Al-Hiwalah: (Sharia Economic Law)
Volume 5 No. 1. January - June 2026
E-ISSN : 2963-0304
Page : 253-290
DOI : 10.47766/al-hiwalah.v5i1.6850
https://journal.uinsuna.ac.id/index.php/AlHiwalah

Tepung Tawar in *Walīmat al-'Urs*: '*Urf* Analysis and Majelis Tarjih PDM Tebing Tinggi's View

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Abstract: The *tepung tawar* rite remains an integral part of Malay *walīmat al-'urs* in North Sumatra, yet its legal status is contested between those who regard it as a permissible custom (*'urf*) and those who see it as *bid'ah* or as carrying traces of *syirk*. This study addresses three questions: how the tradition is conceptualised and practised; how it should be classified under the theory of *'urf*; and how the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid of the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (PDM) of Tebing Tinggi evaluates it. Using an empirical juridical design with a qualitative approach, the study combines semi-structured interviews with two key informants from the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi (July 2026), documentation of Muhammadiyah's official decisions (*Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, Volumes 1 and 3), and a review of recent literature. Data were condensed thematically, triangulated, and tested against the validity conditions of *'urf* and the distinction between *'ādah* and *'ibādah*. The findings show that no HPT decision specifically addresses *tepung tawar*; the Majelis Tarjih evaluates it through the principles of *Masalah Lima*. The rite is *mubāḥ* as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* when three conditions are met: no belief in the intrinsic power of its materials, prayers addressed to Allah alone, and no *isrāf*. Elements involving *mantra*, the belief that the rite is religiously required, or wastefulness constitute *'urf fāsid* and must be abandoned. The novelty of this study lies in documenting how a local Tarjih body reasons about a Malay custom in the absence of a specific central ruling.

Keywords: *Tepung Tawar; Walīmat al-'Urs; 'Urf; Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah; Islamic Law*

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‖ Submitted: 28-04-2026 ‖ Accepted: 30-09-2026 ‖ Published: 01-10-2026

Abstrak: Ritual *tepung tawar* masih menjadi bagian integral dari *walīmat al-'urs* masyarakat Melayu di Sumatera Utara, namun status hukumnya diperdebatkan antara pihak yang memandangnya sebagai adat yang dibolehkan (*'urf*) dan pihak yang menilainya sebagai *bid'ah* atau mengandung unsur *syirk*. Penelitian ini menjawab tiga pertanyaan: bagaimana tradisi ini dipahami dan dipraktikkan; bagaimana klasifikasinya menurut teori *'urf*; dan bagaimana Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah (PDM) Tebing Tinggi menilainya. Dengan desain yuridis empiris dan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini memadukan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan dua informan kunci dari Majelis Tarjih PDM Tebing Tinggi (Juli 2026), dokumentasi putusan resmi Muhammadiyah (*Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* Jilid 1 dan 3), serta kajian literatur mutakhir. Data direduksi secara tematik, ditriangulasi, dan diuji dengan syarat-syarat keabsahan *'urf* serta pembedaan antara *'ādah* dan *'ibādah*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa belum ada putusan HPT yang secara khusus membahas *tepung tawar*; Majelis Tarjih menilainya melalui prinsip-prinsip *Masalah Lima*. Tradisi ini *mubāḥ* sebagai *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* apabila memenuhi tiga syarat: tidak ada keyakinan terhadap kekuatan intrinsik bahan-bahannya, doa hanya ditujukan kepada Allah, dan tidak mengandung *isrāf*. Unsur *mantra*, keyakinan bahwa ritual ini diwajibkan agama, atau pemborosan termasuk *'urf fāsid* dan harus ditinggalkan. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada dokumentasi penalaran lembaga Tarjih tingkat daerah terhadap adat Melayu ketika belum ada putusan pusat yang spesifik.

Kata Kunci: *Tepung Tawar; Walīmat al-'Urs; 'Urf; Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah; Hukum Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as a country characterized by diverse regional cultures and traditions, including those associated with traditional wedding ceremonies. One ethnic group that continues to preserve its ancestral traditions is the Malay community. In Malay society, customs and Islamic teachings are closely intertwined. This relationship is reflected in the expression

"Tak Melayu, Tak Islam" (literally "not Malay, not Islamic"), which conveys that Malay identity and Islam are regarded as inseparable: to be Malay is to be Muslim, and one who abandons Islam is no longer considered Malay. Consequently, Malay culture has become an essential identity that is continuously preserved and passed down to subsequent generations. One of the traditions that remains an integral part of traditional Malay weddings is the *tepung tawar* ritual.[1]

The *tepung tawar* tradition is an ancestral custom that has long been practiced within Malay communities, particularly in the regions of Sumatra and Riau. This ritual is performed as an expression of prayers and hopes that the bride and groom will receive protection, blessings, and be spared from various difficulties. It is generally conducted as part of the *walīmat al-'urs* (Islamic wedding reception) ceremony. Beyond wedding celebrations, this tradition is also practiced on other occasions, such as thanksgiving ceremonies held to celebrate a child's completion of Qur'anic recitation. In Islam, *walīmat al-'urs* is a recommended Sunnah following marriage. Its implementation varies across regions, reflecting the cultural practices and traditions of local communities.[2] Nevertheless, questions arise regarding the legal status of cultural traditions accompanying *walīmat al-'urs*, particularly whether such practices are consistent with Islamic teachings or contain elements that contradict Islamic law.

In this article, *tepung tawar* refers to a Malay rite of blessing in which respected elders sprinkle or dab a mixture of rice flour and water (often scented with rose water) on the palms, shoulders or head of a person or couple, using a

[1] Indah Septi Rahayu Dan Lestari Setia Ningsih, "Tepuk Tepung Tawar Pengantin Baru Sebagai Tradisi Budaya Melayu Dan Media Pendidikan," *"Multiverse: Open Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 1 (2023): 62–67.

[2] UII, "Fikih Walimatul 'ursy Fakultas Ilmu Agama Islam UII Yogyakarta," 2023.

small bundle of leaves such as *daun setawar*, *sedingin* and *ribu-ribu*, and scatter yellow rice (*beras kunyit*) and puffed rice (*bertih*), while offering prayers for safety and blessing. The word *tawar* connotes "neutralising" or "cooling", reflecting the original intention of the rite to ward off harm; in contemporary Muslim practice it is understood primarily as a symbolic expression of prayer and good wishes.[3]

The question is particularly pressing in Tebing Tinggi, North Sumatra. The city has a Malay customary heritage, and *tepung tawar* is practised not only in family weddings but also in public ceremonies organised by the municipal government, such as the send-off of Hajj pilgrims.[4] At the same time, Muhammadiyah has a well-established regional leadership (PDM) in the city, whose Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid is regularly consulted by members on the religious status of local customs. Tebing Tinggi therefore offers a concrete setting in which a living Malay custom and a reformist organisation's legal reasoning meet directly.

