical data shows that Rateb Bejalan is understood by the community not only as a hereditary tradition, but as a form of collective effort in dealing with the perceived threat that increases in the month of Safar. In this case, the vulnerability of the month of Safar should not be read solely as a magical belief, but rather as a cultural language that people use to name experiences of uncertainty, vulnerability, and potential disturbances that are difficult to objectively ascertain, but are perceived in their social lives. In this context, Rateb Bejalan works as a social technology that reorganizes the sense of security. Uncertainty that was originally abstract and anxiety-inducing was translated into a concrete, mutually intelligible ritual structure.

There were deliberations, village cleaning, three-night processions, closing prayers, and feasts. This network transforms situations that initially feel out of control into a more organized social experience. Thus, ritual serves not only as a medium of prayer, but also as a collective device for managing emotions and re-establishing a sense of community control over situations that are considered vulnerable. In Clifford Geertz's framework, ritual can be understood as a system of symbols that organize meaning as well as emotions; The anxiety that arises due to the shadow of reinforcements and disturbances is not simply removed, but is processed into religious tranquility through collective action. At this point, Rateb Bejalan becomes a means of transformation from scattered fear into organized collective action.

The stage of village cleansing before the procession clearly shows how the symbolic and pragmatic dimensions meet in this ritual practice. Cleaning can be

interpreted as purifying the space morally-spiritually, but at the same time it is a real action to take care of the village environment. This means that the living space of the community is not treated as a passive setting for rituals, but as part of a common order that must be cleaned, cared for, and prepared before seeking protection from Allah. Thus, since the preparation stage, Rateb Bejalan has united the religious, ecological, and social dimensions into a series of mutually reinforcing practices. Protection is not only requested through prayer, but also sought through spatial planning and social involvement of citizens.

Rateb Walk is indeed effective in reducing social tensions and giving citizens a common framework to deal with uncertainty, but at the same time it also has the potential to reproduce certain fears. As Safar continues to be framed as a month prone to bullets, the community is not only responding to threats, but also passing on and affirming a certain perspective on danger. In other words, Rateb Walking is not only an answer to anxiety, but also part of the cultural mechanisms that shape what types of anxiety are considered legitimate, when they arise, and how they are supposed to be responded. From this point of view, Rateb Bejalan is not completely neutral, because it helps build a social reality about vulnerability and safety.

The analysis also shows that the structuring of a sense of security through ritual takes place through a specific structure of authority. There are religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community figures who play a role in interpreting the meaning of Safar, determining the ritual implementation, and leading the residents in the procession. This means that Rateb Bejalan is not only an arena of collective faith expression, but also an arena of symbolic authority legitimacy. Those who are considered authority in ritual at the same time gain positions as managers of social anxiety and interpreters of the communal path of salvation. Here it appears that rituals not only unite the community, but also affirm certain power structures within the community.

In addition, structuring a sense of security through Rateb Bejalan is not always synonymous with resolving material sources of vulnerability. Disasters, diseases, and social disturbances actually have broader health, economic, environmental, and social dimensions than ritual alone can answer. Therefore, the Rateb Bejalan can be understood ambivalently: on the one hand, it strengthens solidarity, provides inner peace and restores a sense of collective security; But on the other hand, it also has the potential to make

people feel that the threat has been sufficiently overcome at a symbolic level, even though the structural factors that cause vulnerability may still be ongoing. Thus, Rateb Bejalan is not only a legacy of sacred religious traditions, but also a social practice that actively produces a sense of security, shapes the perception of threats, and negotiates the relationship between religion, community, and uncertainty in everyday life.

Tawhidism as the axis of legitimacy: negotiating "rejecting reinforcements" in the horizon of monotheism

One of the sensitive points in reading Rateb Bejalan is the label "push the bullets" which is sometimes easily misunderstood as a magical practice. This is where monotheism serves as the axis of legitimacy. The presence of the banner of monotheism, dhikr, basmalah, salawat, and azan shows that this ritual (as understood by the perpetrator) is directed to Allah SWT as a source of protection. In other words, salvation is not produced by objects or places, but is invoked through theologically oriented collective prayer. Asad's framework of the "discursive tradition" helps us to read this more carefully. Religious practices are determined not only by the text, but also by the way communities reason, pass on, and negotiate practices within the horizon of their recognized orthodoxy.

