

# The Influence of Hindu Tradition on Petang Megang Ritual and Its Significance to the Indigenous Muslim Community in Pekanbaru Riau

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the practice of *Petang Megang* tradition on indigenous Muslim Malay people in Pekanbaru Riau in welcoming the holy month of Ramadhan, and to investigate the influence of Hinduism on this annual tradition. *Petang Megang* ritual does not only function as a passed-on tradition, but also reflects the acculturation of Hindu and Islam, social interaction, and community culture. This research is a descriptive study, in which data obtained are presented, analyzed, and explained. This study found that *Petang Megang* tradition reflects a strong relationship between the two beliefs, Hindu and Islam. The relationship can be seen in the similar concepts of purification in *Petang Megang* which is similar to *tirtayatra* in Hindu and *wudhu* (ablution) in Islam. Despite bringing similarity to Hindu tradition, *Petang Megang* serves as a medium of Islamic *dawah* (propagation) where it introduces a cultural practice in its relation to religious event (Ramadan). This study suggests that *Petang Megang* is a symbol of longstanding harmonious co-existence between Hindu and Islam in the region.

**Keywords:** *Islam, Hinduism, Petang Megang, Malay*

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji praktik tradisi Petang Megang pada masyarakat adat Melayu Muslim di Pekanbaru Riau dalam menyambut bulan suci Ramadhan, dan untuk mengetahui pengaruh agama Hindu terhadap tradisi tahunan tersebut. Ritual Petang Megang tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tradisi turun-temurun, tetapi juga mencerminkan akulturasi Hindu dan Islam, interaksi sosial, dan budaya masyarakat. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif, dimana data yang diperoleh disajikan, dianalisis dan diterangkan. Studi ini menemukan bahwa tradisi Petang Megang mencerminkan hubungan yang kuat antara dua kepercayaan yaitu Hindu dan Islam. Hubungan tersebut terlihat pada kesamaan konsep bersuci di Petang Megang yang mirip dengan tirtayatra dalam agama Hindu dan wudhu dalam Islam. Meski memiliki kemiripan dengan tradisi Hindu, Petang Megang tetap berfungsi sebagai media dakwah Islam di mana ia memperkenalkan praktik budaya dalam kaitannya dengan acara keagamaan (Ramadhan). Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa Petang Megang merupakan simbol kerukunan hidup bersama yang telah berlangsung lama antara Hindu dan Islam di wilayah tersebut.*

**Kata kunci:** Islam, Hindu, Petang Megang, Melayu

### **Introduction**

Riau province has been regarded as one of the centers of Malay culture in Southeast Asia, even becomes one of halal tourism destination in Indonesia. Islamic values are seen to be integrated in the people's daily life, including the indigenous Malay Muslim community. The provisions of customs and traditions in Pekanbaru must not conflict with religious law. That is why, traditions that do not conflict with religious teaching are preserved till today. There are also, however, some traditions that are still alive despite the pros and cons. One of them is *Petang Megang* tradition which is held the dawn before Ramadan. In late afternoon, residents take a mass bath in the Siak River in Senapelan sub-district or what is commonly referred to as the 'old town' in Pekanbaru. Surely, there was no prescribed teaching in Islam regarding *Petang Megang*. Therefore, this ritual was criticized by many religious leaders in Pekanbaru. This tradition is considered as

a teaching of Hinduism where people purify themselves in the Ganges River, India. It is considered similar to Makara Sankranti to worship the god Surya in mid-January, to Raksabandha as a strengthening of the bonds of love between each other which is carried out in July-August, and to Vasanta Panchami in January-February as self-purification to welcome spring.

The influence of Islam Indonesia, especially in Pekanbaru in the first millennium happened peacefully during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fajriandhany et al 2020). Once Islam entered and developed, various cultural elements underwent Islamic religious adjustments. There is a proverb in Malay that sounds '*Adat Basandi Syara', Syara' Basandi Kitabullah*' [tradition is based on religion, religion is based on Quran]. After the Sriwijaya Kingdom collapsed, several Malay kingdoms emerged. Among them were Bintan, Temasik, Indragiri, Siak, Pelalawan, Gunung Sahilan, Rambah, Rokan IV Koto, Tambusai, Riau Lingga, and the Kingdom of Kunto Darussalam who played an important role in the development of Islam and culture. Islam became stronger and later united under the name of the Malay Community. Although community in Pekanbaru is estimated to have existed long before the arrival of the major religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, there were no found documents to support this statement. One of the artifacts of this existence is Muara Takus temple which is located in Kampar district. There are still many inscriptions found, but it could not tell the origins of society and of Malay in Pekanbaru.