This issue becomes particularly interesting when examined in relation to the perspective of Muhammadiyah, a modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah is widely recognized for its emphasis on purifying Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. During its early

[3] Rini Selvia, Y Yuliantoro, and A Fiqri, "Tepuk Tepung Tawar dalam Adat Pernikahan Melayu," *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* 1, no. 2 (2021): 428–31, https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v1i2.3039; Doni Febri Hendra and A Ariani, "Tepuk Tepung Tawar sebagai Simbol Ritual Budaya Melayu Kabupaten Karimun," *Dance and Theatre Review: Jurnal Tari, Teater, dan Wayang* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1–8; Taslim Batubara, Badrun, and Ahmad Muhajir, "Tradisi Tepung Tawar: Integrasi Agama dan Kebudayaan pada Masyarakat Melayu di Sumatera Utara," *Local History & Heritage* 2, no. 1 (2022): 10–16, https://doi.org/10.57251/lhh.v2i1.288.

[4] Antara Sumut, "Pemkot Tebing Tinggi Tepung Tawari 57 Calon Jamaah Haji," *Antara Sumut*, 2022, https://sumut.antaranews.com/berita/482713/pemkot-tebing-tinggi-tepung-tawari-57-calon-jamaah-haji.

development, Muhammadiyah frequently addressed religious practices within society that were considered to be influenced by elements of TBC (*Takhayyul*, *Bid'ah*, and *Khurāfāt* superstition, religious innovation, and superstition-based beliefs). Accordingly, the movement toward religious purification became one of Muhammadiyah's primary concerns in ensuring that Islamic practices remained consistent with authentic religious teachings.[5]

Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah does not necessarily reject all cultural traditions practiced within society. Rather, it provides room for cultural expressions as long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings. Traditions and cultural practices may be accepted provided that they do not contain elements of *syirk* (associating partners with Allah), superstition, or other practices that may undermine Islamic faith. In this regard, culture can serve as a medium for Islamic preaching (*da'wah*) and the reinforcement of Islamic values within society. The *tepung tawar* tradition itself remains a subject of debate among Muslims. Some scholars consider this practice a form of custom or *'urf* that is permissible because it primarily consists of prayers and positive hopes without violating Islamic law. Others, however, regard the tradition as *bid'ah* (religious innovation) and therefore consider it unnecessary to practice.[6] These differing perspectives indicate the need for a more comprehensive examination of the legal status of the *tepung tawar* tradition, particularly from the perspective of Muhammadiyah.

[5] Haedar Nashir, "Akidah Islam Berkemajuan: Memperluas Paham Tauhid Murni," 2026.

[6] Maizatul Mariatik and Ahmad Jailani, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar Dalam Perspektif Islam Masyarakat Melayu Riau Di Desa Pangkalan Nyirih Kecamatan Rupat Kabupaten Bengkalis," *Jurnal Al-Kifayah: Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 2, no. 2 (2023): 268–280, https://doi.org/10.53398/ja.v2i2.317.

Muhammadiyah is relevant to this inquiry because of its explicit commitment to purifying religious practice from elements it classifies as *bid'ah* or *khurāfāt*, combined with an institutional mechanism, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid, for issuing religious guidance. In North Sumatra, *tepung tawar* continues to be practised, including among Muslims who identify with reformist orientations.[7] This situation raises a question rather than a presumed conflict: how does an organisation committed to purification evaluate a custom that is embedded in communal identity? Recent studies of Muhammadiyah's cultural *da'wah* indicate that the organisation's responses to local traditions vary by locality and are often accommodative where texts are not contradicted.[8]

In Islamic jurisprudence, customs or *'urf* may serve as a legal consideration provided that they do not contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah. Acceptable customs that do not violate Islamic law are classified as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* (valid customary practices), whereas customs that contradict Islamic teachings are categorized as *'urf fāsid* (invalid customary practices). Therefore, it is essential to determine whether the *tepung tawar* tradition performed during *walīmat al-'urs* constitutes a permissible cultural practice according to Muhammadiyah's perspective.

Previous studies have examined *tepung tawar* from several angles. From the perspective of Islamic law, Husnah and Fajaruna analysed the rite within

[7] Syafri Hamid and Rini Anggraini, "Adat Melayu dan Hukum Islam: Dinamika Tepung Tawar dalam Pernikahan Kontemporer," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 16, no. 1 (2023): 47–49.

[8] I Wijaya, R Romli, and A J Azwar, "Community Response to the Cultural Da'wah Practices by Muhammadiyah Preachers in Palembang City," *Muharrik: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 6, no. 2 (2023): 303–18.

comparative Islamic jurisprudence,[9] while Huda and Izzati identified compatibility between Islamic law and Malay custom through the lens of *'urf*.[10] Using interviews and documents in Tanjungpinang, Ardiansyah and Masrokhin likewise found harmonisation between *'urf* and Islamic law in Malay weddings,[11] and Al Mansur et al. classified the rite in Bengkalis as *mubāḥ* as long as it does not contradict sharia.[12] Purnama showed that Islamic law, customary law and state law operate together in Malay marriages in Pekanbaru.[13] A second group approaches the tradition through hadith and cultural studies: Maulana, Ghozali, and Sarifandi argue that the prayers at the core of the rite are consistent with Prophetic teaching,[14] whereas Mariatik, Maizatul, and Jailani emphasise the Islamic values it carries among the Malay community of Bengkalis.[15] In North Sumatra, Batubara, Badrun, and Muhajir and Pangaribuan

[9] Irlina Dewi Husnah Fajaruna, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," in *Comparativa:Jurnal Ilmiah Perbandingan Mazhab Dan Hukum*, 2023, 17–32.

[10] Mahmud Huda and Mutia Izzati, "Hukum Pernikahan Melayu: Studi Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar Menurut 'Urf," *Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 7, no. 2 (2022): 134–56.

[11] Ogie Ardiansyah and Masrokhin, "The Tradition of Tepuk Tepung Tawar in Malay Weddings from the Perspective of Islamic Law: A Case Study at Tanjungpinang, Riau Islands," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v6i2.5391.

[12] Muhammad Al Mansur et al., "Tinjauan Hukum Islam terhadap Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar pada Adat Pernikahan Melayu Bengkalis," *Akademika: Jurnal Keagamaan dan Pendidikan* 21, no. 1 (2025).

[13] Handika Purnama, "Hukum Islam, Adat dan Hukum Negara dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Melayu di Pekanbaru Riau: Keabsahan, Etika, dan Administrasi Perkawinan," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 14, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2021.14101.

[14] Maulana, Achmad Ghozali, and Sujai Sarifandi, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar dalam Budaya Melayu Riau: Sebuah Analisis dalam Perspektif Hadis," *Nusantara: Journal for Southeast Asian Islamic Studies* 20, no. 2 (2024), https://doi.org/10.24014/nusantara.v20i2.34867.

[15] Mariatik and Jailani, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar Dalam Perspektif Islam Masyarakat Melayu Riau Di Desa Pangkalan Nyirih Kecamatan Rupat Kabupaten Bengkalis."

describe *tepung tawar* as a product of the integration, or acculturation, of Islam and Malay culture.[16]

These studies mostly evaluate *tepung tawar* either through general *fiqh* and *'urf* theory or through the views of community and customary leaders, and most are located in Riau and the Riau Islands. None has examined how the fatwa body of a reformist organisation, specifically the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid at the regional (PDM) level, reasons about the rite in the absence of a specific central decision, or how such a body reconciles the acceptance of *'urf* with its concern over *bid'ah* and *syirk*. This study addresses that gap by documenting the reasoning of the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi and testing it against the validity conditions of *'urf* and the distinction between *'ādah* (custom) and *'ibādah* (worship).

