

Ritual as the Primordial Nexus: Bellah's Evolutionary Framework for Social Solidarity and Cultural Identity

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Abstract:

The Ritual Roots of Society and Culture of Bellah's work (2005) in the Handbook of the Sociology of Religion discusses ritual as the foundation of society and culture through an interdisciplinary perspective. Bellah integrates Durkheim's (1912/1995) theory of collective effervescence, Collins (1998) on the rituals of everyday interaction, Deacon (1997) on the origins of symbolic language, and Rappaport (1999) who divides the meaning of ritual into three levels: low as information, middle as metaphor, and high as unity of self with others. Bellah argues that ritual is not just a religious practice but a basic social action that shapes solidarity, morality, and collective meaning, from human evolution to modern life, including elections and public events. A critical analysis shows the strengths of this article, namely its integration of cross-disciplinary theories, its depth of evolutionary perspectives, and its contemporary relevance. However, there are limitations, including minimal exploration of scepticism, speculative empirical examples, and a focus on the Western context. The application of Bellah's theory to Indonesian and Sundanese culture is demonstrated through the rituals of Cokaiba Maluku, Seren Taun, traditional weddings, and angklung music, which strengthen mutual cooperation and communal identity. In the context of Islam, worship rituals such as prayer, zakat, fasting, and the pilgrimage align with Bellah's concept, supported by Qur'anic verses such as Al-Baqarah: 43 and Al-Hujurat: 10, which foster communal solidarity amidst cultural diversity. Overall, Bellah's theory asserts that ritual is a crucial mechanism for creating social harmony and preserving cultural identity, relevant to the challenges of globalization and secularism. The emphasis on collective meaning and solidarity makes ritual a vital instrument in maintaining social, moral, and cultural balance in contemporary society.

Keywords: collective effervescence; Islam; Origins of Language; ritual music; Sundanese Indonesian Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The study of rituals has long been a center of attention in the sociology of religion because rituals are seen not only as religious practices, but also as elements that underlie the existence and function of society itself. Robert N. Bellah, in his writing *The Ritual Roots of Society and Culture* contained in the *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, asserts that without rituals, society lacks a strong foundation of solidarity, morality, and collective meaning. This differs from the classical view that sees religion and ritual as merely certain aspects of culture, but places them as integral evolutionary factors in the formation of human society (Bellah, 1964).

Bellah begins his discussion from the classical heritage of sociology, particularly the work of Émile Durkheim, by taking a long quote from *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912/1995), which shows that human social life depends on the duality between monotonous “profane time” and “sacred time” filled with intense collectivity. Durkheim saw ritual as a moment where collectivity produces collective effervescence, namely shared emotional energy that strengthens social bonds within a community. Ritual for Durkheim is a way for society to separate the sacred from the profane and create a whole moral community (Bellah, 1964).

Bellah then takes the reader beyond Durkheim. He combines Durkheimian ideas with the study of symbolic interaction popularized by other sociologists such as Randall Collins, Erving Goffman, and Terrence Deacon, to show that ritual is not just a religious phenomenon, but the foundation of all social interaction. Collins (1998) even suggests that all social interaction can be understood as a form of interaction ritual, in which two or more people come together to focus on a common object or action, and share an emotional resonance that strengthens a sense of membership and moral obligation within the group. These interaction rituals serve as a way for individuals to assert their position within the social network, rather than simply performing religious practices. Bellah then examines the origins of language, citing the work of Terrence Deacon (*The Symbolic Species*, 1997) who observed that the rhythm, meter, and repetition of rituals helped early hominids transition from an indexical communication system (like that of chimpanzees) to the more complex symbolic system of language. Rituals consistently use repetition and redundancy to incorporate symbolic signs into social structures, thus enabling a shift from concrete associations between signs and objects to relationships between signs themselves. This provides the basis for the formation of a symbolic language that is essential to human social life.

Bellah also discusses the relationship between ritual and music, drawing on studies such as Wallin, Merker, and Brown's *The Origins of Music* (2000), which demonstrates that music, with its consistent rhythms and sound patterns, was an integral part of early ritual practices. Music in rituals can strengthen emotional bonds because it stimulates a synchronous collective emotional response—a phenomenon similar to the concept of collective effervescence. Music becomes a medium for human groups to create a sense of unity and a strong collective emotional memory. From this study, Bellah concludes that ritual is not merely a specific aspect of culture, but is a “fundamental social action of humanity” essential to the formation of social order. This approach goes beyond the function of ritual as a mere symbol or personal religion, but emphasizes its role as a mechanism for creating social conventions, moral order, and collective meaning systems—a function rooted in human biological and social evolution (Bellah, 1964).

In his analysis of contemporary life, Bellah demonstrates that rituals have not disappeared in the era of secular modernity, although their forms have changed. Rituals can be found in various daily activities such as communal meals, school customs, sports, military ceremonies, and even in politics such as elections or national commemorations. Such rituals still involve elements of repetition, symbolism, and emotional resonance that strengthen collective solidarity even in non-religious contexts. When rituals fail to provide legitimacy, for example in a contested election, this can negatively impact overall social legitimacy (Bellah, 1964). Through this perspective, Bellah made significant contributions to the study of modernity and secularization. He not only viewed secularization as the reduction of religion in public life, but also observed how ritual practices persist in other contexts as an important element of social integration. Rituals can be found in the way societies treat state symbols, family traditions, and social norms that strengthen community cohesion (Bellah, 1964).