Petang Megang is not the only ritual gaining criticism; there is also a ritual of *Tepuk Tepung Tawar* [Plain Flour ritual] was also rendered as being influenced by Hinduism (Batubara and Badrun, 2020). This tradition is carried out by Hindus by watering flowers and sprinkling

holy water as a request for salvation to God. The tools and materials used in this tradition only consist of *bertih* and white rice accompanied by incantations by the ritual leader. Despite having a symbolic meaning, this tradition also has social values. However, this does not rule out the possibility that Hindu influence has brought various aspects of its teaching in *Petang Megang* ritual.

This research is aimed to describe the influence of Hindu teachings on *Petang Megang* and the significance of this ritual to Islam for the indigenous Malay Muslim community in Pekanbaru. Further, it seeks to explain if there is evidence of the spread of Hindu teachings that have indeed influenced the culture and customs of the Malay community in the archipelago.

## Literature Review

Malay culture in Nusantara has many historical relics, both tangible and intangible relics. Malay heritage can be traced to their culture including traditions and rituals in local communities and the beliefs held by the society (Suroyo et.al, 2021). One of the traditions of Malay community, particularly in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan is called *Petang Megang*. *Petang Megang* (also called *mandi balimau*, *Balimau Kasai*, *Potang Balimau*, *Potang Mogang*, *Balimau*, *Belangiran*, *Pangir*, *Dugderan* or *Padusan* in Javanese) is a ritual practice of the Malay community in welcoming Ramadan and self-actualization (Bornstein, 2018) of the Malay Muslim community as a symbol of self-cleaning (Moekahar, 2018 ; Suroyo, Putra, & Ibrahim, 2021) . For the locals, this ritual has many meanings and shapes the cultural beliefs of the Malay community. Local people believe that *Petang Megang* is a sign of self-purification which is part of the

culture and beliefs of the Malay community in Pekanbaru, Riau for long time ago. *Petang Megang* ritual has a long history in Malay culture and is related to the expansion of Hinduism throughout the archipelago in Nusantara. This ritual is adapted in the same way as the Hindu *Makar Sankranti* ceremony, which is performed bathing in a river as a form of worship to the gods and goddesses by one using lime and traditional ingredients such as rice, turmeric, *pandan* leaves, and flowers that make the body fragrant as a form of purifying oneself from dirt (Suroyo, Putra, & Ibrahim, 2021) .

Rituals are passed on by ancestors from generation to generation in today's life, including *Petang Megang*. This ritual can be understood from the perspective of cultural and religious studies (Baauto, 2016; Soraya, 2019). In 3102 BC, the influence of Hinduism on Malay culture was seen in *Petang Megang* ritual. From this tradition, there is a Malay-Islamic relationship that can be traced as well as its influence from previous religions (Baharum, et al., 2019). This can be seen in previous studies that describe the role and contribution of Hinduism to civilization in the Malay Archipelago (Abd Rahman, et al., 2021) . Nowadays, *Petang Megang* is considered as contradictory to today's Malay society and the tradition is prohibited, which is based on the premise that ancient people used to include shamans and magic by using lime and *pandan* leaves. Meanwhile, the use of lime actually has many health benefits. Lime is (*limau* in Malay) also said to be able to repel supernatural beings (Mahdini., 2002).