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How is the *tepung tawar* tradition conceptualised and practised in the *walīmat al-'urs* of the Malay community? (2) How should the tradition be classified under the theory of *'urf* in Islamic jurisprudence: as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ*, as *'urf fāsid*, or as partly both? (3) How does the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid of PDM Tebing Tinggi evaluate the tradition, and on what legal bases? Correspondingly, the study aims to describe the concept and development of the tradition, to analyse its legal position through the principles of *'urf*, and to examine the views of the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi on its implementation.

[16] Batubara, Badrun, and Muhajir, "Tradisi Tepung Tawar: Integrasi Agama dan Kebudayaan pada Masyarakat Melayu di Sumatera Utara."

METHODS

This study employs an empirical juridical approach, with a qualitative orientation serving as the primary means of exploring field data. The empirical juridical approach views law not as an abstract concept existing in isolation, but rather examines how it operates, is implemented, and sometimes disregarded in actual social life. Instead of merely examining legal provisions in written texts, this approach involves direct engagement with social realities, particularly in the context of the tepung tawar tradition during walīmat al-'urs. A qualitative approach is adopted because this phenomenon cannot be adequately measured through numerical data. It involves cultural values, religious beliefs, and tensions between customary practices and religious principles, which can only be comprehensively understood through narratives and interpretations rather than statistical measurements.[17]

Data sources were aligned with the three research questions. For the first question (concept and procedure), the study relies on secondary ethnographic and legal studies of Malay weddings in North Sumatra and Riau, supplemented by the informants' descriptions of current practice in Tebing Tinggi. For the third question (the view of the Majelis Tarjih), primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two key informants: Benny Fernanda, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., Chairman of the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid of PDM Tebing Tinggi (interviewed on July 9, 2026, at the Taqwa Baiturrahman Mosque), and H. Drs. Daulat P. Sibarani, Coordinator of the Tarjih Division (interviewed on July 31, 2026, at the Taqwa Mosque, Lubuk Baru). Informants

[17] Sugiyono Sugiyono and Puji Lestari, "Metode Penelitian Komunikasi (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan Cara Mudah Menulis Artikel Pada Jurnal Internasional)" (Alvabeta Bandung, CV, 2021).

were selected purposively according to three criteria: (a) holding a formal position in the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi, (b) having a background in Islamic studies and *fiqh*, and (c) being familiar with Malay wedding customs in the city. The research instrument was an interview guide covering four themes: the legal status of the tradition, the legal bases used, its position in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (HPT), and the conditions for its permissibility. Because the study focuses on the institutional view of the Majelis Tarjih, customary leaders and practitioners were not interviewed; this is acknowledged as a limitation.[18]

The study clearly distinguishes primary from secondary data. Primary data consist of the interview transcripts and Muhammadiyah's official documents, namely the HPT Volume 1 (*Masalah Lima*), the HPT Volume 3 (Chapter V on *Dīn al-Islām*, culture and arts), and the *Tanya Jawab Agama* series. Secondary data consist of journal articles, books on *'urf* and Malay custom, and statistical data on Tebing Tinggi. The literature review is used to describe the historical, theological and sociological dimensions of the tradition and to position the findings within previous research.[19]

Tebing Tinggi was chosen as the research location because *tepung tawar* is practised there in both family and public ceremonies, while the city's PDM has an active Majelis Tarjih that members consult on such customs. Fieldwork was carried out in July 2026.

The data were analysed inductively in three stages. First, interview transcripts and documents were condensed and coded into themes corresponding

[18] Ibnu Elmi A S Pelu and Jefry Tarantang, "Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Islam Empiris: Antara Teks dan Konteks Sosial," *Jurnal Hukum Novelty* 13, no. 1 (2022): 22–38.

[19] Ardiansyah and Masrokhin, "The Tradition of Tepuk Tepung Tawar in Malay Weddings from the Perspective of Islamic Law: A Case Study at Tanjungpinang, Riau Islands."

to the interview guide. Second, the coded data were displayed in thematic matrices comparing the two informants and the documentary sources. Third, the findings were evaluated against an *'urf* framework consisting of (a) the validity conditions of *'urf*: that the custom is generally practised by the community, exists at the time of the act, and does not contradict definitive texts (*naṣṣ qaṭ'ī*);[20] (b) the distinction between *'ādah* and *'ibādah*, used to test whether the practice constitutes *bid'ah*; and (c) the *tauḥīd* criterion, used to test for elements of *syirk* or *khurāfāt*. Source triangulation was employed by comparing information from interviews, official documents and scholarly literature, so that the conclusions are not disproportionately influenced by any single source.[21]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tepung Tawar in the Cultural Tradition of Walīmat al-'Urs

The Definition of Tradition and Culture

In Indonesian usage, tradition (*tradisi*, from the Latin *traditio*, "handing over") denotes customary practices inherited from ancestors and maintained by society; it overlaps with *adat* (from the Arabic *'ādah*) and, in Islamic legal terminology, with *'urf*, namely what a community recognises and repeatedly practises in word or deed. Soekanto describes tradition as an activity carried out continuously by a group across generations,[22] while Koentjaraningrat defines culture as the whole system of ideas, actions and human creations acquired

[20] Afiq Budiawan, "Tinjauan Al Urf Dalam Prosesi Perkawinan Adat Melayu Riau," *Jurnal An-Nahl* 8, no. 2 (2021), https://doi.org/10.54576/annahl.v8i2.39.

[21] Sugiyono and Lestari, "Metode Penelitian Komunikasi (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan Cara Mudah Menulis Artikel Pada Jurnal Internasional)."

[22] Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, Rev. ed. (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2012).

through learning.[23] In this study, *tepung tawar* is therefore treated both as a cultural practice and as an *'urf* whose legal value must be tested against the sources of Islamic law.

The History and Concept of Tepung Tawar in Walīmat al-'Urs

a. The History of the Tepung Tawar Tradition

The tepung tawar tradition is not a recent cultural practice. Its origins can be traced back to the historical development of Malay society, where similar rituals existed long before the arrival of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. During the pre-Islamic period, rituals of this kind were associated with animistic and dynamistic beliefs that were prevalent among various Malay communities. When Islam gradually spread throughout Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, these traditions did not immediately disappear. Instead, they continued to exist by adapting to Islamic values while retaining familiar elements of their original cultural forms.[24]

Anthropologists often describe this prolonged process as cultural syncretism. However, within the context of Malay Islamic society, the term Islamization of customary practices may provide a more appropriate explanation. The materials used in the ritual also underwent changes in their symbolic meanings. Practices that were previously associated with invoking protective spirits gradually acquired new interpretations as symbolic expressions of prayers and hopes directed toward Allah. This transformation did not occur overnight, nor did it develop uniformly across all regions. Such variations help

[23] Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*, Rev. ed. (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2009).