The application of Bellah's concept to the Indonesian context and Sundanese culture illustrates how ritual remains relevant within highly diverse social structures. In Indonesia, rituals such as Cokaiba in Maluku, Seren Taun in Sunda and Cirebon, and traditional wedding ceremonies demonstrate how rituals serve to strengthen group solidarity, reinforce communal bonds, and create a strong local cultural identity, even amidst processes of modernization and globalization. For example, Seren Taun, a harvest ritual as a form of gratitude to nature

and ancestors, involves music, dance, and cultural symbols that strengthen connections between community members and with their spiritual environment. Such rituals align with Bellah's concept of ritual as symbolic play that conveys moral values and social solidarity beyond the context of formal religion. These rituals provide a shared experience that strengthens a sense of togetherness and shared identity within a pluralistic society. Furthermore, traditional music such as the *angklung* in Sundanese communities demonstrates how musical elements in traditional rituals foster a sense of unity and mutual cooperation, a parallel to Bellah's notion of music as a ritual medium for fostering solidarity and collective emotion. Music and dance in the context of Indonesian culture are not just entertainment, but are an important part of how communities transmit moral values, social norms, and solidarity across generations.

In the context of Islam, rituals such as prayer, the Ramadan fast, zakat (almsgiving), and the Hajj pilgrimage also demonstrate how ritual practices can build solidarity and collective meaning in a multicultural society. Congregational prayer in the mosque strengthens a sense of brotherhood among believers, while the Ramadan fast fosters empathy for the less fortunate. The Hajj, as the culminating ritual, demonstrates the collectiveness of believers gathering from across the world to perform rituals together, which aligns with Bellah's idea that collective ritual experiences can strengthen social cohesion and shared identity. Verses in the Qur'an also emphasize the value of social solidarity through ritual practices. For example, the command to pray in Surah Al-Baqarah (verse 43) demonstrates how structured worship fosters social discipline and order. Other verses, such as Surah Al-Hujurat (verse 10), emphasize the importance of brotherhood and harmony among believers, which can be seen as a reflection of the meaning of collective rituals in Islamic social life. Rituals are not only religious acts but also a way of affirming social commitment to the values of justice, compassion, and unity.

While Bellah's ideas offer comprehensive insights, his approach has also received some criticism. One is his tendency to overemphasize the relationship between ritual and social evolution without providing strong empirical evidence in many contemporary cases. Some critics consider his examples to be speculative, as they relate to a periodization of human evolution that has not yet been fully verified. Furthermore, Bellah's focus on the Western context sometimes makes generalizations to non-Western societies incomplete, necessitating further research based on local empirical data. Another criticism relates to the limited exploration of societal skepticism toward modern rituals, which are often viewed as manipulative or related to social power dynamics, rather than as genuine builders of solidarity. While Bellah himself acknowledges this skepticism, as discussed by Bell (1997), he maintains that ritual is fundamental to human social action.

Robert N. Bellah's approach in **The Ritual Roots of Society and Culture** provides powerful theoretical insights into how rituals serve as the foundation for the formation of society and culture. By combining Durkheim's classical approach with theories of interaction and the evolution of language and music, Bellah constructs a narrative that rituals are not merely religious practices but also universal mechanisms that shape solidarity, morality, and collective meaning across diverse social contexts. This view can be broadly applied to the analysis of rituals across cultures, including Indonesia and Islamic religious practices, while recognizing the need for more in-depth empirical research into contemporary ritual phenomena across diverse human societies.

Ritual as a fundamental element in human social and cultural life has become a major focus in the study of the sociology of religion. One of the most significant contributions to this understanding comes from Robert N. Bellah, particularly through his work **The Ritual Roots of Society and Culture**, contained in the *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (Bellah, 2005). Bellah emphasizes that ritual is not merely a religious practice, but a fundamental social action that shapes solidarity, morality, and collective meaning in society. Bellah's approach is interdisciplinary, combining Durkheim's theory of collective effervescence, Collins and Goffman's concept of everyday interaction, Deacon's origins of symbolic language, and Rappaport's levels of ritual meaning. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how ritual shapes social structure, both in traditional and modern contexts. This literature review includes an analysis of Bellah's evolutionary speculations, a reinterpretation of Durkheim's concepts, the concept of civil religion, and the relevance of Bellah's ritual theory to contemporary society, including Indonesian culture and Islamic religious practices.

First, the research conducted by Guy G. Stroumsa (2011) on Robert Bellah on the origins of religion. A Critical Review. A critical analysis of Bellah's views on the origins of ritual shows that Bellah places ritual as the most fundamental social act in human evolution, linked to the function of play (*homo ludens*) and the emergence of symbolic language. Bellah interprets ritual as central to the formation of human culture in primitive societies and its subsequent development into more complex forms. The main criticism that emerges

from this study is that Bellah's evolutionary approach is often too speculative and lacks strong empirical evidence beyond grand theoretical narratives; many of his arguments rely on abstract conceptions of the evolution of ritual from a mimetic phase to organized society, without sufficient verifiable anthropological or archaeological data. This criticism points to the risk of oversimplification when generalizing classical ritual to every human social form, especially since the evidence for early human society is much more fragmentary than Bellah's picture of cultural evolution. This interdisciplinary approach is indeed innovative, but it needs to be approached with caution regarding the available empirical evidence (Stroumsa, 2012).

