

Rethinking Maqasid al-Shari‘ah from the Ground: An Ethnography of Pilgrimage and Community Philanthropy in Pasir Sialang Village, Kabupaten Kampar, Riau

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Abstract

This study examines the annual grave pilgrimage (ziarah raya enam) and community-based giving in Pasir Sialang Village, Kabupaten Kampar, Riau, as an ethnographic case of how local Muslim actors negotiate religious devotion, customary practice, and communal welfare. Rather than claiming to reconstruct maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah as a legal theory, this article uses maqāṣid as an interpretive lens to examine how local meanings and social practices may be cautiously related to Islamic ethical objectives. Employing a qualitative ethnographic case study, the research draws on participant observation, semi-structured interviews with five key informants, and analysis of local documents related to pilgrimage, mosque activities, communal meals, and donation practices. The findings show that the pilgrimage is understood not only as prayer and remembrance for the deceased, but also as a social event that organizes kinship, migrant return, village belonging, food sharing, and mosque-based donations. Community philanthropy in this context operates less through formal charitable institutions than through informal giving, voluntary labor, shared meals, and household-based contributions. These practices form a local moral economy in which domestic resources are transformed into communal support and social reciprocity. The study also finds that the relationship between Islamic norms and local custom is not simply harmonious, but continuously negotiated through religious authority,

customary leadership, gendered participation, and theological caution. The article contributes to community-based maqāṣid studies by showing that local practices should not be directly mapped onto classical maqasid categories, but interpreted through empirical meanings, observable social effects, religious boundaries, and the presence of maslahah.

Keywords: Community Philanthropy; Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah; Moral Economy; Religious Negotiation; Ziarah.

Introduction

The relationship between Islam and local culture in Indonesia has often been discussed in terms of adaptation and accommodation, but such descriptions may overlook tensions, negotiations, and methodological questions in local religious practice.¹ However, such a description risks overlooking the tensions, negotiations, and methodological questions that arise when local religious practices are interpreted through Islamic legal-ethical frameworks. Grave pilgrimage, for instance, is not merely a devotional act; in many Indonesian Muslim communities it becomes a contested space where remembrance of death, respect for ancestors, communal identity, and debates over religious legitimacy intersect.² Likewise, community-based giving that accompanies ritual events is frequently treated as ordinary charity, although it may also function as an informal mechanism of redistribution, reciprocity, and social obligation. The scientific problem addressed in this study lies in this intersection: how can the intertwined practices of pilgrimage and communal giving in Pasir Sialang, Riau be analyzed without romanticizing local culture or hastily labeling them as manifestations of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah? Rather than assuming that these practices automatically represent maqāṣid values, this article investigates how local actors understand them, how religious and customary authorities negotiate their meanings, and to what extent they may be interpreted within the framework of Islamic legal objectives.

Studies of pilgrimage and ritual in the Malay world have highlighted how these actions serve not only as religious worship but also as a means of preserving

¹ Moh Teguh Prasetyo, “Islam Dan Transformasi Budaya Lokal Di Indonesia,” *Batuthbah: Jurnal Sejarah Padaban Islam* 2, no. 2 (2023): 150–62, <https://doi.org/10.38073/batuthah.v2i2.1107>; Heru Purwoyuliyanto, “Islam dan Kearifan Lokal: Kajian Literatur Tentang Relasi Budaya Dan Agama Di Indonesia,” *TSAQOFAH* 5, no. 5 (2025): 4489–509, <https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v5i5.6838>.

² Damanhuri et al., “Dimensions of Spiritual Education in The Tradition of Grave Pilgrimage in Javanese Muslim Society,” *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 2 (2025): 290–308, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v9i2.61>; Fitria Nur Barokah and Moh Khoiruddin, “Exploring Sprituality in Grave Pilgrimage: The Case of the Berbah Community at the Kanjeng Panembahan Purboyo Cemetery,” *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization* 7, no. 2 (2024): 183–205, <https://doi.org/10.14421/skijic.v7i2.3090>.