[24] Nuraini Pangaribuan, "Tradisi Tepung Tawar: Akulturasi Islam dan Budaya Melayu dalam Prosesi Pernikahan Masyarakat Melayu di Kota Tanjung Balai," *Tamaddun: Jurnal Kebudayaan dan Sastra Islam* 23, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddun.v23i2.19694.

explain why the meaning and implementation of the tepung tawar tradition continue to differ among Malay communities today.[25]

b. The Concept of the Tepung Tawar Tradition

The tepung tawar tradition in walīmat al-'urs constitutes one of the customary elements of traditional Malay wedding ceremonies that continues to be preserved in various regions. This ritual is performed as a gesture of respect toward the newlyweds and as an expression of prayers and hopes that they will enjoy a married life filled with blessings, protection, and happiness. For the Malay community, tepung tawar is not merely a customary ceremony but also symbolizes the good wishes conveyed by family members and guests to the newly married couple.

In its implementation, the tepung tawar ceremony involves several ingredients and ceremonial materials prepared in advance. These materials are not simply ordinary household ingredients. Rather, they follow customary compositions, although variations may occur from one region to another, reflecting the dynamic nature of local cultural practices.

One of the principal ingredients is finely ground white glutinous rice. In traditional Malay culture, glutinous rice holds particular significance because of its sticky texture and cohesive properties. This characteristic symbolizes the hope that goodness, protection, and blessings will remain attached to the couple's lives and will not easily disappear. Another ingredient is bedak sejuk, a traditional rice-based preparation made from rice soaked for several days, sometimes even weeks, before being ground and mixed with fragrant flowers such as roses, jasmine, and ylang-ylang. Their fragrance contributes not only to

[25] Mariatik and Jailani, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar Dalam Perspektif Islam Masyarakat Melayu Riau Di Desa Pangkalan Nyirih Kecamatan Rupat Kabupaten Bengkalis."

the sensory atmosphere of the ceremony but also carries symbolic significance. Certain leaves are also incorporated into the mixture, including daun sedingin, daun ribu-ribu, daun gandarusa, and pandan leaves. Each ingredient possesses its own symbolic meaning within Malay cultural traditions, although some of these meanings have gradually become less familiar to younger generations due to the passage of time and social change.[26]

Rose water or water over which prayers have been recited is another element that frequently becomes a subject of debate. This is understandable because it represents one of the most significant points of distinction when examined from the perspective of Islamic law. Water accompanied by prayers directed toward Allah has a fundamentally different theological position and intention from water over which incantations invoking supernatural powers other than Allah are recited. Differences in intention and underlying beliefs ultimately determine whether this practice can be considered permissible or whether it contains elements that contradict Islamic teachings.

The Sequence and Procedures of Walīmat al-'Urs in Malay Tradition

The implementation of *walīmat al-'urs* in Malay tradition involves more than a communal meal. It consists of a series of customary proceedings with an established sequence and specific meanings, within which the *tepung tawar* ritual occupies an important position. The following description is based on ethnographic studies of Malay weddings in North Sumatra and Riau,[27] supplemented by the informants' accounts of current practice in Tebing Tinggi.

[26] Hamid and Anggraini, "Adat Melayu dan Hukum Islam: Dinamika Tepung Tawar dalam Pernikahan Kontemporer."

[27] Batubara, Badrun, and Muhajir, "Tradisi Tepung Tawar: Integrasi Agama dan Kebudayaan pada Masyarakat Melayu di Sumatera Utara."

Its implementation generally follows similar patterns across regions, although certain details reflect local characteristics.

Following the completion of the marriage contract (*akad nikah*), once the bride and groom have taken their seats on the wedding dais, the *tepung tawar* ceremony begins. It is usually initiated by the most senior or respected family member, such as a grandparent, the parents of the couple, or a respected traditional leader. Those who perform the ritual are known as *penepung tawar*. Their number is traditionally odd, such as three, five, seven or nine.[28] This customary preference coincides with the hadith "Indeed, Allah is *witr* (odd) and loves what is *witr*",[29] although such a convergence does not turn the custom into a religious prescription.

Each *penepung tawar* takes a small portion of the prepared mixture and gently applies it to the palms of the bride and groom or sprinkles it over their heads while reciting prayers, often in a low voice. The prayers are not uniform: some participants recite blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*), others recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, and some offer supplications in Arabic or Malay. Some communities still use traditional Malay expressions or *mantra* of pre-Islamic origin. Such *mantra* are not part of the *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* discussed below: where they invoke beings other than Allah or presume an autonomous power, they fall into *'urf fāsid* and must be replaced with prayers addressed to Allah.

After all the penepung tawar participants have completed their respective turns, the ceremony concludes with a collective prayer led by a local

[28] Muhamad Zen Ahmad Fauzi, "Tradisi Tepung Tawar Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam: Studi Kasus Di Sumatera Utara," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 12, no. 2 (2022): 88–104.

[29] Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 2001).

Islamic scholar (ustaz) or religious figure. This closing prayer serves not only as the conclusion of the ritual but also as a collective expression of goodwill and support for the new chapter of married life undertaken by the couple in the presence of their families and guests.

The Tepung Tawar Tradition from the Perspective of Islamic Teachings

Customs and Culture in Islam

Islam has never emerged in a cultural vacuum. Whenever Islam entered a particular region, it encountered communities with their own established customs and cultural traditions. The Indonesian archipelago, Arabia, Persia, and India, for instance, already possessed diverse cultural traditions before the arrival of Islam. Therefore, the more relevant question is not whether Islam accepts customs, but rather how Islam responds to pre-existing cultural practices. Historically, three approaches can be identified in the development of Islamic preaching (da'wah), both during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and throughout the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago through the Wali Songo. First, taḥmīl, which refers to the preservation and refinement of existing traditions without eliminating them. Second, taghyīr, which involves modifying or reconstructing problematic traditions to make them consistent with Islamic principles without necessarily abolishing them entirely. Third, taḥrīm, which refers to prohibiting traditions that fundamentally contradict the principle of monotheism (*tauḥīd*) and cannot be reconciled with Islamic teachings.[30]

The tepung tawar tradition represents an example of a cultural practice that continues to be maintained by society while undergoing certain adjustments

[30] Afifah Dwi dan Yasnel Ramadhani, "Budaya Melayu Dan Pengaruh Islam Dalam Upacara Pernikahan Di Kecamatan Siak," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies (IJIS* 1, no. 1 (2023): 36–38.

to align with Islamic teachings. Elements that were previously associated with traditional beliefs, such as the recitation of incantations, have gradually been replaced with prayers directed toward Allah SWT. This transformation demonstrates how Islamic values can become integrated into an existing cultural tradition without necessarily eliminating the tradition itself. Consequently, tepung tawar continues to be practiced, although its content and meanings have been adapted to Islamic teachings. This process is commonly understood as a form of cultural acculturation.

