

Semiotic Analysis: Religious Values of “Batammat Kaji” In The Series of Traditional Malay Marriages in Asahan District

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the symbolic meaning and religious values contained in the “Batammat Kaji” ritual and how these values are communicated through symbols and ritual interactions. This research uses a qualitative approach with semiotic analysis methods. Data was obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation studies. The research results revealed that the “Batammat Kaji” ritual contains symbols that represent the teachings of the Islamic religion and the beliefs of the local Malay community. The verbal and non-verbal communication processes that occur during rituals function to build social bonds, strengthen Malay cultural identity, and convey religious messages. Religious values, such as faith, piety and spirituality, are strongly integrated into every stage and element of the ritual, reflecting the efforts of Malay society to harmonize cultural traditions and Islamic religious teachings. The conclusion of this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the religious values contained in the “Batammat Kaji” tradition and how these values are communicated through symbols and ritual interactions by the Malay community in Asahan Regency. These findings can contribute to Malay cultural studies, cross-cultural communication studies, and understanding of the integration of religion and tradition in society.

Keywords: Batammat Kaji, Malay, Semiotic Analysis.

A. INTRODUCTION

The cultural transformation that occurs is the result of thinking that produces various habits, values, social rules and binding norms (Dalimunthe, 2022). This view is in line with the concept expressed by Kango (2015) which states that cultural change originates from a process of thought and reflection which leads to the evolution of habits, values, social rules and norms in society (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Dalimunthe et al., 2020).

Individual or group thinking plays a key role in creating cultural change. When new ideas or innovative thinking emerge, they can change the way society views and interacts with the world around it. This process then influences the formation of new habits, the values that are upheld, the social rules that are followed, and the norms that guide everyday life (Sikumbang et al., 2024). This phenomenon occurs because a wide scale without restrictions on user quotas, space and time allows people all over the world to share information instantly via various platforms. This cross-border interaction allows the adoption and adaptation of new cultural elements from different parts of the world. As a result, complex cultural mixing occurs and the birth of new cultures which often reflect a synthesis of various traditions and influences (Estuningtyas, 2018; Indainanto et al., 2023). The impact of globalization and rapid world connectivity has had a significant influence on the cultural entities embraced by modern society. In this context, modern society tends to follow rapidly developing trends, both in terms of lifestyle, fashion, entertainment, technology and other fields. The presence of social media and information technology accelerates the spread of trends and popular culture from one place to another quickly (Ritonga et al., 2023).

In their study, Sholichah et al. (2023) emphasize that in the era of globalization, modern society is experiencing a significant cultural transformation due to the rapid and widespread spread of cultural ideas, values and practices. This phenomenon creates a new culture which is a synthesis between local culture and global influences (Fauzan et al., 2024). As a result, modern societies are often open to the adoption of new cultural elements, which can result in the creation of cultural synthesis or even greater cultural change (Jadidah et al., 2023).

This research focuses on one of the community cultures in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, known as "Batammat Kaji" which is specifically practiced as an obligatory Malay traditional ceremony. "Batammat Kaji" is a Malay traditional tradition with a sharia pattern, namely the khatam of the Koran whose practice covers all traditional events. In terms of implementation, "Batammat Kaji" is identified symbolically as a moral message that interprets Islamic values. Essentially, "Batammat Kaji" was created with the aim of raising individual awareness of the urgency of Tawheed in achieving a life blessed by Allah SWT.

"Batammat Kaji" is also an important part of the series of Malay traditional wedding ceremonies in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, because its implementation tends to be religious with religious values embedded (Aly et al., 2023). This reflects how tradition and religion are intertwined in the lives of the Malay people, strengthening their cultural identity and spirituality. Through "Batammat Kaji", values such as purity, cleanliness and piety are instilled in the bridal couple, while emphasizing the importance of living a domestic life based on the teachings of the Islamic religion.

Therefore, this research aims to examine in depth the symbolic meaning and religious values contained in the "Batammat Kaji" ritual, as well as analyze how these values are communicated through symbols and ritual interactions by the Malay community in Asahan Regency. It is hoped that this research can provide a deeper understanding of the integration between Malay cultural traditions and Islamic religious teachings in the context of traditional marriage. Apart from that, this study also contributes to the understanding of cross-cultural communication, especially in studying how religious values are represented and transmitted through ritual practices in Malay society (. It is hoped that the results of this research can enrich the literature regarding Malay cultural studies and cross-cultural communication.