Second, research conducted by Jean-Louis Fabiani (2023) on Bellah's Durkheim: A fruitful reinvention?. Bellah in his work *His Works* (including *The Ritual Roots*) reinterprets Durkheim's basic concepts of collective effervescence and ritual as central forms of social action. An article in *The American Sociologist* suggests that Bellah shifted Durkheim's focus from social structural explanations to an emphasis on the emotional and symbolic experience of ritual. The criticism here is that Bellah may have "overdone-overemphasize the emotional and symbolic dimensions of ritual, thus obscuring the rational and structural aspects of society that Durkheim himself upheld. While Durkheim tended to assess ritual through a functional and empirical approach, Bellah instead brought in strong personal narrative and moral elements, which became the subject of debate within the sociological community. Bellah's approach made the theory more normative: ritual is not only a social unifier, but also a source of moral values in society. This criticism does not reject the role of ritual, but questions the level of subjective interpretation that Bellah adds beyond Durkheim's traditional empirical foundation (Fabiani, 2023).

Third, research conducted by Leonid Kondratyuk (2018) on Robert Bellah's Concept of the Civil Religion: Pros and Cons. Bellah's primary focus, in several of his other works, is the concept of civil religion, rituals and shared symbols outside of formal religion that still unite society. Kondratyuk's analysis critiques Bellah's model of civil religion, which can easily be misinterpreted as excessive nationalistic idolatry, rather than as a genuine mechanism of social solidarity. This critique deepens the understanding that collective rituals such as state ceremonies and political symbols can function not only as social unifiers but also as tools of political legitimacy that potentially diminish diversity. The critique warns that if rituals are too tied to state ideology, they can actually support authoritarian systems and increase social tensions, rather than strengthening solidarity. Bellah's approach is considered to not capture the contextual dangers of rituals that are too embedded in power structures. (Kondratyuk, 2018).

Fourth, research conducted by Michele Dillon (2003) in the *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. More contemporary analyses of the sociology of religion show that Bellah successfully expanded the understanding of ritual far beyond traditional religious contexts to include all forms of daily social rituals (eating together, sports, elections), combining secular and sacred contexts. This approach has great power in helping sociologists understand the symbolic role of ritual in modern, pluralistic life, including in multicultural and secular societies. However, modern sociological historians have also pointed out that such generalizations can obscure the structural distinction between classical religious rituals and secular, pragmatic rituals, thereby making the theory lose its predictive power in specific empirical studies. For example, the ritual of eating together in a particular country may be rich in cultural values, but it does not have the same structural impact as intense religious rituals. This criticism highlights the need for more rigorous empirical research to validate the generalizations of Bellah's theory in cross-cultural practice (Dillon, 2003).

Fifth, research conducted by Bryan S. Turner (2017) on *Ritual, belief and habituation: Religion and religions from the axial age to the Anthropocene*. This article conducts a critical evaluation of Robert N. Bellah's evolutionary ideas, especially the concept of the Axial Age and the relationship of religious ritual in the context of cultural evolution. Turner begins by agreeing that Bellah successfully revived the emphasis on ritual and religion in the development of human society, and that Bellah's focus on the relationship of ritual solidarity is crucial in the sociology of religion. However, Turner takes the next step by evaluating the historical and contemporary implications of Bellah's approach, especially in the Anthropocene era which is marked by major changes in human-nature relations due to biotechnology and modern social transformations. Turner argues that while Bellah's theory of ritual continuity from the Axial Age to the modern world has heuristic force, it may overlook the profound disjunctures occurring in human social structures and religious experiences due to environmental and technological changes. For example, the development of biotechnologies that modify human bodies and identities may change the way rituals are practiced and understood, so that they no longer continue to reflect the same ritual forms as they did during the Axial Age. Consequently, Turner suggests that

there may be a fundamental shift in ritual itself, from habituated to more individualistic and disembodied forms as modernity progresses (Turner, 2017).

This literature review demonstrates that Robert N. Bellah's ritual theory makes a significant contribution to understanding how rituals serve as the foundation of social life, shaping solidarity, and generating collective meaning in both modern and traditional societies. However, various academic critiques point to Bellah's theory as being limited by its tendency to generalize, its lack of empirical support for some evolutionary arguments, and its potential for normative bias in assessing the moral dimensions of ritual. Critical discourse from scholars such as Stroumsa, Fabiani, Kondratyuk, Dillon, and Turner has enriched our understanding that rituals not only unite but can also harbor ideological risks, power imbalances, and vulnerability to change in the modern era. Thus, Bellah's theory remains relevant and influential, but needs to be contextualized and continually critiqued to address the increasingly complex and pluralistic social, political, cultural, and religious dynamics of contemporary society.

METHOD

This research methodology uses a library research approach that focuses on the search, collection, selection, analysis, and synthesis of various academic sources that discuss ritual theory (Creswell, 2016), the evolution of religiosity, and Robert Bellah's sociology of religion. The first process begins with the identification of primary sources, namely Bellah's own works that contain his conceptual constructions and main arguments regarding the role of ritual in the formation of society, such as his work in the *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (Dillon, 2003) and his major work *Religion in Human Evolution* (Turner, 2017), because these two sources serve as the main theoretical foundation for understanding Bellah's framework of thought authentically and completely. After that, a search for secondary sources in the form of reputable international journal articles, critical studies, and empirical research that uses, tests, or criticizes Bellah's theory was carried out, by utilizing academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, SpringerLink, and ResearchGate, so that the selected publications are truly credible and relevant. The next stage is a systematic selection process, namely selecting literature that meets the latest criteria, has direct relevance to the critique of Bellah's theory, represents various approaches (theoretical, historical, empirical, evolutionary, and anthropological), and presents diverse viewpoints, both supporting and opposing, so that the analysis is not biased (Sugiyono, 2022).