cultural memory and transmitting ethics. It shows that the recitation of *sya'ir* (religious poetry) during pilgrimages to the tomb of Abdurrahman Siddiq in Tembilahan reflects a form of religious art through which Malay Muslims preserve their spiritual heritage and moral teachings.³ Similarly, analyzing the ambiguities and innovations in the practice of saint worship among Indonesian Muslims reveals an ongoing negotiation between modernist Islamic reform and traditional spirituality. These findings emphasize that pilgrimage in Indonesia is not merely a ritual of the past, but a dynamic field where theology, culture, and community intersect.⁴

At the same time, the emergence of Islamic philanthropy (*zakat*, *waqf*, and communal giving) provides another dimension of social piety in contemporary Indonesia. Islamic philanthropy is understood as worship that purifies wealth while containing strong social dimensions: care, wealth distribution, and protection of weak groups.⁵ *Zakat* givers are perceived as pious and generous, so that philanthropic practices become a symbol of personal piety in the social space, including on social media.⁶ Islamic social finance also show that philanthropy has developed into a structured form of collective action that reflects the ethical and socio-economic objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the protection of wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), and community welfare (*maṣlahah 'āmmah*).⁷ In rural contexts such as Pasir Sialang, philanthropy often emerges alongside pilgrimage activities, manifesting itself in the form of communal feasts, charitable donations, and the collective maintenance of sacred sites.

³ Abd Madjid et al., "Honoring the Saint through Poetry Recitation: Pilgrimage and the Memories of Shaikh Abdurrahman Siddiq Al-Banjari in Indragiri Hilir," *Religions* 13, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030261>.

⁴ Verena Meyer, "Grave Matters: Ambiguity, Modernism, and the Quest for Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 92, no. 1 (2024): 160–79, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae061>.

⁵ Faisal Hidayat et al., "The Tradition of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia: Harmony Between Faith and Social Culture," *Asian Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Citizen Engagement* 1, no. 1 (2025): 67–82, <https://doi.org/10.63919/ajmpce.v1i1.15>; M. Wildan Humaidi et al., "Green Philanthropy: Islamic Activism on Indonesia's Environmental Democracy," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 24, no. 2 (2024): 167–91, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v24i2.167-191>; Sahran Saputra et al., "Enhancing Sustainability through Agricultural Zakāt -Based Philanthropy Movement: A Comprehensive Study on Social Welfare Capital," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 14, no. 1 (2024): 231–46, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.14>.

⁶ Najib Kailani and Martin Slama, "Accelerating Islamic Charities in Indonesia: Zakat, Sedekah and the Immediacy of Social Media," *South East Asia Research* 28, no. 1 (2020): 70–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1691939>.

⁷ Tika Widiastuti et al., "Developing an Integrated Model of Islamic Social Finance: Toward an Effective Governance Framework," *Heliyon* 8, no. 9 (2022): e10383, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10383>.

Theoretically, *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* provides a robust framework for understanding how local Muslim communities integrate moral objectives into their religious and social behavior. Mohammed (2024) shows that contemporary research on *maqāṣid* has moved beyond the field of *fiqh* to include sustainability, ethics, and socio-cultural applications, signaling a paradigm shift from legal interpretation to human-centered understanding. This theoretical evolution opens space for reinterpreting local religious traditions such as pilgrimage and community philanthropy not as remnants of syncretic piety, but as contextual manifestations of Islamic ethical objectives.⁸

In Pasir Sialang, the integration of pilgrimage and communal giving provides an important empirical site for examining how Islamic ethical values are interpreted, practiced, and negotiated within a local cultural framework. Rather than claiming to reconstruct *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* as a legal theory, this study uses *maqāṣid* as an analytical lens to understand how local actors relate religious devotion, social obligation, and communal welfare in the context of *ziarah* and informal philanthropy. This study aims to examine how the people of Pasir Sialang understand the relationship between pilgrimage, communal giving, religious merit, and social solidarity, and how these local meanings may be interpreted through a *maqāṣidic* framework without assuming a direct or automatic correspondence between local practice and the classical categories of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how a *maqāṣidic* reading can be applied cautiously to local religious practices when it is grounded in ethnographic data, actor-based interpretation, and attention to social context.