This results in greater exposure to foreign cultures and creates pressure for traditional cultures to adapt or even disappear under the influence of more dominant cultures. The impact of foreign cultural intervention has given rise to debate about the importance of preserving local cultural heritage in facing the challenges of globalization and modernization (Rahmah, 2021). Nur et al. (2024) in their research stated that wide-scale societal connectivity in new media has caused foreign culture to become a dominant trend among society. The impact of this trend is that the essence of traditional culture is fading because foreign culture is more accessible and more attractive to many individuals (Mailin et al., 2023).

This highlights the importance of not only physically preserving traditional cultural practices, but also promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage as an important part of a society's identity and diversity (Sanjaya, 2022). In this study, the researcher observed that "Batammat Kaji" contains religious values that need to be studied through semiotic analysis to examine these values in depth. Through a semiotic approach, the symbols contained in "Batammat Kaji" are analyzed to reveal the hidden meaning behind the ritual or practice (Dalimunthe & Ginting, 2023). This analysis focuses on the signs and symbols in "Batammat Kaji", which can include language, movements, objects and certain rituals.

By understanding these signs explicitly, researchers attempt to decipher the religious messages contained, so that the deeper and more complex meaning of this tradition can be

understood more clearly and comprehensively. Based on this focus and identification, the researcher determined the research with the title Semiotic Analysis: "Batammat Kaji" Religious Values in the Series of Malay Traditional Marriages in Asahan Regency.

B. METHODS

This research applies a qualitative descriptive approach to explore, analyze and describe cultural phenomena related to the "Batammat Kaji" tradition in Malay wedding ceremonies in Asahan Regency. Descriptive methods allow researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the practice, as well as capture the nuances and cultural context surrounding it. By adopting a qualitative approach, this research focuses on direct observation and content analysis to explore various aspects of the "Batammat Kaji" tradition and its significance in the context of Malay marriages (Chatra et al., 2023; Creswell, 2013; Patilima, 2011). Researchers used participatory observation to respond to the complexity and diversity in the implementation of the "Batammat Kaji" tradition. This approach allows researchers to be directly involved in the cultural activities being observed, while maintaining an objective attitude in the analysis process. By documenting participants' experiences and interpretations, this research aims to present an in-depth and varied picture of the "Batammat Kaji" tradition (Moleong, 2018; Salam, 2023). This research was conducted in Asahan Regency, a region located in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The reason for choosing this research location was because Asahan Regency is famous for its diverse Malay culture and rich traditions, including the "Batammat Kaji" tradition in Malay wedding ceremonies. By being located in this region, the research had direct access to the communities that practice these traditions, allowing researchers to gain in-depth insight into the implementation and cultural meanings associated with marriage traditions in these environments. Research informants are a series of individuals determined by researchers with the assumption that these individuals have the capacity to provide the information needed in the research context. The technique for determining informants in this research uses a purposive technique, where researchers select informants based on certain criteria (Creswell, 2013; Moleong, 2005; Sugiyono, 2018). There were seven informants in this study.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The "Batammat Kaji" ritual in Asahan Regency is a series of activities full of religious symbols and meaning, reflecting Islamic values and the beliefs of the local Malay community. This activity involves various elements, each of which has its own meaning and function, contributing to the sacredness and moral message of this ritual. For example, the flowers used in this ritual symbolize beauty and purity. Flowers are often considered a

symbol of natural beauty bestowed by God, depicting the purity and beauty expected in a marriage relationship

Apart from flowers, cloth also plays an important role in the “Batammat Kaji” ritual. Cloth is often used to cover and protect, which symbolically depicts protection and purity in married life. In the context of marriage, this cloth can be interpreted as the protection given by the husband to his wife, as well as a shared commitment to maintain the purity and honor of their household. The use of cloth in this ritual reminds married couples of the importance of maintaining these values in their daily lives.

Other ritual equipment, such as white sticky rice and free-range chicken, also have deep meaning in the context of “Batammat Kaji”. White sticky rice, for example, is often associated with purity and abundance. The color white itself symbolizes purity, while sticky rice, which is a staple food, depicts the abundance and prosperity expected in a new household. The free-range chicken, as a symbol of food sources and daily life, emphasizes the importance of independence and the ability to provide for the family's needs.

All elements involved in the “Batammat Kaji” ritual work together to convey deep spiritual and moral messages. This ritual not only functions as a religious ceremony, but also as a means of strengthening social and spiritual ties within the community. Through the use of these symbols, the Malay people in Asahan Regency emphasize the importance of purity, protection, prosperity and abundance in married life.