A content analysis was then conducted through in-depth reading to understand the arguments, methods, and conclusions used by each author in positioning Bellah. This analysis process includes assessing how Bellah's theory is understood, the extent to which its empirical validity has been tested, its relevance in the context of modern society, and whether there are methodological weaknesses, problematic evolutionist assumptions, Eurocentrism, or limitations of cultural context. The next stage is critical interpretation, namely comparing the views of different researchers, placing Bellah's theory within Durkheimian thought, contemporary ritual theory such as Randall Collins, and its correlation with Rappaport's ideas on the structure of ritual meaning. From here, a synthesis process is carried out, namely formulating comprehensive conclusions regarding the position of Bellah's theory in the development of the sociology of religion, its conceptual strengths, its contributions to the study of ritual and society, as well as the weaknesses and challenges of his theory in the modern era. To maintain the validity of the methodology, this study also applies the principle of academic credibility, namely using only indexed scientific sources, citing appropriately, comparing literature across disciplines, and ensuring that interpretations are carried out objectively, not speculatively, and based on scientific data (Miles, 1994). Thus, this methodology ensures that a critical review of Robert Bellah's theory is not only descriptive, but analytical, reflective, and argumentative, so that it can produce a comprehensive, relevant, and academic understanding of Bellah's major role in building the modern foundation of the sociology of religion (Creswell, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prayer Ritual as Collective Effervescence and Solidarity

In Islam, rituals function as collective worship that strengthens the community's togetherness, in line with the idea (Bellah, 1964) that ritual practices can build social solidarity. Congregational prayer, for example, is not only a religious obligation but also binds individuals into a harmonious network of togetherness. In the Indonesian context, particularly Sundanese culture, Islamic rituals are often integrated with local traditions, forming religious expressions that are performative, adaptive, and symbolic (Asad, 1993). Verses related to prayer, zakat, fasting,

and the pilgrimage demonstrate that rituals play a crucial role in building community bonds, solidarity, and social unity among Muslims.

Congregational prayer creates a shared focus through uniform movements, recitations, and direction of worship, all directed toward a common spiritual goal. This unison generates collective emotions that unite the congregation in a profound religious experience. From Collins' perspective on interactive rituals, this condition builds positive emotional energy, a sense of togetherness, and a strong sense of membership in the community. Thus, congregational prayer not only strengthens an individual's relationship with God but also strengthens social bonds, moral responsibility, and solidarity among fellow Muslims. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:43):

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

" And establish prayer, pay the zakat, and bow down with those who bow down."

This verse emphasizes that prayer is not merely an individual act of worship, but rather a collective ritual performed collectively, including communal bowing, thus fostering a sense of togetherness and unity among the congregation. This shared practice creates moral bonds, a sense of religious identity, and strengthens social solidarity among the congregation. Furthermore, congregational prayer also clearly distinguishes between sacred and profane time, as understood from Durkheim's perspective, where religious rituals create an atmosphere of sanctity that separates humans from their daily routines. Thus, congregational prayer becomes an effective means of fostering unity, religious discipline, and social cohesion among the congregation. Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:1-2):

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

"Successful indeed are the believers, those who are humble in their prayers."

The emphasis on *khusyu'* in worship emphasizes the performative dimension of ritual, as explained by Rappaport: that ritual practice is not merely symbolic but actually transforms the internal dispositions of those who practice it. *Khusyu'* provides a profound emotional and spiritual engagement, so that worship is not merely a mechanical routine but an experience that shapes morality, social sensitivity, and spiritual closeness. Through centeredness, concentration, and total submission to God, ritual produces psychological transformation that is then reflected in more ethical and empathetic social actions. Thus, *khusyu'* strengthens the individual's emotional bond with the faith community and reinforces collective moral commitment.

Zakat Ritual as a Social Contract and Morality

Zakat, as a mechanism for wealth redistribution, plays a crucial role in shaping moral order and social unity in Islamic society. This practice is not merely a material act of worship, but a symbolic act that structures social relations between the wealthy and the needy. In line with Deacon's notion of symbolic transition, which helps people resolve social issues through collective meaning agreements, zakat functions as an agreed-upon communal moral contract. This obligation fosters solidarity, a sense of togetherness, and a commitment to social justice. Zakat is thus not merely a religious obligation, but an effective social instrument for strengthening community cohesion, reducing inequality, and building a collective identity based on humanitarian and spiritual values. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:277):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

" Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and pay zakat will have their reward with their Lord. On them will be no fear, nor will they grieve."

The fact that zakat is always combined with prayer demonstrates that Islamic rituals are not merely individual but also possess a strong social dimension. Prayer fosters spiritual discipline and moral

awareness, while zakat serves as a mechanism for purifying wealth and strengthening social responsibility. The combination of the two shapes the collective morality of the community, instilling values of caring, empathy, and justice. Through zakat, communal bonds are strengthened by fostering a relationship of mutual assistance between those who are able and those in need. Thus, zakat is not only a form of worship but also an instrument of social solidarity that ensures balance and harmony in Islamic society. Surah At-Taubah (9:103):

حُدِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةٌ تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

" Take zakat from some of their wealth, with which you purify and purify them, and pray for them. Indeed, your prayer is (a) peace of mind for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Zakat is a performative ritual that is not simply a financial obligation, but serves both a purifying function and a strengthening of human values. This practice cleanses the heart of selfishness and materialism, while connecting individuals with broader social interests. By distributing a portion of one's wealth to those in need, zakat creates a deeply meaningful relationship between giver and recipient, fostering a sense of unity, empathy, and equality. Through this mechanism of social justice distribution, zakat strengthens solidarity, builds collective responsibility, and affirms the identity of the community as a mutually supportive moral community. Ultimately, zakat is not merely a personal act of worship, but a means of fostering social cohesion and harmony in shared life.