The indigenous Malay Muslims who were already familiar with Hindu-Buddhist teachings were slowly introduced to Islam through trade and cultural activities. The spread of Islam began in coastal villages (by the sea and rivers), which tend to be more tolerant than

those of other areas (Zami, 2018). From a cultural perspective, *Petang Megang* is believed by the indigenous Malay community to have many historical meanings; this custom is thought to have lasted for centuries in Indonesia before the arrival of Islam. Another opinion says that this tradition is related to Islamic practice (Iballa, 2016). Moreover, the Malay community's *Petang Megang* tradition is similar to one of the traditions of the Prophet. This phenomenon is interesting to study by authors, especially in the form of behavior patterns of Islamic society, due to the ritual stems from their perception of *hadith* as one of the guidelines and views of Islam. This is also in line with the development of *hadith* studies which have penetrated the field of appreciation and practice of *hadith* in Islam.

## Method

This study is qualitative employing field research and library research. Data were collected from observations and interviews, as well as documents (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers and others that are deemed necessary to support and represent). The key informants of this research are local Malay Muslims in Pekanbaru who have been performing *Petang Megang* ritual for a long time, and also Malay experts. Direct observations and literature study were also used to gather the data. Data was then analyzed by using historical-philosophical approach, i.e., an attempt to look at a problem from a historical point of view, especially when looking at the recording of the journey of the *Petang Megang* tradition in Malay society. Methods based on socio-cultural phenomena, such as phenomenology and acculturation, were also used. The task of the phenomenological approach is to find or observe the phenomena that occur. In this scenario, three principles apply: (1) something is real; (2) something is

seen; and (3) something is a phenomenon because it is observed accurately. However, point to an unchanging resemblance between what the observer sees and what the observer feels is unavoidable.

## Result and Discussion

*Petang Megang* is a tradition that began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century where a person is required to wash his hair with lime, *kasai* (potpourri), and various other types of flowers on the last day of the month of Sha'ban. *Balimau* is often called *bakasai* (bath with lime). This tradition of *Petang Megang* that has been passed down from generation to generation and is still practiced today, mainly by the people of Pekanbaru and the surrounding districts. This ritual symbolizes the self-cleaning ceremony or mandatory bathing to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. This is done by the indigenous Malay Muslim community as a form of self-purification or cleaning oneself from various impurities, such as sins. It is believed that the month of Ramadan must be welcomed with pure intention and also pure body. In ancient times, there was no soap, tap water and wells as of today, so rivers serve as a place for indigenous Malay muslims to carry out the *Petang Megang* ritual. The lime was believed at that time as a mixture and bath amenities. In addition, *pandan* leaves and local flowers were also used to add fragrance to the body. This can be traced from various sources from interviews which say that in the indigenous Malay community of Pekanbaru, *limau* (lime) is used as a substitute for soap because it can remove oil or sweat from the body.

*Petang Megang* term derives from *Petang* means evening, while *megang* means the time between evening and dusk. In other areas, the term *Petang Megang* is called *mandi balimau*, *mandi* means washing oneself, while *balimau* means lime (Efni, 2017). To welcome the holy

month of Ramadan, *Petang Megang* is performed to cleanse the human body and purify the heart (Moekahar, 2018). Based on the data obtained from the field and interviews as well as documentation, it is said that the first community to perform *Petang Megang* were Riau natives who came from the Pelalawan region. Later on, *balimau bathing* as part of the *Petang Megang* ritual, was also practiced in Batu Belah, Kampar Regency in the 1960s, and the original tradition is thought to have emerged in West Sumatra (Pebrianto, Saputra, & Bakhtiar, 2019) .

*Petang Megang*, like most traditions and ritual in Indonesia, has undergone a shift in meaning and evolved over time. As observed through the ritual tradition of the *Petang Megang*, there have been various changes in terms of the place (e.g., riverbanks) and the materials used. *Petang Megang*, like most traditions, has undergone various changes, such as its purpose and meaning (Fatma & Lukito, 2021). Nowadays, local indigenous Malay muslims in Pekanbaru put more emphasis on the ritual of bathing *balimau* and gatherings to maintain communal bonds other than as self-cleaning activities. Today, *Petang Megang* is more of ceremonial rather than theological with the aim of attracting local tourists to visit Pekanbaru.