The "Batammat Kaji" ritual in Asahan Regency is an example that is rich in symbolism and meaning in the context of Malay culture. This ritual is not just a series of activities, but a ritual communication that binds society in long-agreed rules and patterns. In this ritual, each element has a deep meaning and is carefully arranged to convey messages about purity and commitment in marriage.

Verbally, this ritual includes reading the Koran and prayers which not only present a spiritual dimension but also actualize important religious values in the life of Malay society. Non-verbal interactions such as the arrangement of Balai, the use of white sticky rice, free-range chickens, peak flowers, and merawal flags are not just decorative elements, but symbols that contain deep symbolic values. White sticky rice, for example, symbolizes fertility and prosperity, while free-range chicken symbolizes purity and authenticity.

This ritual is also a collective celebration that strengthens the cultural identity of the Malay people. Through the use of these symbols, ritual participants not only celebrate important moments in their personal lives but also affirm their cultural heritage. The values of togetherness, solidarity and social harmony are reflected in every aspect of this ritual,

creating strong social bonds between communities.

The "Batammat Kaji" ritual in Asahan Regency is a celebration rich in religious and cultural values. In essence, this ritual does not just commemorate a wedding in the Malay tradition, but also illustrates how the local community deeply integrates Islamic teachings in every aspect. One of the central elements of this ritual is the Khatam Al-Quran, which symbolizes a deep spiritual commitment in the marriage bond. Khatam Al-Quran is not only a ritual symbol, but also shows the importance of faith and piety in starting a new married life. Semiotic analysis of religious values in a series of traditional Malay weddings in Asahan Regency, known as "Batammat Kaji", displays the complexity of the symbols and meanings contained in each element of this tradition. In this tradition, symbols such as Khatam Al-Quran, Improve Balai, white sticky rice, free-range chicken, peak flower, and merawal flag become embodiments of the religious, cultural, and social values that are upheld by the community.

Khatam Al-Quran, as the center of tradition, reflects dedication and perseverance in studying the teachings of the Islamic religion, while Tinggi Balai signifies aspirations for success and glory in life as well as the distribution of power and responsibility in society. White sticky rice, free-range chicken, and peak flowers, as symbols of purity, prosperity, and success, depict positive values such as harmony, loyalty, and simplicity in marriage. The merawal flag, with its simplicity, represents purity of heart and moral values in social life, while the white color in symbols such as the merawal flag and the crest flower shows purity of heart and inner cleanliness. All of these symbols form a complex network of meanings in the "Batammat Kaji" tradition, which as a whole depicts seriousness in living life based on religious and cultural values. The role of the Koranic Khatam in this tradition highlights the importance of religious knowledge and the responsibility to teach it to others, while other symbols provide a deeper understanding of harmony, purity and blessings in traditional Malay marriages. Through semiotic analysis, it can be understood that "Batammat Kaji" is not only a series of formal rituals, but also a powerful means of strengthening the cultural and spiritual identity of the Asahan people.

The symbols in this tradition carry deep meanings, which form the foundation of the values upheld by society. Khatam Al-Quran, as the center of tradition, creates close ties between community members and strengthens social and religious relationships within the community. Improve Balai, white sticky rice, free-range chicken, peak flower, and mewal flag, each conveying a message about harmony, purity, and blessings in marriage. Through active participation in the "Batammat Kaji" tradition, people can deepen their understanding

of these symbols and the values contained in them. This helps enrich spiritual experiences and strengthen people's collective identity, while also strengthening social ties within communities. Thus, the semiotic analysis of "Batimmat Kaji" reveals the depth of meaning and complexity of the religious values that underlie traditional Malay marriages in Asahan Regency.

This is in line with the view of Roibin (2019) who says that religion provides a basis for human action (pattern for behavior), which becomes the direction for human behavior. Religion is also a pattern of human behavior, which is the result of human thoughts, feelings and desires which are sometimes influenced by mystical forces. This view emphasizes the religious value contained in the Battamat Kaji tradition as an aspect that implies the context of spirituality or the urgency of religion in society.

Religious values are values related to the concept of religious life or religious concepts which include the bond or relationship between humans and God. Religious values are also related to life in the world as well as other social and cultural aspects (Ritonga et al., 2024). Apart from that, religious values also have a close connection with the afterlife which is mysterious and unpredictable from human perspective. As a source of value systems, religion provides guidance, guidance and encouragement to humans to solve their life problems in various fields such as religious, political, economic, social, cultural and military sciences. Through religion, patterns of motivation, life goals and human behavior are formed that lead to the pleasure of Allah (morals) (Ahmadi, 1994).