Fasting Rituals as Communal Discipline and Empathy

Ramadan fasting serves not only as an individual act of worship, but also as a means of fostering emotional harmony and social bonds among Muslims. When Muslims around the world observe fasting in unison, there is a harmony of feelings, spiritual experiences, and a collective consciousness that unites them in a common atmosphere. This unison of practice creates a strong emotional connection, similar to the concept of *musilanguage* in ritual, namely the synchronization of emotions created through repeated, shared activities with symbolic meaning. During Ramadan, the intensity of worship, social activities, and the spirit of sharing increases, strengthening solidarity, a sense of brotherhood, and togetherness. Moments such as congregational tarawih prayers, breaking the fast together, and giving to each other deepen the social cohesion of the community. Thus, Ramadan fasting becomes a ritual that not only fosters spiritual closeness with God but also builds emotional harmony and unity within the Muslim community at large. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

" O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become pious."

Fasting is an annual ritual that is continually repeated in Islam and has a powerful social function. Through the experience of enduring hunger and thirst, Muslims are trained to feel what those living in limitations experience, thus fostering empathy, social sensitivity, and solidarity with the poor and needy. More than just an individual act of worship, the Ramadan fast involves the collective participation of all Muslims worldwide at the same time. This simultaneity of worship creates an intense shared spiritual atmosphere, bringing a sense of togetherness, social warmth, and increased religious and charitable activities. This condition creates what is known as *collective effervescence*, where shared religious emotions and spirituality strengthen the sense of brotherhood and communal identity of the people. Thus, fasting is not only a personal ritual practice, but also a social mechanism that strengthens the bonds, unity, and solidarity of Muslims globally. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:185):

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۗ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

"The month of Ramadan, the month in which was revealed (the beginning) of the Quran as a guidance for mankind and explanations of the guidance and the distinction (between right and wrong). Therefore, whoever of you is present (in his country of residence) in that month, then he should fast in that month..."

Fasting in Islam is positioned as a symbolic ritual closely linked to divine revelation, as this practice is directly based on the commands of the Quran and prophetic tradition. By abstaining from food, drink, and certain biological desires, fasting not only exercises self-control but also serves as a means of transition to deeper spiritual awareness. The experience of enduring hunger and thirst fosters social empathy, a sense of community, and a moral awareness for those less fortunate. More broadly, the Ramadan fast is practiced simultaneously by Muslims worldwide, fostering a strong sense of global solidarity. This shared spiritual and emotional experience strengthens the collective identity of the Muslim community, creating a sense of unity across cultures, nations, and geographies. Thus, fasting is not merely an individual act of worship, but a social ritual that serves to foster spiritual closeness, human solidarity, and shared moral commitment in the lives of Muslims globally.

The Hajj Ritual as Unity and Performative

The Hajj, one of the greatest rituals in Islam, brings together millions of people from different nations, languages, cultures, and social statuses in one time and space, performing a series of rituals in an identical form. This uniformity of action creates a powerful collective spiritual experience, where each individual no longer stands as a separate self, but as part of the global community of Muslims. From Rappaport's perspective, the Hajj can be understood as a ritual that reaches the highest level of meaning, namely the achievement of unity with others and the formation of a deep sense of togetherness. The emotional, symbolic, and spiritual experiences that emerge during the Hajj affirm solidarity, equality, and universal brotherhood. Thus, the Hajj is not only a personal spiritual worship, but also a process of forming communal identity and social meaning that strengthens relationships among believers throughout the world. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:196):

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَخْلِفُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهٍ أَدَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۖ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۖ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۖ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۗ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ۗ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾

"Complete the Hajj and Umrah for the sake of Allah. But if you are besieged (by the enemy), (sacrifice) the easy-to-get sacrificial animal and do not shave your head until the sacrificial animal reaches the place of slaughter. If any of you is sick or has an ailment on his head (and shaves it), he must make atonement, that is, fast, give charity, or sacrifice. If you are in a state of security, whoever performs Umrah before Hajj (tamatu'), he must (sacrifice) the easy-to-get sacrificial animal. But if he does not get it, he must fast three days during (the period of) Hajj and seven (days) after you return. That is ten complete days. This provision applies to those whose family does not reside around the Sacred Mosque. Fear Allah and know that Allah is Severe in punishment."

The command to perfect the Hajj and Umrah rituals demonstrates that both are performative rituals with relatively fixed rules, sequences, and structures, such as the tawaf, sa'i, and wuqf, carried out collectively by millions of pilgrims. This fixed form of ritual creates uniformity of action, unity of purpose, and a sense of togetherness that transcends ethnic, linguistic, and regional boundaries, thus fostering universal solidarity among Muslims. At the same time, Islam also provides rukhsah or legal leniency under certain conditions, demonstrating social flexibility and concern for humanity in ritual practice. Thus, the Hajj and Umrah are not only personal acts of worship, but also mechanisms for establishing a shared moral and social contract that affirms brotherhood, equality, and collective responsibility among believers. Through these rituals, a strong communal awareness is built that the people are a single spiritual and social entity bound by shared values and commitments. Surah Al-Hajj (22:27):

وَادِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

"And call upon the people to perform Hajj, they will come to you on foot, and on lean camels, coming from every far-off place."