### **Hinduism Influence on *Petang Megang***

The indigenous Malay Muslim community has always been known as a society that likes to socialize with people from other ethnics and countries. As a result, many countries flocked to the Malay region especially in Malay Peninsula to establish economic relations. Malays are also known for their friendly, peaceful, polite and welcoming characters. This is the reason of why the interaction made trade in the



Malay region vibrant, including traders from other countries to Pekanbaru.. On their way to Southeast Asia and China, Islamic traders from India, Persia, and Arabia sailed through the Straits of Malacca around the seventh century.

The presence of Hinduism in Indonesia greatly influenced the traditions of indigenous or local people. This can be seen from the construction of temples with their reliefs and carved arches, and the shape of mosques. Local art forms show a strong link between the two cultures, such as the influence of Sanskrit culture as a sacred Hindu language spoken exclusively by Brahmins. Sanskrit can now be seen in the inclusion in Indonesian Malay and Javanese, which effectively brought 'higher civilization' into Indonesian culture. Hinduism influence is also found in the tradition of *Petang Megang* (Rani, 2010).

*Petang Megang* ritual is similar to Hindu rituals namely *Tirtayatra*, as written in the Book of *Sarasamuscaya* 279. The meaning of *Tirtayatra* is very sacred and more divine than *yadnya* (cleaning). *Tirtayatra* does not consider individuals of any position, whether rich or poor, as long as it is based on honest, diligent, and sincere devotion. The concept of *Tirtayatra* is very similar to the *Petang Megang Ritual* in that every individual can perform the *Petang Megang* regardless of social, economic and other status. *Petang Megang* Ritual is also similar to *Makar Sankranti* which is celebrated by Hindus in India (especially in Bengal). Similar to *Petang Megang*, people travel from all over Bengal to cleanse themselves on the Hooghly River near Calcutta. The festival is held in Kurseong, which is located on the altitude of 2458 meters, 51 kilometers from Siliguri and 30 kilometers from Darjeeling (Vepachedu, 2008). The essence of *Makar Sankranti* and *Petang Megang* is similar, namely cleansing the body of past sins to welcome

the holy month of ramadhan (in *Petang Megang*) and god and goddess of Hindu (in *maker sankranti*).



Figure 1. *Tirtayatra* ritual by Balinese Hindu



Figure 2. *Makar Sankranti* ritual by Hindu people in India



Figure 3. *Petang Megang* ritual by Indigenous Malay Muslim in Pekanbaru, Riau

*Petang Megang* is comparable to the Hindu festival of *Makar Sankranti*, which is celebrated by Hindus in India. In Bali, Hindu people also perform a self-purification ritual similar to *Petang*

*Megang*, called *Melasti*. *Melasti* is a *Kawi* term that combines the words *Mala* which means dirt and *Asti* which means to destroy. *Melasti* in this sense is defined as the removal of all kinds of impurities contained in the human body (A. Dewi, Girinata, & Sena, 2018). *Melasti* ceremony has existed and practiced during the Majapahit era, when Java was ruled by Hindus. Since the fall of Majapahit, various Hindu festivals began to fade over time. *Melasti* is mentioned in the *Lontar Sang Hyang Aji Swamandala* as follows:

*“Melasti Ngarani angering prawatek Dewata anganyutaken laraini jagat, papeklesadan kekotoran alam semesta”*.

Meaning: *Melasti* is to increase piety to God, to wash away the sufferings of society, to remove and dirt from the universe. (N. Dewi & Sudarsana, 2017).



Figure. 4. Indigenous Malay muslim in Pekanbaru parade by carrying the properties to do Petang Megang on their head toward the nearest river (Siak River) in Pekanbaru



Figure 5. *Melasti* ritual by Balinese Hindus

Before Islam entered the Malay Peninsula especially in Pekanbaru, the majority of Malays were Hindus. Many ritual and traditions, dress codes and language indicated that Malays have been heavily influenced by Hindu culture. Even after converting to Islam in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Malays retain much of the Indian/Hindu influence in their culture today. Unfortunately, historical texts have been manipulated to deny that Malays were Hindu before being converted to Islam. The widely spread narratives told that the current Malay Muslims are Indian Muslims who were converted to Islam by the Turks and Persians under Mughal rule in India. In this sense, today's Malay rituals, known as local wisdom rituals related to Islam, are actually influenced by Hinduism.