In this context, Pasir Sialang provides an empirical case for examining how pilgrimage and communal giving are interpreted, practiced, and negotiated by local Muslim actors. The study does not treat these practices as direct manifestations of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, nor does it claim to reconstruct *maqāṣid* as a legal theory. Instead, it uses *maqāṣid* as an interpretive lens after local meanings and social practices have been identified through ethnographic data. This approach allows the article to analyze how prayer, remembrance, kinship, food sharing, voluntary donations, and theological caution operate within the community without reducing them to a simple checklist of classical *maqāṣid* categories.

Previous studies have examined pilgrimage, Islamic philanthropy, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* as important but mostly separate fields of inquiry. Studies on pilgrimage in Indonesian and Malay-Muslim societies tend to emphasize ritual memory, saintly authority, and religious identity,⁹ while studies on Islamic

⁸ Tawffeeq A. S. Mohammed, "A Scientometric Study of Maqasid Al-Shariah Research: Trending Issues, Hotspot Research, and Co-Citation Analysis," *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics* 9 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/frma.2024.1439407>.

⁹ Damanhuri et al., "Dimensions of Spiritual Education in The Tradition of Grave Pilgrimage in Javanese Muslim Society," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 2 (2025): 290–

philanthropy largely focus on institutional forms of giving, governance, and social welfare.¹⁰ Meanwhile, maqāsid studies have expanded from legal theory to broader ethical and social concerns,¹¹ but they often risk becoming overly normative when applied to local practices without sufficient empirical grounding.¹² What remains insufficiently explained is how pilgrimage and informal communal giving intersect in a local Muslim community, how local actors understand this intersection, and how such practices may be interpreted through maqāsid without reducing it to a checklist of sharia objectives. This study addresses that gap by examining the ziarah tradition and community-based giving in Pasir Sialang, focusing on local meanings, social practices, and the limits of applying maqāsid as an analytical lens.

This research does not seek to construct a general theory of maqāsid al-shari'ah, but to analyze a specific local practice through qualitative field data. For this reason, the study uses an ethnographic case study design focusing on the annual ziarah tradition and community-based giving in Pasir Sialang, Riau. This study uses an ethnographic case study design, focusing on the Pasir Sialang community as a miniature synthesis of Islam and indigenous traditions in the Malay-Indonesian world. This design allows for an in-depth understanding of religious practices such as pilgrimages to the graves of charismatic clerics and collective philanthropic rituals. Data collection was conducted using three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. During the field research, the researcher participated in grave pilgrimages (ziarah ke makam), village charity events (sedekah kampung), and other socio-religious gatherings. Through this participatory observation, the study documented the dynamics of ritual implementation, symbolic expressions, and social interactions

308, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v9i2.61>; Ade Yamin et al., “The Tradition of Pilgrimage to the Grave of Muslim Missionaries in Misool Island, Papua,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 22, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.22.2022.234>.

¹⁰ Micah A. Hughes and Shariq A. Siddiqui, “From Islamic Charity to Muslim Philanthropy: Definitions Across Disciplines,” *Religion Compass* 18, no. 10 (2024): e70002, <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.70002>; A. Zaenurrosyid et al., “The Islamic Philanthropy Model Based on Maslahah Principles for Developing Islamic Campus in Java,” *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 24, no. 2 (2024): 279–304, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v24i2.279-304>; Afief El Ashfahany et al., “Relationship of Zakat and Waqf to Poverty and Inequality: Bibliometrics Analysis,” *Subufi: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2025): 171–87, <https://doi.org/10.23917/suhuf.v37i1.9938>.

¹¹ Tazul Islam, “Expansion of Maqasid Thought Beyond Maqasid Al-Shariah: Maqasid Al-Quran as a New Paradigm,” *Hamdard Islamicus* 45, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.57144/hi.v45i4.514>.