The Hajj pilgrimage is described as a grand, inclusive ritual that embraces all Muslims from various nations, races, and social backgrounds. During its implementation, millions of people gather in the same time and space, wearing the uniform ihram garments that eliminate differences in status, thus creating a sense of equality, brotherhood, and universal solidarity. This intense experience of togetherness builds a global moral community grounded in the values of monotheism, obedience, justice, and social concern. Within the context of sociological theory of religion, the Hajj experience can be compared to Durkheim's concept of collective effervescence, a situation where shared engagement in ritual generates emotional energy, communal spirit, and a strong collective consciousness. Through these spiritual and social moments, the Hajj becomes not only an individual act of worship but also a process of forming the collective identity of the Muslim community, strengthening shared moral commitment, and affirming global unity within a framework of faith and human values.

Community Solidarity (*Ukhuwah*) as a Result of Rituals

Rituals in Islam as a whole play a vital role in building unity, togetherness, and a sense of social responsibility among the people, as reflected in the value of mutual cooperation that is deeply rooted in Indonesian culture, including Sundanese society. Collective worship practices, such as congregational prayer, zakat (almsgiving), fasting together, and various socio-religious activities, serve not only as a form of devotion to God but also as a way of strengthening relationships among people. This aligns with the message of Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10), which emphasizes that Muslims are brothers and sisters, requiring them to maintain harmony, reconcile disputes, and foster a spirit of mutual concern. Thus, religious rituals have not only a spiritual dimension but also a social one, fostering a strong sense of brotherhood, communal solidarity, and a shared commitment to realizing goodness and justice in community life. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10):

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

"Indeed, the believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

This verse emphasizes the importance of communal brotherhood born from shared religious practices, which serve not only as ritual worship but also as a form of collective identity and a sense of belonging within the community. Through participation in communal rituals, moral awareness, social responsibility, and a commitment to mutual assistance and support emerge. The principle of mutual assistance in good deeds, as emphasized in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:2), strengthens social and spiritual bonds, so that the community is united not only by faith but also by ethical responsibility towards others. Thus, religious rituals not only build relationships between humans and God but also build relationships between humans based on compassion, solidarity, and strong moral obligations. This brotherhood is an important foundation for maintaining the unity of

the community amidst modern challenges, so that the value of togetherness remains alive and functions as a unifying social force. This is explained in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:2):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا آمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَنْ صَدُّوكُمْ عَنْ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَنْ تُعْتَدُوا ۚ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"O you who believe, do not violate the signs (sanctity) of Allah, do not (violate the honor) of the sacred months, do not (disturb) the hadyu (sacrificial animals) and qalā'id (sacrificial animals that are given marks), and do not (also disturb) the visitors to Baitul Haram while they are seeking the bounty and the pleasure of their Lord! When you have completed the ihram (completed the state of ihram), hunt (if you wish). Do not let hatred (yours) for a people, because they prevent you from the Sacred Mosque, incite you to transgress (to them). Help one another in (doing) righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and enmity. Fear Allah, indeed Allah is severe in punishment."

Encouraging mutual cooperation in good deeds is an essential essence of socio-religious life. Ritual practices such as zakat and fasting serve not only as individual religious obligations but also as a means of strengthening togetherness and social awareness. Through zakat, people are trained to be sensitive to the needs of others and to build a just system of economic solidarity. Likewise, fasting fosters empathetic awareness, fosters a sense of shared responsibility, and creates moral bonds among people. This value of togetherness becomes particularly relevant when compared to the conditions of the modern world, which are often characterized by individualism, extreme competition, and weakening social ties, as Bellah argues. Thus, these religious rituals are not only spiritual means but also social mechanisms that maintain community cohesion, strengthen collective identity, and affirm the ethic of mutual cooperation as the basis of a harmonious and meaningful social life.

Rituals and the Origins of Language

Deacon argues that early hominid rituals shifted from indexical communication addressing present realities, such as animal rituals for sex/aggression, to symbolic communication, such as promises for the future, such as marriage contracts. Ritual repetition creates redundancy, shaping language as a collective representation with moral meaning. This resolves reproductive issues through stable pair bonds. Ritual and Language: In Indonesian traditional wedding ceremonies, local languages and symbols such as betel nut (pinang) are used to symbolize the promise of matrilineal family ties, creating a categorical relationship system of wife, in-laws, and elders. This is similar to Deacon's symbolic transition, as rituals mark permanent social roles. The preservation of regional languages through rituals strengthens communal solidarity and cultural identity, preventing the loss of traditional values due to globalization (Day, 2020). Linked to Sundanese culture, Sundanese weddings reflect Deacon's social contract, with nine symbolic steps, such as the siraman (prayers) and nincak endog (showering) that mark the new roles of husband, wife, and in-laws. The repetition of Sundanese prayers and pantun (pantun) in this ritual, like Deacon's redundancy, creates a public promise for the stability of the matrilineal family. The Seven Months Ritual is also symbolic, involving offerings to ancestors, reinforcing a categorical and moral system of social relations.

Rituals and the Origins of Music

Ritual music, with its rhythm and repetition, builds trust, as in the mother-child relationship, and enables social innovation through trance. This parallels Durkheim's notion that rituals create collective harmony. Traditional Indonesian music is often inseparable from rituals, reflecting Brown's musilanguage for solidarity. Talempong in Minangkabau is played in randai or wedding ceremonies, with its fast rhythms creating a spirit of mutual cooperation and joy, strengthening social bonds (Fancourt & Finn, 2021). Sundanese music is integral to rituals, reflecting Brown's musilanguage. The angklung in the Seren Taun ceremony, for example, uses the

rhythmic bamboo jingle to unite participants in dance and song, creating emotional harmony and communal trust. In Kasenian Réak, Sundanese rituals feature gamelan music and trance. Participants enter a trance to communicate with spirits, strengthening social bonds and cultural adaptation, such as the mother-child relationship in Sundanese lullabies, Dissanayake.