Fundamentally, Islam provides room for the development of customs and cultural practices within society. As long as a particular tradition does not contradict Islamic law, it may be accepted and incorporated into the lives of Muslims. This principle is consistent with the Islamic legal maxim al-'ādah muḥakkamah (العادة محكّمة), which means that established customs and prevailing social practices may serve as considerations in determining Islamic legal rulings. Etymologically, al-'ādah refers to an action, expression, or other practice that is repeatedly performed until it becomes familiar and easy to carry out as part of everyday life. This maxim is recognized as one of the five major principles of Islamic jurisprudence and emphasizes that beneficial customs prevailing within society may serve as a basis for legal consideration, provided that they are consistent with the values and principles of the relevant social environment.[31] Nevertheless, not every customary practice can automatically be accepted as a legal basis. Islamic scholars have established several requirements

[31] Sudirman Suparmin, "Al-Adatu Al-Muhakkamah in The Traditional Menukur of Culture," *Al-Mashlahah: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 9, no. 02 (2021).

for recognizing an 'urf as a valid customary practice under the principle of al-'ādah muḥakkamah.[32]

Among these requirements are that the custom must be generally recognized within the relevant community, must not contradict authoritative Islamic legal texts or definitive religious evidence (naṣṣ qaṭ'ī), and must have been established over a considerable period rather than being a newly emerging practice. These requirements have informed the legal approaches of the Ḥanafī and Mālikī schools, followed by the Ḥanbalī and Syāfi'ī schools, in recognizing 'urf as a source of legal consideration, although differences remain among these schools regarding its scope and specific requirements. Nevertheless, custom does not constitute an independent source of Islamic law. Its legal authority remains subordinate to the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, a customary practice may only be accepted when it does not contradict these two primary sources of Islamic law. If any element of a tradition conflicts with Islamic teachings, that particular element must be modified or abandoned.

Among the Malay community, this relationship is expressed in the maxim *"Adat bersendikan syarak, syarak bersendikan Kitabullah"* (custom is founded upon Islamic law, and Islamic law is founded upon the Book of Allah), which presents custom and religion as complementary rather than opposing. A similar accommodative approach is visible in the history of Islamisation in the archipelago, where local cultural forms were used as media of *da'wah* and filled with Islamic values. The adapted *tepung tawar* tradition can be understood within this pattern.

Islamic Scholars' Perspectives on Customs and Cultural Practices

[32] A Budiawan, "Tinjauan Al-'Urf Dalam Prosesi Perkawinan Adat Melayu Riau," *Jurnal An-Nahl* 8, no. 2 (2021): 118.

From the perspective of Islamic scholars, customs and cultural practices constitute inseparable elements of human social life. Islam does not require Muslims to eliminate all traditions that existed before its arrival. Rather, Islam provides opportunities for local cultures to continue developing, provided that they do not contradict Islamic creed ('aqīdah), religious practices, or the fundamental principles of Islamic law (sharia). Islamic scholars explain that customs may be considered in determining Islamic legal rulings through the concept of 'urf. 'Urf refers to customary practices that are recognized and accepted by society and provide beneficial values. Accordingly, acceptable customs may be preserved as long as they do not contain elements of syirk (associating partners with Allah), immoral conduct, gambling, or other practices prohibited in Islam. Nevertheless, the application of 'urf in Islamic legal reasoning is subject to clear limitations. It must not contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic law and generally applies to matters of social transactions and interpersonal relations (mu'āmalah), rather than acts of prescribed worship ('ibādah maḥḍah).[33]

Among the four Sunni schools, the Mālikī school gives the widest room to custom, treating the practice of the people of Medina (*'amal ahl al-Madīnah*) as authoritative; the Ḥanafī school frequently prefers established custom over strict analogy (*qiyās*), particularly in transactions; al-Syāfi'ī's revision of his earlier opinions (*qaul qadīm*) into later ones (*qaul jadīd*) after moving from Iraq to Egypt reflects sensitivity to changed social conditions; and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

[33] Mahfudzin, Agung Wahyudin, and Dayan Fithoroini, "Konsep Islam tentang Adat: Telaah 'Urf sebagai Sumber Hukum Islam di Indonesia," *Justicia Religia: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023).

considered custom where stronger evidence was absent.[34] All four schools, however, confine the role of *'urf* to *mu'āmalah* and do not allow custom to create or modify acts of prescribed worship (*'ibādah maḥḍah*).

Classification of Customs and Cultural Practices in Islam

1. *'Urf Ṣaḥīḥ* (Valid Customary Practices)

'Urf ṣaḥīḥ refers to customary practices that do not contradict the Qur'an and hadith, do not undermine public welfare and do not cause harm. Such customs may be preserved and may serve as considerations in legal rulings. *Tepung tawar* falls into this category only in its adapted form, that is, when (a) it is understood as a symbol of prayer, gratitude and respect, (b) the prayers are addressed to Allah alone, and (c) it involves no wastefulness. In that form its legal status is *mubāḥ* (permissible): it is neither recommended nor prohibited, and Muslims are free to perform or omit it.[35]

2. *'Urf Fāsid* (Invalid Customary Practices)

'Urf fāsid refers to customary practices that contradict Islamic legal evidence and the fundamental principles of Islamic law, such as practices that legitimise usury, involve deception or direct worship to entities other than Allah. In relation to *tepung tawar*, the following elements belong to this category: *mantra* that invoke spirits or powers other than Allah; the belief that the flour, water, rice or leaves have intrinsic power to ward off misfortune; and the wasteful scattering or trampling of food. These elements do not render the whole tradition invalid; rather, they must be removed or replaced (*taghyīr*), so that the remaining practice can be evaluated as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ*.

[34] M.Nur Hasan, "Qaul Qadim Dan Qaul Jadid Imam Syafi'i Dalam Perubahan Hukum Islam," *Al-Risalah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 23, no. 1 (2023).
[35] Budiawan, "Tinjauan Al-'Urf Dalam Prosesi Perkawinan Adat Melayu Riau."

3. Between 'Ādah and 'Ibādah: The Question of Bid'ah

The charge that *tepung tawar* is *bid'ah* requires a distinction between *'ādah* (custom) and *'ibādah* (worship). In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the basic rule for worship is that nothing may be practised unless it is prescribed, whereas the basic rule for worldly affairs and customs is permissibility. Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih adopts the same distinction: *bid'ah* in the technical sense applies to innovations in matters of worship that are attributed to religion without textual basis.[36] As long as *tepung tawar* is performed as a social custom, an expression of joy, respect and prayer, it belongs to *'ādah* and is not *bid'ah*. It becomes problematic in three situations: (1) when it is believed to be a religious requirement or a condition for a valid or blessed marriage, which would attribute to religion what it does not prescribe (*bid'ah*); (2) when its materials or procedures are believed to have autonomous power, which violates *tauḥīd* (*syirk* or *khurāfāt*); and (3) when it involves wastefulness (*isrāf*, *tabżīr*). The legal status of the tradition is therefore conditional: it is *mubāḥ* in its customary form, and the problematic elements, rather than the tradition as a whole, are what must be corrected.