In its practice, *Petang Megang* is a ritual that is associated with Islam. In fact, in ancient Malay, this ritual term was used to worship Lord Vishnu and goddess Lakshmi near the river. It was related to the sun god Surya and the ritual was considered important for spiritual practice for ancient Hindus in Malay culture. The purpose of this ritual in the ancient Hindu Malay era was to give reward or forgiveness for previous transgressions. They also praise the sun in their prayers, wishing themselves success and good luck. The Hindu influence in *Petang Megang* can be seen in the ritual performed in the past, before the arrival of Islam in Pekanbaru area. At that time, *Petang Megang* resembled *Makar Sankranti* in India. This indicates that Hindus arrived in Southeast Asia and influenced Malay culture before the arrival of Islam.

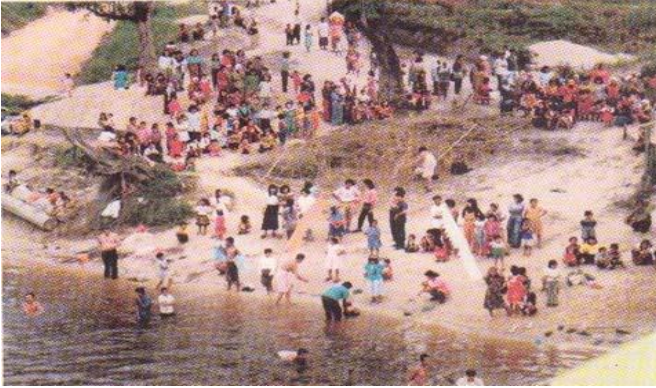


Figure 6. *Petang Megang* ritual by Riau Province in 1989

### **The significance of *Petang Megang* for Indigenous Malay community**

Initially immersed in animism, Indonesians eventually slowly accepted Hindu and Islamic beliefs before being colonized and exposed to Western cultural influences. While it is undeniable that these chains of cultural influences played a role in the formation of Indonesian and Malay cultural civilizations (*Petang Megang*), the authors' initial observations suggest that the different roles and contributions of Islam and Hinduism in Indonesia have triggered more due to other cultural forces. *Bumi Melayu* is an area that was influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism which is also called *Suvarnabhumi* means land of Gold. The entrance of Islam was able to turn this area into a center for the development of Islam. Therefore, it can be said that the birth of Malay civilization coincided with the spread of Islam throughout the Malay Peninsula.

Islam developed in the Malay world for a long time and through many events. The relationship between Islam and Malay attracted the attention of outsiders, and jealousy emerged for the prosperity of Muslims, prompting Europeans to attack the archipelago in search of

natural resources (Roza, 2014). The Hindu caste system influenced the social order of the people of the archipelago before the entrance of Islam. The meeting of the two civilizations led to the formation of the *Petang Megang* Ritual entity which was heavily influenced by Islamic and Malay cultural norms. *Petang Megang* and Malay culture appeared in arts as a result of a blend of Malay-Muslim civilization and Hinduism (Akmal, 2018). Initially, *Petang Megang* was just a Malay custom that has been passed down from generation to generation. In essence, *Petang Megang* was performed to cleanse oneself of all negative things and feelings such as grief, jealousy, envy, usury, greed, and others. By doing so, their spirituality is being ready to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. With this timing related to Ramadan, the tradition of *Petang Megang* was easily associated as Islamic, although this view was not accurate, as the practice was not following any practice by Prophet Muhammad and his closest companions. No evidence that mentions cleansing ritual (*Petang Megang*) by Prophet Muhammad in either Quran or *hadith*. However, many indigenous Malay Muslim communities stated that *Petang Megang* is “*Adat bersandi Syara’, Syara; bersandi kitabullah*” means a culture that is based on Islamic *sharia*, and the *sharia* is based on the Quran and *hadith*.