Ritual is a performative, invariant sequence of performances that transforms participants beyond mere symbols, creating moral conventions and three levels of meaning. The Lower Level provides information, the Middle Level is metaphorical, and the Higher Level is the unity of self with others. This involves Mauss's bodily discipline for solidarity, contrasting with the egotistical, rational world of information. Indonesian rituals are often performative, such as the Tiban ritual in Kediri, where the music of the Tolak Balak (a musical instrument used to ward off disaster) is used to achieve a higher meaning through unity with God and community, akin to Rappaport's unitive consciousness. The Asad discipline is seen in Ojhung in Bondowoso, a rattan fighting attraction with rhythmic music that integrates myths of origin, shaping moral dispositions through patience and solidarity (Yaden et al., 2020). The Mikul Lodong ritual in Cipatat is a Sundanese cultural ritual. Performatives involving the repetition of symbolic actions such as bringing offerings for unity with nature and ancestors achieve a higher meaning of harmony with God. This is similar to the Asad discipline, where the integration of Islam and Sundanese tradition shapes moral dispositions. This ritual contrasts with modern secularization, but remains vital for social harmony in Sundanese agrarian society.

Rituals are ubiquitous, such as communal meals symbolizing solidarity, political rituals such as elections, and military drills for bonding. In modern society, secularization has privatized rituals, but they are essential for morality. Acknowledging Bell's skepticism, rituals remain fundamental to social life (Bellah, 1964). Periodic rituals in Indonesia, such as Eid al-Fitr or Nyepi, create national unison, similar to JFK's funeral; people fast or observe silence together, building solidarity across ethnic groups. Eating together during a thanksgiving meal is an ancient ritual, like Visser's, with its etiquette to prevent conflict. In the political world, Indonesian elections have elements of mutual cooperation campaign rituals, although sometimes they fail, such as in the 2000 US election. Bellah's conclusion is relevant: amidst globalization, rituals such as Cokaiba or talempong persist to maintain Indonesia's cultural diversity, preventing Thomas Hobbes's Hobbesian world, especially in the context of local crises (Aliche et al., 2025). The ritual of communal eating in Sundanese culture, seen in thanksgiving, creates solidarity. For example, Nyangku in Panjalu becomes an arena for solidarity and politics. Overall, Sundanese culture demonstrates ritual as a social root, as Bellah describes, creating harmony within Indonesia's diversity. However, globalization can weaken it, so preservation through education is crucial (Day, 2020).

Ritual as Collective Effervescence

Durkheim contrasted monotonous, economically focused profane time with sacred time filled with collective passion through rituals, such as dance and song in Australian Aboriginal communities. Rituals create a church or moral community. Collins expands this to include daily interaction rituals, where two or more people focus on each other, share emotions, generate moral energy, and create group boundaries. Language is born from such rituals, full of collective meaning. In Indonesia, rituals often act as collective effervescence to strengthen solidarity amidst ethnic diversity. For example, the Cokaiba tradition in Maluku, a celebration of the Prophet's birthday, is celebrated using masks. The masks are analogous to demons. This is similar to Collins' interaction rituals, in that repeated shared actions create a sense of membership and moral obligation, preventing conflict and strengthening social ties. Cokaiba, which dates back hundreds of years, symbolizes mutual support and unity, similar to how Durkheim's rituals unite Aboriginal tribes. In the modern context, this persists despite urbanization, through the engagement of younger generations via social media to document traditions (Day, 2022). A Sundanese cultural ritual, the Seren Taun festival in Cigugur, Kuningan, is an annual harvest ritual involving singing, dancing, and the sharing of produce, uniting the community in gratitude and harmony. Similar to Collins's interaction ritual, the shared focus on harvest symbols such as bitter melon generates moral energy, strengthens communal boundaries, and fosters the obligation of mutual cooperation. Today, Seren Taun has also become a political arena, where local leaders participate to strengthen community ties (Yaden et al., 2020).

Rituals in Islam, from the theoretical perspective of Robert Bellah and a number of other thinkers, emphasize that rituals are not merely religious acts, but rather instruments for the formation of social solidarity, collective morality, and communal identity. Worship rituals such as prayer, zakat, fasting, and the pilgrimage produce spiritual experiences intertwined with social functions, forming networks of obligation, a sense of

belonging, and moral commitment among individuals. Bellah positions rituals as performative structures that build collective consciousness, making religion a social force that organizes communal life. This perspective aligns with the reality of Islam, particularly in Indonesia, where rituals are always connected to customs, cultural symbols, and the social structure of society.

The ritual of congregational prayer is a concrete example of how Islam produces collective effervescence, as intended by Durkheim. When congregants gather, organize their bodies in the same movement, recite a uniform chant, and share a spiritual awareness, a moral energy is created that strengthens community boundaries and religious identity. Collins asserts that the repetition of shared practices strengthens collective emotional memory and solidifies a sense of belonging. In the context of Sundanese and Indonesian society, congregational prayer is not only a ritual of worship but also a means of fostering friendship, building social trust, and resolving social conflicts through spiritual and social closeness. Thus, the prayer ritual plays two roles: spiritual-theological and social-communitarian (Elwert & Christakis, 2006). The zakat ritual demonstrates the powerful moral dimension of Islamic economics. Bellah explains that rituals shape a collective moral order because they instill values through obligation and repetition. In Islam, zakat is not only a financial obligation but also a social contract that ensures the continued distribution of social justice. Through zakat, the social distance between rich and poor is narrowed, empathy is sharpened, and social equilibrium is created. This aligns with Deacon's theory of symbols as a binding social and moral contract. In Indonesian society, zakat is often associated with the practice of mutual cooperation and social solidarity, strengthening the network of social trust that is essential for social stability.