In the context of Rateb Bejalan, the symbols of monotheism work as a safeguard of meaning: it affirms a vertical orientation (to Allah) while maintaining the legitimacy of the ritual in the midst of possible criticism. Therefore, rather than rushing to decide whether the practice is "syncretic" or "pure," anthropological analysis is more productive when it traces how communities give monotheism the basis to rituals, as well as what socio-ecological functions they perform. Thus, "resisting reinforcements" in the Rateb Bejalan can be understood not as the production of salvation through forces other than Allah, but as an expression of collective effort, a cultural language to ask for protection, organize order, and restore a sense of security through a legitimate religious device in the eyes of the community.

Ecological-cultural dimension: from village cleansing to sea feasts and the "release" of food waste

The ecological dimension of Rateb Bejalan emerged from the beginning: village cleaning is not just a technical stage, but a practice that affirms that living spaces must be

maintained before being asked for protection. Here the human-environment relationship is not only discussed as an idea, but put into practice in action. This reinforces the argument that the rite can be an ecological-cultural device: it instills discipline, concern, and a moral orientation towards the environment.



Figure 6. The feast after the farewell ended at the seaside

The closing part of the ritual is carried out by holding a feast together by the sea. and the banning of food waste as seen in figure 6, can also be read in the framework of the human–nature–God relationship. The dumping of food waste is not interpreted as an offering, but a symbol of the release of negative energy and the return of food waste to nature (for example, the consumption of marine life). Anthropologically, this act marks the sea as a liminal space and a "release" space: a vast place, located on the edge of a village, and symbolically considered capable of "carrying away" bad things. This shows that nature is not understood as a passive background, but rather as a cosmological partner in an effort to maintain balance.

Rateb Walk as a Lived Islam and Cultural Resilience in the Midst of Modernity

The entire series of Rateb runs starting from deliberation, village cleaning, walking dhikr procession, moving jellyfish, adhan at the village limit, closing feast, all of these things show Rateb Bejalan as a form *of living Islam*. Islam here exists as an experience that is carried out, not merely read: it is established in steps, resonates in dhikr, and takes shape in the management of the village space. That is why Rateb Bejalan remains meaningful even under the pressure of modernity that tends to judge religious

practices from the aspect of doctrinal formality alone. In terms of cultural resilience, this ritual shows the mechanism of maintaining identity: annual repetition, cross-generational involvement, and the strengthening of monotheistic symbols keep the tradition alive. But this resilience does not mean that it is immune to criticism; Instead, it survives because it is able to provide social answers to uncertain situations, namely providing a sense of security, solidarity, and order of meaning while maintaining the orientation of monotheism as the axis of legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

This article affirms that *Rateb Bejalan* is a *lived Islamic* practice that functions not only as a religious expression, but also as a cultural mechanism to produce sacredness, social solidarity, and a sense of communal security. Through this ritual, the Tamiang Malay community arranges the relationship between body, space, emotions, and divine orientation in a living symbolic-performative order. The findings of the study show that the meaning of *Rateb Bejalan* does not lie solely in the recitation of dhikr or its protection purpose, but in the overall ritual work that establishes piety, sanctifies living space, and strengthens social cohesion. In this context, ritual serves as a medium of transformation: vulnerability is processed into order, anxiety becomes religious tranquility, and everyday social isolation is transformed into an experience of moral togetherness. The aesthetics *of Rateb Bejalan* therefore cannot be reduced to the beauty of form, but must be understood as a relational harmony between humans, the environment, and God manifested through movement, sound, discipline, and collective participation.

Nevertheless, this article also shows that *Rateb Bejalan* is not a completely neutral arena. In addition to reinforcing solidarity and communal identity, these rituals simultaneously reproduce role structures, symbolic authority, and certain moral boundaries within society. Therefore, *Rateb Bejalan* needs to be understood more critically as an arena where religion, culture, and power intertwine in shaping the meaning of life together. Thus, the main contribution of this article lies in the affirmation that local-religious rituals are not static remnants of traditions, but social practices that continue to actively produce an order of meaning, a sense of security, and an orientation of communal life in the midst of uncertainty.

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