This is in line with Battamat Kaji which symbolizes harmony between religious, cultural and social values in the context of Malay traditional marriages in Asahan Regency. In this tradition, symbols such as Khatam Al-Quran, Tinggi Balai, white sticky rice, native chicken, peak flower, and merawal flag are not only part of formal ceremonies, but also imply deep meanings related to religious values.

Thus, through the "Batimmat Kaji" tradition, the Asahan people not only carry out traditional Malay wedding ceremonies, but also strengthen their cultural and spiritual identity. This tradition is not only a forum for strengthening social relations within the community, but also a medium for deepening understanding of the religious values believed in by the community. In line with Finanti et al. (2021), issues of human life and existence can be divided as follows: (1) Human relationship with God; (2) Human relations with humans; (3) Human relationship with oneself.

Semiotic analysis of "Batimmat Kaji" in traditional Malay weddings in Asahan Regency also illustrates the role of symbols in building a relationship between humans and

God. The practice of Khatam Al-Quran, as an expression of dedication and respect for the teachings of the Islamic religion, shows the importance of spiritual connection in everyday life. Other symbols such as Tinggi Balai, white sticky rice, native chicken, peak flower, and merawal flag reflect the presence of God in every aspect of life, both in terms of success, purity, and blessings.

In the context of marriage, these symbols remind that God's presence is at the heart of human relationships, and that a holy and blessed marriage is the result of a strong spiritual bond. This is in line with Maimun (2010), the value of worship can be seen from two aspects, namely the inner attitude that recognizes oneself as a servant of God, and its manifestation in the form of words and actions. The value of worship does not only include moral and ethical aspects, but also takes into account aspects of truth from a theological perspective. In other words, worshiping God is not only considered good, but also theologically correct.

Apart from that, semiotic analysis also highlights how "Batammat Kaji" is a tool to strengthen the cultural and spiritual identity of the Malay community in Asahan Regency. Through participation in these traditions, people not only appreciate their cultural heritage, but also strengthen their beliefs and commitment to the religious and cultural values they hold dear. Thus, a semiotic analysis of "Batammat Kaji" in Malay traditional weddings in Asahan Regency not only reveals the meaning of symbols in a religious and cultural context, but also highlights the important role of this tradition in strengthening human relationships with God, strengthening cultural identity, and strengthening social ties in society. When viewed from the communication aspect, Battamat Kaji emphasizes symbols as a means of strengthening values in society as a whole, by considering the communication elements found in prophetic teachings as an integral part of an ongoing communication process as per the view of Faridah et al. (2023).

The feeling or affection aspect of communication influences social interactions and the dynamics of relationships between individuals. Clear emotional expression can help strengthen emotional bonds between individuals, while misunderstandings in capturing or interpreting affection can disrupt the relationship. Therefore, it is important for communicators to be sensitive to other people's feelings and emotional expressions, as well as to communicate their own feelings clearly and openly (Mulyana, 2015).

Affection also plays an important role in influencing the effectiveness of communication in professional contexts, such as in business meetings or negotiations. Appropriate emotional expression can help build trust, motivate cooperation, and facilitate informed decision making. On the other hand, errors in capturing or interpreting affection can result in

detrimental conflicts or disagreements (Arifin, 1994).

Affection also plays a role in forming a communication culture in a group or organization. The way individuals express and respond to emotions can influence the communication norms that develop in that environment. For example, cultures that encourage the open expression of emotions may tend to be more open to honest and meaningful discussions, while cultures that suppress the expression of emotions may create tension or discomfort in interactions (Kriyantono, 2016).

This underlies the symbolic communication aspect in Battamat Kaji, namely the traditional Malay wedding tradition in Asahan Regency. In this tradition, symbols such as Khatam Al-Quran, Improve Balai, white sticky rice, free-range chicken, peak flower, and merawal flag act as communication media that strengthen values in society. These symbols not only contain religious and cultural meaning, but also convey emotional messages that deepen the bonds between individuals and communities. In the context of communication, these symbols become language that expresses the values upheld by the Malay community in Asahan Regency and facilitates social interaction and strengthens emotional ties between individuals in the community.