Analysis of the Tepung Tawar Tradition in Walīmat al-'Urs from the Perspective of the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership of Tebing Tinggi

Tebing Tinggi City, located in North Sumatra, has a unique geographical characteristic as an enclave, since all its land boundaries are surrounded by Serdang Bedagai Regency. Covering an area of 38.44 km², the city experienced significant population growth, increasing from 145,180

[36] Syamsul Anwar, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Panitia Musyawarah Nasional Tarjih Muhammadiyah XXX, 2018); Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Tanya Jawab Agama Jilid I* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2003).

inhabitants in 2010 to 172,838 inhabitants according to the 2020 population census. Its population is ethnically diverse. Nevertheless, the Malay ethnic group has historically played a significant role in shaping the local customary system, one of which is reflected in the preservation of the tepung tawar tradition.[37]

The *tepung tawar* ceremony in Tebing Tinggi is practised not only within family settings but has also been incorporated into the formal activities of the local government. In June 2022, for example, the acting mayor attended the *tepung tawar* of 57 prospective Hajj pilgrims organised by the municipal government, and a similar ceremony for prospective pilgrims was held in May 2025 in the presence of Mayor H. Iman Irdian Saragih and the Regional Leadership Coordination Forum (Forkopimda). These events show that *tepung tawar* has moved from a family ritual rooted in Malay culture to a publicly recognised ceremony with social and religious significance.

Alongside these cultural developments, Muhammadiyah has also maintained an active presence in Tebing Tinggi City. The administrators of the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah or PDM), together with the Regional Leadership of Muhammadiyah Youth for the 2023–2027 period, were officially inaugurated in January 2025, with representatives of the Tebing Tinggi City Government in attendance. The government's presence at the inauguration indicates a harmonious relationship between the organization, the government, and the local social structure. Therefore, the PDM Tebing Tinggi's perspective on the tepung tawar tradition is influenced by two important considerations: Muhammadiyah's commitment to

[37] Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Tebing Tinggi, "Kota Tebing Tinggi dalam Angka 2024" (Tebing Tinggi: BPS Kota Tebing Tinggi, 2024).

preserving the purity of Islamic creed and the reality of its existence within a community where Malay culture remains deeply rooted.

According to Muhammadiyah, the existence of customs and cultural practices is not automatically considered contradictory to Islamic teachings. Each tradition must first be examined based on its conformity with Islamic principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Within the Muhammadiyah Manhaj Tarjih, customs belong to the domain of mu'āmalah (social and worldly affairs), which are fundamentally permissible as long as they do not contain elements of polytheism (syirk), superstitious beliefs (khurāfāt and takhayyul), or religious innovations (bid'ah) in matters of prescribed worship ('ibādah maḥḍah), and do not give rise to beliefs that deviate from Islamic creed. On this basis, the tepung tawar tradition, which has long been practiced within Malay society, cannot immediately be classified as prohibited merely because it is a cultural inheritance. Its legal status depends on the purpose of its implementation, the procedures involved, and the beliefs accompanying the practice. As long as tepung tawar is understood as a symbol of prayer, respect, and good wishes for the bride and groom, without attributing supernatural powers to the materials used, the tradition may still be categorized as an acceptable customary practice. Conversely, if people believe that the tepung tawar ceremony possesses the power to bring good fortune, ward off calamities, or independently provide benefits beyond the will of Allah SWT, such a practice contradicts the principle of tauḥīd (monotheism), which constitutes the fundamental foundation of Muhammadiyah's religious thought.[38]

[38] Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah Jilid 3* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018).

Muhammadiyah's perspective on customary practices is also reflected in various religious rulings published in the Tanya Jawab Agama (Religious Questions and Answers) section of Suara Muhammadiyah. These explanations emphasize that Muhammadiyah clearly distinguishes between practices belonging to the domain of religious worship and those constituting customary or cultural traditions within society. A tradition is not automatically declared prohibited as long as it is not positioned as an act of worship with specific requirements established by Islamic law.[39] On this basis, the implementation of tepung tawar as part of the customary proceedings before or after the marriage contract (akad nikah) is regarded as a social tradition rather than a form of worship with a specific religious status under Islamic law. However, if people believe that tepung tawar constitutes a requirement for the validity of marriage, possesses a particular religious merit, or independently provides protection and blessings, such an understanding needs to be corrected. This is because such beliefs have no foundation in the Qur'an or Hadith.

In the Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah (Compilation of Muhammadiyah Tarjih Decisions), particularly in the discussion of arts and culture in Islam, it is explained that culture is a product of human creativity that is fundamentally acceptable as long as it does not contradict the teachings derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muhammadiyah does not regard all local cultural practices as traditions that must be eliminated. Instead, it applies a process of selection to each cultural element to ensure its conformity with the principles of Islamic law. This approach demonstrates that culture continues to have a place in the social life of society, provided that it does not deviate from

[39] Muhammadiyah, *Tanya Jawab Agama Jilid I*.

Islamic values. Based on this understanding, the tepung tawar tradition performed during walīmat al-'urs may still be preserved if it is understood as a symbol of prayer, an expression of gratitude, and a form of respect for the bride and groom, without being accompanied by mystical beliefs or practices containing elements of polytheism.[40]

Muhammadiyah emphasizes that every religious decision established by the organization results from a collective process of ijtihād conducted by the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid. This mechanism demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's position toward various cultural practices does not arise merely from rejecting traditions that have developed within society. Rather, it involves a systematic examination guided by textual religious evidence (dalīl naqlī), principles of Islamic legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh), the objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah), and consideration of the underlying social conditions.[41] Through this approach, Muhammadiyah seeks to integrate the preservation of positive cultural values with efforts to maintain the purity of Islamic creed. Therefore, traditions that contain social values, strengthen relationships among community members, and serve as means of conveying prayers and advice may continue to be preserved as long as they do not contradict Islamic legal provisions.

The following findings are based on interviews conducted by the researcher with two representatives of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council. The first interview was conducted with Mr. Benny Fernanda, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council of Tebing Tinggi, on Thursday, July 9, 2026, at the Taqwa Baiturrahman Mosque, Muhammadiyah Branch,

[40] Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah Jilid 3*.
[41] Maslahul Falah, "Penerapan Kaidah Fikih Dalam Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah," *Jurnal Staika* 6, no. 1 (2023).

Tebing Tinggi City. The second interview was conducted with Mr. H. Drs. Daulat P. Sibarani, Coordinator of the Tarjih Division, on Friday, July 31, 2026, at the Taqwa Mosque, Lubuk Baru, Muhammadiyah Branch, Tebing Tinggi City. The interviews examined the legal position of the tepung tawar tradition in the implementation of walīmat al-'urs and the considerations that may be used to determine whether the tradition should be preserved, accepted, or abandoned.

According to Mr. Benny Fernanda, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., Muhammadiyah evaluates the tepung tawar tradition as a customary cultural practice from several perspectives, particularly cultural and religious aspects. When a cultural practice is related to matters of Islamic creed, it must be abandoned if it violates religious principles. However, this does not mean that every element of the tradition must be eliminated. Only those elements that potentially violate Islamic creed need to be abandoned. From Muhammadiyah's perspective, the tepung tawar tradition may still be tolerated as long as it does not violate Islamic beliefs and principles.