¹² Andri Laksana et al., “Integrating Maqasid Al-Shari'ah in Contemporary Islamic Legal Reform on Drug Policy,” *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4 (June 2025): 416–39, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10665>; Wilnan Fatahillah and Teguh Luhuringbudi, “Comparative Study of Islamic Family Law in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia: Maqāsid Al-Shari'ah Perspective,” *TATHO: International Journal of Islamic Thought and Sciences*, April 24, 2025, 127–40, <https://doi.org/10.70512/tatho.v2i2.87>.

that reflect the internalization of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* in the daily life of the community.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 key informants selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the annual *ziarah* tradition and community-based giving in Pasir Sialang, they are M. Toyib and Erpan (Malay Customary Head), Ramli (Chairman of the Mosque Board), Asmah (Chairman of the Ibu Taklim Council), and Muhammad Lutfi (RW and Chairman of the Pilgrimage Tour). Fieldwork was carried out from January 2025 to May 2025, lasting approximately 5 months and covered the preparation, implementation, and post-event activities of the pilgrimage tradition. The interviews explored participants' understandings of *ziarah*, *ṣadaqah*, religious merit, social obligation, and communal welfare. Following Creswell's qualitative approach¹³ and Geertz's ethnographic orientation,¹⁴ the study focused on participants' lived meanings, symbolic actions, and local interpretations. In addition, local documents, including mosque donation records, community announcements, pilgrimage notes, local manuscripts, *ḡya'ir*, and community archives, were examined to contextualize and triangulate the interview and observation data. The data were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, and interpretation of recurring patterns, following Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure.¹⁵

The data were analyzed through a thematic-hermeneutic procedure combined with *maqāṣidic* interpretation. The analysis began with repeated reading of interview notes, observation records, and relevant documents to identify meaningful units related to *ziarah*, communal giving, religious motivation, social obligation, and perceived benefit. These units were then coded inductively, grouped into broader empirical themes, and interpreted in relation to the *maqāṣid* framework. The main themes included ritual remembrance, communal solidarity, informal redistribution, religious legitimacy, gendered participation, and social reciprocity. Only after these empirical themes had been established were they examined through *maqāṣid* categories, especially by considering the presence of *maṣlahah*, prevention of harm, preservation of religious commitment, protection of social life, and circulation of material resources. Drawing on al-Ghazālī's

¹³ John W. Creswell and John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed (SAGE Publications, 2013).

¹⁴ Gary A. Olson, "The Social Scientist as Author: Clifford Geertz on Ethnography and Social Construction," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 11, no. 2 (1991): 245–68.

¹⁵ Christine Roseveare, "Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide, by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke," *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* 38, no. 1 (2023): 143–45, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.76737>.

formulation of maqāšid¹⁶ and Jasser Auda's systems approach,¹⁷ the study treated maqāšid not as a checklist but as an interpretive lens. Therefore, a practice was linked to maqāšid only when supported by participants' explanations, observational evidence, and identifiable social effects.¹⁸

All research procedures adhere to Islamic and social research ethics, including respect for sacred sites, community customs, and participant privacy. Written consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was maintained upon request. These ethical guidelines are adapted from Muhtada (2023), which emphasizes the moral responsibility inherent in religion-based and community-centered research. By applying this comprehensive methodological framework, this study aims to present a deep and context-rooted understanding of how maqāšid al-sharī'ah is reconstructed through pilgrimage and philanthropy as expressions of Islam that are humanistic, spiritual, and culturally rooted in the Indonesian context.¹⁹

Discussion

Pilgrimage Tradition in Pasir Sialang

The annual grave pilgrimage in Pasir Sialang is not merely a ritual inherited from previous generations, but a collective practice through which the community organizes memory, kinship, and religious authority. The procession begins at the village mosque, where participants gather before visiting several grave sites. This starting point is significant because the mosque functions as the ritual center that frames the pilgrimage as a communal religious act rather than a private visit to the dead. M. Toyib, a resident of Pasir Sialang, explained that the pilgrimage is understood by local people not only as a visit to graves, but also as a way to remember parents, relatives, and ancestors who have passed away and to pray for them collectively.²⁰ This statement indicates that pilgrimage is locally understood as an act of remembrance and prayer, not merely as cultural preservation.