Religious Values Contained in the "Batammat Kaji" Tradition in the Series of Malay Traditional Weddings in Asahan Regency

The Battamat Kaji tradition in Asahan Regency is part of local wisdom which is rich in religious and cultural values. When held during a wedding ceremony, this tradition plays an important role in strengthening the bond between the two married parties. Khatam Al-Quran is a practice in Battamat Kaji, where a person or group of people completes the recitation of the Al-Quran from beginning to end. This is done as a form of respect and dedication to the holy books in the Islamic religion. The process of Khatam Al-Quran usually involves reading it together by family, friends and members of the local community. In the context of weddings in Asahan Regency, Khatam Al-Quran is held as part of a series of wedding events to provide blessings and purity for couples who are getting married. This is also considered an attempt to ask for mercy and protection from Allah SWT for the newly formed marriage. This tradition not only reflects respect for religion and culture, but also strengthens social bonds and togetherness in the community. Through Khatam Al-Quran, the people of Asahan Regency unite themselves in prayer and hope for happiness and success for married couples.

In wedding ceremonies, Battamat Kaji which is patterned after the Khatam Koran has

a broader and deeper meaning. Apart from being an expression of gratitude for the ability to read the Koran, this tradition also reflects gratitude to the teachers who have taught them the Koran. These teachers are respected as spiritual leaders who guide them in understanding and living the teachings of the Koran. Apart from that, Battamat Kaji is also a reminder of the importance of the Koran as a guide and source of guidance in building a household that is *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* (a household that is harmonious, full of affection and full of grace). By bringing the Koran as the main focus in the wedding ceremony, the married couple expressed their hope to receive blessings and guidance from Allah SWT in every step of their married life journey. In this context, Khatam Al-Quran is not just a formal ritual, but is also a moment full of spiritual meaning for married couples and the surrounding community. Through this tradition, they recognize that the Koran is not only a holy book to read, but also as a source of inspiration and guidance in living their daily lives, including in carrying out marriages.

Battamat Kaji in the wedding tradition in Asahan Regency contains deep meaning and is full of Malay cultural symbolism. Increasing the Hall higher or peaking represents aspirations for success and glory in life, depicting the spirit to continue to improve oneself and reach the peak of achievement. White sticky rice (*pulut*) symbolizes fertility and nobility, while the sticky nature of sticky rice reflects closeness in the relationship with God and eternity in the household in the future. Yellow spiced free-range chicken is interpreted as a pleasure given by Allah, with free-range chicken being a special dish for Malays, signifying the blessings and abundance given by Him. The flower crest that is Hall's main attraction symbolizes success and joy, while the boiled egg in the nest depicts patience and simplicity, teaching the importance of waiting patiently for meaningful results.

It can be concluded that the religious value of "Batammak Kaji" in Malay traditional marriages in Asahan Regency includes a combination of religious, cultural and social values. The Khatam Koran is at the center of this tradition, strengthening the bond between the two married parties and involving the community in joint prayer for the success and blessings of the marriage. In Asahan Regency, symbols such as *Tinggi Balai*, white sticky rice, yellow spiced free-range chicken, and the *Merawal Flag* are not just decorative elements at weddings, but also carry a deep meaning. They not only decorate weddings, but also teach fundamental values for the local community.

Upgrade Balai, for example, symbolizes purity and togetherness, reminding that marriage is a sacred bond that requires the cooperation and support of family and community. White sticky rice, with its simplicity, teaches patience and fortitude in facing life's journey

full of twists and turns. The yellow spiced village chicken reflects respect for local traditions and wisdom, while the Merawal Bendera reminds of the importance of respecting human diversity and maintaining unity in diversity.

This tradition is not just a series of rituals, but also a powerful means of strengthening the cultural and spiritual identity of the Asahan people. By preserving and passing on these traditions to future generations, they not only maintain their cultural roots, but also fill their lives with valuable values. In weddings in Asahan Regency, these symbols are not only an integral part of the ceremony, but also become the guardians and custodians of a rich and valuable heritage for the survival of local culture.

Symbolic Meaning of the "Batammat Kaji" Tradition in the Local Malay Cultural Context

Balai in Malay society is not just a physical structure, but a complex symbol that reflects social hierarchy, power and collective responsibility. With various levels representing social standing, the hall is a clear marker of the structure of power and influence in society. Starting from the nine-story hall that symbolizes the highest authority to the three-story hall that reflects the common people, each level of the hall shows the distribution of power and responsibility within the community. This symbolism also highlights the importance of people's participation and involvement in decision-making and policy implementation, affirming the principles of justice and interdependence in traditional Malay society.