Nevertheless, cultural changes resulting from modernization have influenced how younger generations perceive the tradition. Many no longer consider tepung tawar a sacred ritual. Consequently, Muhammadiyah may set aside elements that potentially undermine Islamic creed while still allowing individuals who wish to practice the tradition to do so. The meaning of the tradition has changed over time. In the past, people performed tepung tawar with the belief that it could restore spiritual energy or vitality. Today, however, the ceremony is often performed simply by scattering its materials, sometimes accompanied by the recitation of ṣalawāt or other prayers.

According to the interviewee, the tradition may eventually disappear, as evidenced by the fact that some people are increasingly reluctant to participate when invited to a tepung tawar ceremony. This occurs because the practice is no

longer widely regarded as sacred. Its meaning has shifted: it is no longer understood as a means of restoring spiritual energy, bringing good fortune, or obtaining blessings. As these beliefs gradually disappear, Muhammadiyah may increasingly set aside or simply allow those aspects of the tradition that do not violate religious principles. The practice must also avoid wastefulness, such as throwing or stepping on rice and breaking eggs unnecessarily. Within Muhammadiyah, practices that can still be tolerated should indeed be tolerated.

Meanwhile, according to Mr. H. Drs. Daulat P. Sibarani, the tepung tawar tradition is permissible under certain conditions. It may be performed if it serves merely as a customary symbol of affection, advice, prayer, and respect. If prayers are directed exclusively toward Allah, the primary consideration is the content of the prayers rather than the customary objects used in the ceremony. However, tepung tawar is not permissible if people believe that its materials possess supernatural powers capable of warding off calamities or bringing benefits, because such beliefs contradict the principle of tauḥīd and may constitute acts of syirk. Both interviewees therefore share the same fundamental position: the tepung tawar tradition may be practiced, but it must not be accompanied by beliefs that attribute supernatural powers to the materials used in the ceremony.

The two informants use different vocabulary, but their substantive positions are consistent. Benny Fernanda's statement that the tradition "may be tolerated" refers to Muhammadiyah's persuasive *da'wah* stance toward practitioners, not to a separate legal category. In legal terms, both informants apply the same criteria: the custom is permissible (*mubāḥ*) when its materials are not believed to have intrinsic power, the prayers are addressed to Allah alone, and no wastefulness occurs; any element that fails these criteria must be

abandoned.[42] The distinction between "tolerated" and "*mubāḥ*" is therefore one of *da'wah* strategy rather than of legal status.

Legal Sources and Foundations Used by Muhammadiyah in Evaluating the Tepung Tawar Tradition

According to Mr. Benny Fernanda, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., the legal sources and foundations used to evaluate the tepung tawar tradition include the following:

1. Sūrah al-Isrā' (17): 27

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ ۖ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord."

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, an act that causes harm even in a small amount may also produce greater harm when performed excessively. Wastefulness is not determined merely by the quantity involved. Even a small amount of something may constitute waste if it is used improperly. For example, rice, eggs, and flour used in the tepung tawar ceremony may become wasteful when they are not utilized appropriately. Throwing or stepping on rice and breaking eggs unnecessarily are considered wasteful acts that are disliked by Allah. As stated in the Qur'an, those who engage in wastefulness are described as the brothers of the devils.

2. Matters of Islamic Creed and Potential Violations of 'Aqīdah

In certain communities in the past, the tepung tawar tradition involved more than simply scattering flowers or other materials. It was also associated with beliefs that the ritual could restore spiritual energy and open the way to

[42] Benny Fernanda, "Wawancara dengan Benny Fernanda, Ketua Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid PDM Tebing Tinggi," ed. Sofia Ramadhani Purba (Masjid Taqwa Baiturrahman, Tebing Tinggi, 2026).

blessings and good fortune. Such beliefs may undermine Islamic creed and potentially lead individuals toward syirk. In this context, the issue is not necessarily whether the act constitutes major or minor syirk, but rather the possibility of syirk khafī, or hidden polytheism, which individuals may commit without being fully aware of it. The source of blessings, good fortune, and the restoration of spiritual energy is not the chicken or other objects moved or used above the couple's heads. Nor do the prayers recited while placing flour on particular parts of the right or left hands possess independent power. In the traditional ceremony, specific meanings were associated with placing flour near the thumb on the right or left hand.

However, contemporary communities often no longer pay attention to these customary rules. Some people simply place the materials on the nose or cheeks. This indicates that the sacred character once associated with the tepung tawar tradition has gradually disappeared. In the past, people were reluctant to violate the established ceremonial procedures because they believed that these rules carried particular meanings. When such practices were believed to bring spiritual energy, blessings, or good fortune, they could potentially undermine Islamic creed. This is because all forms of good fortune, blessings, and goodness ultimately come from Allah alone. Thus, the first consideration concerns wastefulness (isrāf or tabżīr), while the second concerns the potential violation of Islamic creed. People may believe that the ceremony brings blessings and protection, even though all such benefits belong exclusively to Allah, and prayers should therefore be directed toward Him.

Furthermore, as a *da'wah* movement, Muhammadiyah seeks, as far as possible, to avoid prohibitions that could obstruct the effectiveness of its preaching. *Da'wah* should be persuasive, compassionate and encouraging; when

people are prohibited from practices they have long valued, they may respond with resentment. This approach corresponds to the Manhaj Tarjih, which combines textual (*bayānī*), rational (*burhānī*) and intuitive-experiential (*'irfānī*) approaches in understanding religious questions.[43]

Meanwhile, according to H. Drs. Daulat P. Sibarani, the legal sources and foundations used to evaluate the *tepung tawar* tradition include the following:

1. Sūrah al-A'rāf (7): 199

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Adopt forgiveness, enjoin what is right, and turn away from the ignorant."

The term 'urf is understood by Islamic scholars as referring to good customary practices that are recognized and established within society.[44]

2. Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِقَوْمٍ يُلَقِّحُونَ فَقَالَ: «لَوْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا لَصَلُحَ». قَالَ: فَخَرَجَ شِيصًا، فَمَرَّ بِهِمْ فَقَالَ: «مَا لِنَخْلِكُمْ؟» قَالُوا: قُلْتَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، قَالَ: «أَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِأَمْرِ دُنْيَاكُمْ»

Anas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a group of people who were pollinating date palms and said, "If you did not do that, it would be fine." The palms then produced poor-quality dates (shīṣ). He passed by them again and asked, "What is the matter with your date palms?" They replied, "You said such and such." He said, "You know better about the affairs of your world." (Narrated by Muslim).

[43] Anwar, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah*.

[44] Mahfudzin, Wahyudin, and Fithoroini, "Konsep Islam tentang Adat: Telaah 'Urf sebagai Sumber Hukum Islam di Indonesia."

3. The Islamic Legal Maxim Concerning Custom

العَادَةُ مُحَكَّمَةٌ

"Customary practices may serve as a basis for legal consideration."