The social dimension of the pilgrimage becomes visible in the participation of migrants and extended families. Many residents who live outside the village return during the event, making the pilgrimage a moment of social reunion. Erpan, the Malay customary leader of Pasir Sialang, explained that the event brings together villagers who rarely meet, including migrants, through

¹⁶ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī, *Al-Mustasfā Min 'ilm al-Uṣūl* (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993).

¹⁷ Jasser Auda, *Maqāsid Al-Sharīah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2008).

¹⁸ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein & Nasir, "Localizing Islamic Ethics in Plural Societies: A Malay-Indonesian Perspective."

¹⁹ Dani Muhtada, "Faith-Based Philanthropy and Social Solidarity in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (2023): 1–28.

²⁰ Interview with M. Toyib, Community Member, Pasir Sialang, February 8, 2025

walking together, greeting one another, and renewing family ties.²¹ This indicates that the pilgrimage operates as a mechanism for maintaining social bonds across distance. The ritual route is therefore not only a path toward grave sites, but also a social corridor where kinship, village identity, and collective belonging are reaffirmed.

Along the pilgrimage route, residents who do not join the procession participate by providing drinking water, snacks, and fruits for passing pilgrims. This practice should not be reduced to spontaneous generosity. It represents an informal form of community philanthropy embedded in the village's moral economy. Ramli, the head of the mosque board in Pasir Sialang, explained that providing drinks and food for pilgrims is understood as a small act of voluntary charity; nobody forces residents to do it, but those who are able usually feel that it is appropriate to share.²² Such giving transforms household resources into communal support and creates a small-scale redistribution mechanism during the ritual. The act is voluntary, yet it is shaped by shared expectations of religious merit, social propriety, and mutual care.

Women's participation also shows that the pilgrimage does not only take place along the route to the graves, but also in domestic and communal spaces where meals are prepared. Asmah, the head of the women's religious study group in Pasir Sialang, explained that women consider cooking and preparing meals for pilgrims as part of charity and service to the community.²³ Thus, although some women do not join the pilgrimage procession, they remain important actors in sustaining the ritual through collective labor, food service, and social support. This role shows that philanthropy in the pilgrimage tradition is not limited to money or material goods, but also includes labor, time, and care work that support communal activities.

However, the pilgrimage should not be romanticized as a practice entirely free from tension. Some local actors distinguish between pilgrimage as prayerful remembrance and practices that must be kept within acceptable religious limits. Muhammad Lutfi, the pilgrimage group coordinator and neighborhood leader, explained that the pilgrimage is directed toward prayer, tahlil, social gathering, and donation collection, so that the practice remains within boundaries accepted by the community.²⁴ This view shows that the pilgrimage is not simply a harmonious fusion of religion and culture, but a negotiated practice. Religious leaders,

²¹ Interview with Erpan, Malay Traditional Leader, Pasir Sialang, February 2, 2025

²² Interview with Ramli, Mosque Committee Chair, Pasir Sialang, March 3, 2025

²³ Interview with Asmah, Chairwoman of the Women's Religious Study Group, Pasir Sialang, April 7, 2025

²⁴ Interview with Muhammad Lutfi, Neighborhood Head (RW) and Chair of the Pilgrimage Group, Pasir Sialang, April 7, 2025

customary figures, and local residents continuously define the acceptable boundaries of the pilgrimage by emphasizing prayer, charity, and kinship while avoiding elements that could be viewed as theologically problematic.

Thus, the grave pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang should not be understood merely as a spiritual ritual oriented toward prayer and respect for the deceased. Based on the informants' explanations, the pilgrimage is also understood as a space for strengthening kinship, maintaining social ties, assisting pilgrims through the provision of food and drink, and collecting donations for mosque maintenance and village social activities. These meanings indicate that, at the emic level, local actors do not necessarily use the terminology of maqāsid al-sharī'ah to explain their practices; rather, they understand the pilgrimage as a means of gaining religious merit, strengthening togetherness, and sustaining social good. Therefore, the maqāsidic reading in this study is positioned as the researcher's etic interpretation, not as a direct claim that the community consciously implements the classical categories of maqāsid. After empirical themes such as collective prayer, kinship maintenance, communal giving, and social donations were identified from the field data, these practices were then cautiously interpreted through the maqāsid framework. Prayer and tahlil may be related to the preservation of religious commitment, while food sharing, assistance to pilgrims, and donation collection may be understood as practices that support social benefit and the circulation of resources within the community. In this way, maqāsid is not used as a top-down checklist imposed on the data, but as an analytical lens for understanding how religious values, social solidarity, and communal welfare operate within the pilgrimage tradition of Pasir Sialang.