Balai is not only a physical structure, but also a symbol that contains cultural values, value systems and complex social relationships in Malay society, and plays an important role in strengthening the myth about the division of power and responsibility in society. In the Malay community in Asahan Regency, white sticky rice is not just a food, but a symbol full of social and cultural meaning. As a symbol of fertility, purity and prosperity, white sticky rice depicts positive concepts such as harmony and loyalty. Its sticky nature reflects the idea of attachment in human relationships and spiritual connection with God. In a household context, white sticky rice is a symbol of the close bond between a husband and wife. Thus, white sticky rice is not only rice that is sticky and white when cooked, but also a symbol of goodness, eternity and sustainable spirituality.

Free-range chicken is not only a source of food but also a symbol that reflects the depth of cultural and spiritual meaning for the Malay people. In wedding ceremonies, his presence not only strengthens the bond between the bride and groom but also depicts

traditional values such as togetherness, hospitality and sufficiency. In Asahan Regency, people believe that serving free-range chicken not only provides delicious food but also brings blessings and good fortune to those who enjoy it, making it a symbol of blessings. The peak flower, as a symbol of success and happiness in social construction, contains a deep message about the importance of patience and simplicity. Although it radiates beauty and the highest achievements in life, this flower teaches that success requires the same perseverance and patience as slow-growing flowers. In addition, simplicity in life is represented by the splendor of peak flowers that live simply, reminding us of the importance of appreciating simple beauty in the journey of life.

The Merawal flag is not only a white coconut leaf paper in a hall with white sticky rice and peak flowers, but also a symbol that reflects purity of heart, moral values and ethics in social life (Rubino et al., 2023). A representation of inner cleanliness and purity in action, the Merawal flag invites individuals and society to maintain integrity and morality in all aspects of life.

By respecting and maintaining the purity of the heart, as well as implementing kindness in daily actions, the flag begins to encourage the formation of a civilized and ethical society, where the values of purity and honesty are the main foundation for social interaction and joint development.

Khataman Koran is not just a series of activities at a traditional Malay wedding, but is a symbol of dedication, patience and perseverance in studying the teachings of the Islamic religion. This practice reflects respect for religious knowledge and the responsibility to teach that knowledge to others. More than just a tradition, the recitation of the Koran creates close bonds between community members, strengthening social and religious relationships within the community. Thus, reciting the Koran is not only a form of spiritual preparation for marriage, but also a symbol of seriousness in living a life based on religious values.

D. CONCLUSION

The "Batammat Kaji" ritual in traditional Malay marriages in Asahan Regency is not only a formal ceremony, but also a ritual communication that is rich in symbolic meaning and religious values. In this ceremony, the Khatam Al-Quran becomes the peak point symbolizing spiritual commitment in marriage, while elements such as white sticky rice, free-range chicken, peak flowers, and merawal flags contain deep symbolism related to fertility, blessings, and harmony in the family. This practice not only maintains Malay cultural and religious values, but also strengthens social and spiritual relationships in society,

indicating the importance of this tradition in building solidarity and cultural continuity in Asahan Regency. 2. The symbols used in the "Batammat Kaji" ritual in Asahan Regency, such as flowers, cloth and ritual equipment, have deep meaning and function in conveying the teachings of the Islamic religion and the local Malay community. The flower crest, for example, symbolizes beauty and fertility, while the fabric used in decorations such as the balar garland and other ritual equipment reflects the refinement and majesty of the ceremony. At the same time, these elements also contain religious values, such as the purity in the Khatam Al-Quran which is accompanied by the Merawal flag as a symbol of blessing and spiritual protection. The "Batammat Kaji" ritual not only depicts the richness of Malay culture, but also functions as a means to strengthen the appreciation of the Islamic religion and local values in the context of marriage and the social life of the people of Asahan Regency. Religious values such as faith, piety and spirituality are deeply integrated in every stage and element of the "Batammat Kaji" ritual in Asahan Regency, reflecting the deep efforts of the Malay community to harmonize cultural traditions with the teachings of the Islamic religion. Khatam Al-Quran as a core part of the ritual shows spiritual commitment and adherence to Islamic teachings, while the use of symbols such as the merawal flag and flower crest reinforces messages about blessings and purity in marriage. Ritual procedures, including respect for parents and a spiritual outlook on marital relations, also reinforce values such as harmony and devotion to God. The "Batammat Kaji" ritual not only maintains Malay cultural heritage, but also makes this practice a medium for expressing and enlivening the deep religious values of the people of Asahan Regency.

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