This legal maxim emphasizes that customs and established social practices may serve as legal references in certain matters, provided that they do not contradict Islamic law, contain elements of polytheism, turn practices that are not acts of worship into religious rituals, or involve wastefulness (tabżīr). The two interviewees share the view that there are boundaries that must not be crossed, particularly concerning elements of wastefulness (isrāf or tabżīr). Both are generally receptive to the tepung tawar tradition as a valid form of 'urf, provided that the required conditions are fulfilled. However, their perspectives differ in emphasis. The first interviewee adopts a more cautious approach, particularly by highlighting the potential problematic aspects of the tradition, including what he describes as syirk khafī, or hidden polytheism, which individuals may sometimes commit without realizing it. Meanwhile, the second interviewee is more accepting of tepung tawar as a valid customary practice ('urf ṣaḥīḥ), provided that it fulfills the established requirements.

The Status of the Tepung Tawar Tradition in the Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah

Regarding whether an official decision on the tepung tawar tradition has been included in the Himpunan Putusan Tarjih (HPT), Mr. Benny Fernanda, S.Pd.I., M.Pd., explained that no official decision or religious ruling specifically addressing this tradition has been issued in the HPT. Nevertheless, its legal position can be understood through discussions concerning ethical guidelines, the teachings of tauḥīd, and the principles governing the treatment of customs and cultural practices.

According to the Muhammadiyah Manhaj Tarjih, customary traditions are fundamentally permissible as long as they do not contain elements of TBC (Takhayyul, Bid'ah, and Khurāfāt) or polytheistic beliefs. However, Tarjih's religious guidance concerning practices such as tepung tawar and tahlilan emphasizes a persuasive approach. This means that individuals who choose not to participate in such practices should not hurt the feelings of those who perform them.

Meanwhile, H. Drs. Daulat P. Sibarani explained that, to date, no official decision or religious ruling in the HPT specifically addresses the *tepung tawar* tradition. Its legal status is therefore evaluated using the principles contained in *Kitāb Masalah Lima*, rather than through a specific chapter dedicated to *tepung tawar*.[45]

According to the Muhammadiyah Majelis Tarjih Manhaj, this refers to the methods, principles, and reasoning employed by the Majelis Tarjih in understanding and determining Islamic legal rulings. The application of the Muhammadiyah Majelis Tarjih methodology to the tepung tawar tradition is based on the principles contained in HPT Volume 1 (Masalah Lima, p. 276), as follows:

1. Examination of the Customary Element

   From the perspective of the Tarjih Council, customary practices belong to the domain of mu'āmalah (worldly and social affairs). The fundamental legal principle governing customs is permissibility. Therefore, customary activities such as welcoming guests, offering advice, praying for newly married couples, and expressing gratitude are fundamentally permissible.

[45] Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah (Jilid 1)*, 3rd ed. (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2009).

2. Examination of the Elements of Belief

   The primary concern arises when individuals believe that flour, water, rice, or particular leaves possess supernatural powers capable of warding off calamities and providing protection. Such beliefs contradict the principle of tauḥīd.

3. Examination of the Prayers within the Tepung Tawar Ceremony

   If the *tepung tawar* ceremony involves only prayers directed toward Allah, requests for blessings from Allah, and activities intended to convey advice and strengthen social relationships (*silaturahim*), then the primary consideration is the content of the prayers rather than the customary objects used in the ceremony. However, these prayers must not be regarded as obligatory customary rituals or as requirements for ensuring the safety of an event. This position is consistent with the principles of *Masalah Lima* and with Chapter V, "The Concept of *Dīn al-Islām*, Culture, and Arts," of HPT Volume 3.[46]

Discussion: Positioning the Findings

The findings confirm, but also qualify, previous studies. Like Al Mansur et al. and Ardiansyah and Masrokhin, the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi accepts *tepung tawar* as a permissible custom rather than prohibiting it outright.[47] Like Maulana, Ghozali, and Sarifandi, it locates the legitimacy of the

[46] Muhammadiyah.

[47] Al Mansur et al., "Tinjauan Hukum Islam terhadap Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar pada Adat Pernikahan Melayu Bengkalis"; Ardiansyah and Masrokhin, "The Tradition of Tepuk Tepung Tawar in Malay Weddings from the Perspective of Islamic Law: A Case Study at Tanjungpinang, Riau Islands."

rite in the prayers it contains rather than in its objects.[48] Unlike studies that speak of "harmony" between custom and sharia in general terms, however, the Tarjih reasoning makes permissibility explicitly conditional and identifies the specific elements, namely *mantra*, belief in intrinsic power, treatment as a religious requirement, and wastefulness, that must be removed. Its emphasis on *syirk khafī* also adds a theological dimension that is largely absent from studies based on customary leaders' views.

This conditional permissibility reflects Muhammadiyah's wider approach to culture. The HPT treats culture as fundamentally acceptable insofar as it does not contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the Manhaj Tarjih separates the domain of *'ibādah*, where innovation is rejected, from that of *mu'āmalah*, where the basic rule is permissibility.[49] Contemporary Muhammadiyah scholarship on cultural *da'wah* likewise favours correction from within over prohibition.[50] The Tebing Tinggi case shows how this general orientation is applied at the regional level when no central decision exists: the local Tarjih body derives a ruling from general principles and combines it with a persuasive *da'wah* strategy. These findings, however, reflect the views of two members of PDM Tebing Tinggi and should not be generalised to Muhammadiyah as a whole.

[48] Maulana, Ghozali, and Sarifandi, "Tradisi Tepuk Tepung Tawar dalam Budaya Melayu Riau: Sebuah Analisis dalam Perspektif Hadis."

[49] Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah Jilid 3*; Anwar, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah*.

[50] Wijaya, Romli, and Azwar, "Community Response to the Cultural Da'wah Practices by Muhammadiyah Preachers in Palembang City."

CONCLUSION

This study answers its three research questions as follows. First, *tepung tawar* in Malay *walīmat al-'urs* is a blessing rite performed after the marriage contract, in which elders apply a flour-and-water mixture and scatter rice while offering prayers; its pre-Islamic elements have largely been reinterpreted as prayers addressed to Allah, although practice varies between localities. Second, under the theory of *'urf*, the customary core of the rite, consisting of respect, advice and prayer to Allah, qualifies as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* and is *mubāḥ*; *mantra* invoking other than Allah, belief in the intrinsic power of its materials, treatment of the rite as a religious requirement, and wasteful acts constitute *'urf fāsid*. Because the rite belongs to *'ādah* rather than *'ibādah*, it is not *bid'ah* unless it is attributed to religion as a prescribed ritual. Third, the Majelis Tarjih of PDM Tebing Tinggi confirms that the HPT contains no specific decision on *tepung tawar* and evaluates it through *Masalah Lima*. Both informants permit the rite under three conditions: conviction that benefit comes only from Allah, prayers directed solely to Him, and the absence of *isrāf*.

Recommendations, implications, and limitations. The Majelis Tarjih at higher levels may consider issuing explicit guidance on local wedding customs, and religious leaders in Tebing Tinggi should accompany the rite with explanations of its non-ritual status. The study implies that local Tarjih bodies can accommodate Malay custom through conditional permissibility rather than prohibition. Its findings are limited to PDM Tebing Tinggi and rest on two key informants and secondary data on ceremonial procedures; future research should involve customary leaders, practitioners and couples, and compare PDM views across regions.

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