The Ramadan fast demonstrates dimensions of spiritual discipline and social empathy. From a sociological perspective, fasting creates emotional simultaneity as all Muslims experience hunger, thirst, and self-restraint simultaneously. This produces a collective moral consciousness while uniting the community in a shared spiritual experience. Fasting also has psychological and social impacts, building resilience, fostering empathy for the poor, and strengthening community networks through communal iftar (breaking the fast), tarawih (prayer), and zakat al-fitr (almsgiving). On a theoretical level, this aligns with Bellah's idea that ritual shapes the moral structure and ethical disposition of society. The Hajj, as the culminating ritual, demonstrates how Islam fosters global solidarity. Rappaport states that ritual has informational, metaphorical, and transcendental levels of meaning. In the Hajj, these three levels emerge: information about the procedures of worship, symbols of the spiritual journey, and the ultimate meaning of union with God and the global community of Muslims. The Hajj erases socio-economic boundaries, uniting diverse nations, languages, and ethnicities under the uniform ihram and shared rituals. This ritual is concrete evidence that religion can create cosmopolitan solidarity that transcends the territorial boundaries of nation-states.

Islamic rituals also foster *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) as a social order. Quranic verses emphasize the importance of brotherhood, reconciliation, and mutual assistance in good deeds. Within the Bellah framework, *ukhuwah* is the result of ritual practice that internalizes moral values within individuals and collectives. In Indonesia, this is evident in the strong culture of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), which aligns with Islamic teachings. Religious rituals often trigger social solidarity, such as disaster fundraising, mosque construction, and socio-religious activities. Thus, rituals are not merely symbolic but also concrete social practices. The discussion of language and ritual demonstrates the close relationship between symbols, meaning, and social structures. Deacon asserts that language emerges from ritual structures that bind promises and social contracts. In the Indonesian context, Sundanese or Minangkabau traditional wedding rituals demonstrate how language, prayers, rhymes, and ritual symbols shape identity, family structure, and social obligations. Rituals perpetuate moral values from generation to generation. Thus, rituals are not merely ephemeral events, but mechanisms for the transmission of culture and morals.

The ritual dimension of music enriches the emotional and spiritual experiences of communities. Music in rituals creates emotional synchronization that strengthens social bonds. Brown and Fancourt explain how ritual music functions as the "emotional glue" of society. In Sundanese and Minangkabau cultures, ritual music such as *angklung*, *talempong*, and *gamelan* is not only aesthetic but also a social tool for building solidarity. Music creates trance, emotional unification, and a sense of collective trust. This perspective reinforces Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence. Rappaport's concept of ritual performativity and Mauss's bodily discipline emphasize that ritual shapes both the body and consciousness. Through repeated actions, the body learns discipline, patience, obedience, and loyalty to communal values. Indonesian rituals such as *Tiban*, *Ojhung*, and other Sundanese rituals foster moral ethos and social solidarity. This refutes the assumption of extreme

secularization that predicts the decline of ritual in the modern world; in fact, rituals persist and adapt (Rogers, 2017).

In modern life, rituals have not disappeared but have changed form. Politics, the military, sports, and even digital activities have ritual elements. Elections, state ceremonies, national celebrations, and cultural rituals such as Eid al-Fitr or Nyepi demonstrate that rituals remain the foundation of national morality. In Indonesia, rituals serve as a social glue amidst ethnic and religious diversity. This reinforces Bellah's thesis that modernization does not eliminate religion or ritual, but encourages the transformation and rearticulation of their meaning. Rituals, as collective effervescence, are crucial for maintaining social stability, especially in an era of globalization, identity crises, and individualism. Traditions such as Seren Taun, Cokaiba, or various Sundanese and Nusantara cultural rituals demonstrate how rituals serve as meeting spaces between older and younger generations, between tradition and modernity, and between spirituality and socio-political dynamics (Mubayanah & Amin, 2024). Despite facing the challenges of globalization, rituals persist as pillars of collective identity and social morality.

CONCLUSION

A study of Robert Bellah's theory on the roots of ritual in society demonstrates that ritual plays a fundamental role in shaping social structures, collective identity, and the moral foundations of human life. Through an approach that combines classical Durkheimian theory of collective solidarity, contemporary thinking on ritual interaction, and evolutionary perspectives on the development of symbols, language, and culture, Bellah successfully explains that ritual is not merely a religious expression, but a living, dynamic social action that has a productive power in building social order. Rituals provide shared emotional experiences, create a sense of togetherness, strengthen moral values, and give meaning to human social actions from prehistoric times to the modern world. However, Bellah's view is not without limitations. Some of his arguments are considered to lack strong empirical support and remain hypothetical. Furthermore, the focus of studies rooted in Western cultural experiences raises questions about the extent to which his theory is fully relevant across various non-Western cultural contexts. Another underexplored aspect is the dark side of ritual, such as how rituals can become tools for legitimizing violence, social exclusion, or power domination. Thus, Bellah's theory still requires strengthening through cross-cultural empirical research and critical dialogue with other sociological and anthropological approaches. In the contemporary world context, Bellah's theory remains relevant, especially in understanding social resilience, community solidarity, and the human need for shared meaning amidst global crises, social change, and post-2020 challenges. Globalization, modernization, and secularism do indeed challenge the continuity of traditional rituals, but at the same time present an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of ritual as a mechanism for building social cohesion, cultural integration, and moral stability in a constantly changing modern society.

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