Pilgrimage Traditions and Community Philanthropy

The grave pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang, held annually on the sixth day after Eid al-Fitr and locally known as *ziarah raya enam*, should not be understood merely as a ritual visit to ancestral graves, but as a social practice that brings villagers together within a shared religious space. Based on the interview with M. Toyib, local residents understand the pilgrimage as an opportunity to pray for deceased family members while also maintaining relationships among villagers, including those who now live outside the village.²⁵ Erpan, the Malay customary leader of Pasir Sialang, also explained that walking together from the mosque to the grave sites becomes an important moment for greeting one another, meeting distant relatives, and renewing social ties after Eid al-Fitr.²⁶ Thus, "social cohesion" in the Pasir Sialang context is not an abstract category; it is concretely expressed through the return of migrants, family encounters, the involvement of

²⁵ Interview with M. Toyib, Community Member, Pasir Sialang, February 8, 2025

²⁶ Interview with Erpan, Malay Traditional Leader, Pasir Sialang, February 2, 2025

customary and religious leaders, and residents' participation along the pilgrimage route. For this reason, the tradition should not be directly claimed as a manifestation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. In this study, *maqāṣid* is used interpretively only after local meanings and empirical practices have first been identified. Collective prayer and *tablil* may be read as supporting religious commitment; family encounters and the return of migrants may be related to the preservation of kinship ties; while the provision of food, drinks, and donations, as explained by Ramli and Muhammad Lutfi, indicates the circulation of communal resources that may be interpreted as contributing to social benefit.²⁷ In this way, the *maqāṣidic* reading of the Pasir Sialang pilgrimage is not imposed as a top-down normative label, but developed as a cautious interpretation grounded in field data, informants' explanations, and concrete local practices.

Preparations for the pilgrimage began weeks in advance, led collaboratively by local religious figures and traditional leaders. On the day of the event, men of all ages children, youth, and elders gather at the mosque around 7 a.m. to begin their journey to the village cemetery located in neighboring villages. Traditionally, only men participate in the procession, while women contribute from the domestic and social spheres. As the pilgrims walk through neighboring villages, they greet other villagers, exchange prayers, and strengthen family ties. These interactions reinforce social capital and Islamic brotherhood (*ukhūwah islāmiyyah*), in line with findings from similar ethnographic studies of rural Muslim communities in Southeast Asia.²⁸

The dimension of philanthropy arises naturally during the pilgrimage. Along the route, villagers place food and drinks in front of their homes as *ṣadaqah* (alms) for the pilgrims. This generosity is not driven by an institutionalized charitable framework, but rather by an ethical awareness of shared blessings and social empathy. For the people of Pasir Sialang, giving in this context is not an individual religious act, but a communal expression of *'urf ṣāliḥ* noble customs that are in line with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in maintaining social harmony and collective welfare.²⁹ Many migrants return to their hometowns for this event, viewing it as a spiritual homecoming and an act of social service, reinforcing their

²⁷ Interview with Ramli, Mosque Committee Chair, Pasir Sialang, March 3, 2025 and Interview with Muhammad Lutfi, Neighborhood Head (RW) and Chair of the Pilgrimage Group, Pasir Sialang, April 7, 2025

²⁸ Luqman Nurhakim Karim, "Ritual, Memory, and Community: Revisiting Grave Pilgrimage in Riau Malay Society," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (2022): 289-312.