### ***Petang Megang as Da'wah in Islam***

With such belief that *Petang Megang* is a localized religious practice which could be sourced from Quran and *hadith*. Malay Muslims’ consider *Petang Megang* ritual as a medium of *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) and *da'wah* is in accordance to Islamic main sources of law namely Quran and *hadith*. The obligation to

preach Islam with good deeds and setting a good example, as was done by the Prophet Muhammad, is one of the musts in building a good society. In this situation, the history of the *Petang Megang* or *Balimau bath* is actually very similar to what the Prophet Muhammad taught, as suggested by this ayah:

تَبِيعًا لِّمَنْكَرٍ عَنِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ يَالْعَرُوفِيًّا مُرُونَ الْخَيْرِ إِلَى يَدِّ عَوْنِ أُمَّةٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَتَكُنَّ  
الْمُفْلِحُونَ هُمُ وَأَوْلَادُ

" And let there be among you a group of people who call to good, enjoin the right and forbid what is evil, they are the lucky ones " (Surah Ali Imran (3): 53)

*Petang Megang* is a Malay practice to welcome Ramadan. This is based on the statement that the Malay community considers a *hadith*. The following is a *hadith*:

مَنْفَرِحِدُ خَوْلِرٍ مَّضَاتَحَرَ مَا لِلْهَجَسَدِ هُعَلَا النَّيْرَانِ

"Whoever is relieved, welcomes the presence of the month of Ramadan, surely Allah will forbid his body from any hell."

The above statement is a *hadith* in the *kitab* (book) of Durratun Naṣiḥn. The Malays use this *hadith* as the basis for the ritual practice of the *Petang Megang* or *Mandi Balimau*. This ritual was not found in the books of main *hadith* such as Shahih Bukhari and Muslim. Durratun Naṣiḥn was the only recorded source, hence the degree of the *hadith* is weak. This *hadith*, however, is well known among Malay people. Purification with *mandi wajib* (big bath) is compulsory for Muslims when they have an intercourse and/or they (especially men) experienced a sexual dream. It is mentioned in a *hadith* that:

"Ibn Umar RA said: Rasulullah PBUH said: *Idzaltaqal Khitanani waghaba tilhasyafatu, faqadanzala au lam yunzil* (if

*two genitals meet and enter at the end of the genitals, then it is obligatory to take a bath, whether semen comes out or not"*(HR Aththabrani). Said: *If a person wakes up from sleep and sees wetness and does not feel the dream of ihtilam, then he should take a bath, and if ihtilam (dream of having intercourse) but there is no wetness, then he is not obliged to take a bath.* (R. Annas' I Ibn Majah).

Related to the principle of Islamic teachings about self-purification, purification of the soul can be done in several forms, including prayer, *dhikr*, and good deeds. Doing good to anyone is one of the soul purification methods in Islam. For example, Allah obliges all Muslims to pray (*salah*) five times a day because it is the pillar of their religion as well as the support or basis of their faith (Mursyid & Yusuf, 2021).

Indigenous Malay muslims in Pekanbaru claim that *Petang Megang* ritual is based on *syara'* in a way that the ritual itself adapt the Islamic law of self-purification to welcome the holy Ramadan. Even though the Prophet Muhammad had never taught kind of this ritual, many Malay Muslims take the positive values of *Petang Megang* ritual (i.e. as a medium of da'wah) and drop the negatives of this ritual (e.g., bathing with opposite gender).

### **Hinduism and Islam acculturation in *Petang Megang***

The tradition or ritual of *Petang Megang* has many historical meanings, especially if Islamic da'wah in Riau Province which is nuanced by Islamic faith through local wisdom. This is because this tradition is thought to have existed in Indonesia for centuries, since the arrival of Islam. In addition, this tradition is thought to be related to Islamic principles, In addition to bathing in the river with lime which is considered to purify the body, this ritual is also used to increase the



sense of brotherhood among Muslims by visiting each other and apologizing (Mawarti, 2020).

The current understanding of the Indigenous Malay Muslim community about the *Petang Megang ritual*, especially acculturation, only occurs at this time. Acculturation is part of the life of the Indonesian people, it does not happen suddenly but through a long historical process. Long before the western society used the term ‘acculturation’, Indonesian people have lived with a very rich cultural acculturation which includes ethnicity, language, customs, religion, and so on. This cultural acculturation is a gift for the people of Indonesia, but if it is not addressed properly it has the potential to turn into conflict (Suryana, 2017).

Hinduism and Islam are two prominent cultures in the Malay world and have attracted the attention of many researchers. The role and contribution of these two civilizations in the evolution of civilization in the *Petang Megang* (Rani, 2005). Hinduism and the sizable role of Islam in Malay culture especially *Petang Megang* have attracted the interest of Western researchers, most of whom compare the degree of influence of the two cultures. The Malays lived in a world rich in mythology before Islam came. Islam can solve problems that the previous Malay beliefs could not solve. The understanding in the *Petang Megang Ritual* does not only contain Islamic values, but also adhering to Islamic rules. They (indigenous Muslims of Pekanbaru) are also obliged to realize Islamic ideology through cultural events such as *Petang Megang*. There are certain religious communities who claim that the ritual of *Petang Megang* is prohibited due to misunderstanding of religious values, *Petang Megang* is a Hindu tradition that has been assimilated with Islamic culture. The entry of Islam in the archipelago

did not always erase long-standing traditions, but repackaged them with Islamic principles. Today, Malays celebrate *Petang Megang* to welcome the holy month of Ramadan, similar to *Makar Sankranti* in Hinduism.

As a result of this situation, the Malays who had accepted the teachings of Islam also changed their cultural foundation. The process of acculturation and absorption of Islamic ideals and Malay culture occurred as a result of the meeting and interaction between Islam and Malay culture. Many people believe that Malay is the same as Islam. This is because the popular proverb states that "*adat basanding syara', syara' basanding Kitabullah*" implies that the Malay language is an operation of Islamic ideals against Malay culture. The spread of Islam throughout the Malay world has resulted in significant changes in the views of the population, including their value systems, ways of life and worldviews. This shift is significant because it frees Malays from the limitations of mythology and frees them from Hinduism and Buddhism that previously dominated their thinking (Arsyad, 2019). However, Islam and Malay are a unity that cannot be separated. Malays have been associated with Islam, leading to the conclusion that Malays, like Arabs, are all Muslims (Herlina, 2014) ; (Muhsinin, 2019) .

## Conclusion

The ritual of *Petang Megang* showcases a cultural acculturation of Hinduism and Islam, which has a significant impact on the Pekanbaru Malay community. *Petang Megang* ritual has a long and well-known history in Malay culture, starting from the spread of Hinduism in the archipelago. This ritual is adapted in the same way as the Hindu Makara Sankranti ceremony, which involves bathing in a river for a

certain period of time to worship gods and goddesses while using traditional ingredients such as rice, turmeric, *pandan* leaves, flowers, or other ingredients. *Petang Megang* is similar to *tirtayatra*, which is very sacred and more profound than the purification of *yadnya*, according to the Book of Sarasamuscaya 279. Hindus in Bali carry out similar self-purification ritual, one of which is the *Melasti ceremony*, aimed at removing all kinds of impurities contained in the human body.

*Petang Megang* is a symbol of self-purification, which is present in both Hindu and Islam religions. While this ritual was used to be understood as purely religious practice, as the time turns, it is a cultural event. Before being colonized and influenced by Western culture, Indonesians chose to adopt Hindu and Islamic cultural and religious teachings after being immersed in animism. Although it is evident that the chain of cultural influences influenced the formation of Indonesian and Malay cultures, it also cannot be denied that the order of these cultural influences influenced the formation of Indonesian and Malay cultures as shown in *Petang Megang*. For a long time and through various events, Islam flourished throughout the Malay world.

However, the influence of Hinduism in the *Petang Megang ritual* has a significant impact on Malay culture which has been influenced by Islam. This may have had a positive impact on both the influence of Islam on Malay culture and the influence of Hinduism on Malay culture. Maintaining and caring for the heritage of the *Petang Megang* or *Balimau Kasai* could imply in maintaining harmony between past and present, between Hinduism and Islam, between tradition and present life values. The cultural and spiritual significance of this ritual needs to be promoted to the society, especially to young people so that

the awareness of historical influence as well as the impact on society maintenance could be achieved. The legacy of the *Petang Megang* or *Balimau Kasai* can continue to become a living tradition with real local wisdom.

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