²⁹ Muhtada, "Faith-Based Philanthropy and Social Solidarity in Indonesia."

moral obligations to the village through financial contributions and participation in community development.³⁰

Women also play an important role in community philanthropy through the collective preparation of meals for pilgrims. Based on the interview with Asmah, the head of the women's religious study group in Pasir Sialang, cooking and preparing food are not understood merely as domestic tasks, but as forms of charity, social service, and women's religious participation in the pilgrimage tradition.³¹ In this context, food provision does not simply represent individual generosity; it operates as part of the village's moral economy. Through women's collective labor, household resources such as food ingredients, time, and labor are transformed into communal benefits enjoyed by pilgrims and villagers who gather at the mosque. This practice also demonstrates a mechanism of informal redistribution, since resources originating from individual households are circulated back to the community through shared consumption. At the same time, it contains an element of social reciprocity: women and families who contribute do not necessarily receive direct material returns, but they gain social recognition, religious merit, and participation in sustaining the village tradition. After the pilgrimage procession ends, villagers gather again at the mosque for congregational prayer and communal meals. During this moment, community leaders and mosque administrators encourage donations for mosque maintenance and village social activities. Muhammad Lutfi explained that the pilgrimage occasion is often used by residents, including migrants returning home, to contribute financially to village interests.³² Thus, community participation is not only visible in ritual attendance, but also in their involvement in networks of giving, shared consumption, and material support for the village's socio-religious institutions.

Therefore, the pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang is not merely a religious ritual, but a living arena where Sharia norms and cultural institutions intertwine. This shows that Islamic law (sharia) and local culture do not have to be in dualism, but can operate in synergistic harmony to build a moral, just, and civilized social order.³³ Through this ritual, the community strengthens its spiritual continuity with its ancestors, fosters social solidarity, and regenerates the ethical and philanthropic spirit that sustains communal life. These findings indicate that the

³⁰ Muh. Rizki et al., "Raja Ali Haji'S Philanthropic Thought: The Role of Culture and Language in the Formation of Urban Malay Identity," *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 29, no. 1 (2024): 49, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v29i1.8796>.

³¹ Interview with Asmah, Chairwoman of the Women's Religious Study Group, Pasir Sialang, April 7, 2025

³² Interview with Muhammad Lutfi, Neighborhood Head (RW) and Chair of the Pilgrimage Group, Pasir Sialang, April 7, 2025

³³ Nasr, Seyed Hossein & Nasir, "Localizing Islamic Ethics in Plural Societies: A Malay-Indonesian Perspective."

pilgrimage should be analyzed as a lived and negotiated practice, in which religious meanings are produced through concrete acts of prayer, food sharing, donation, gendered labor, and communal participation.³⁴

Taken together, these ethnographic findings suggest that pilgrimage and communal giving in Pasir Sialang should not be read merely as a harmonious fusion of Islam and Malay culture. Rather, they constitute a negotiated practice in which prayer, remembrance, kinship, voluntary charity, and village solidarity are continuously interpreted by local actors. The provision of food, drinks, and donations functions not only as an expression of generosity, but also as part of a moral economy that redistributes household resources and sustains social reciprocity. At the same time, the community maintains theological boundaries by emphasizing that the core of pilgrimage is prayer and *tablil*, not making requests to the deceased. Therefore, the relationship between ziarah and community philanthropy is best understood as a lived social process shaped by religious meaning, moral obligation, reciprocity, and ongoing negotiation.

Analisis *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* dalam Tradisi Ziarah

The pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang is not understood uniformly by all participants. Some villagers see it primarily as worship through prayer and *tablil* for deceased family members, while others experience it also as a social occasion for family reunion, post-Eid gathering, and village belonging. There is also a cautious attitude among some participants who emphasize that ziarah must remain within theological boundaries: its core is praying for the deceased, not asking from them. This layered meaning is important for the maqāṣidic analysis. The tradition should not be automatically mapped onto all maqāṣid categories; rather, each practice must be interpreted by considering intention, participants' meanings, observable social effects, and Islamic ethical limits. Thus, maqāṣid is used here as an analytical lens, not as a normative checklist.

The annual pilgrimage in Pasir Sialang provides an empirical case for examining selected ritual and social practices through a maqāṣidic lens. Rather than treating the whole tradition as a direct manifestation of the five classical maqāṣid, this section analyzes specific practices—collective prayer, *tablil*, food sharing, donations, moral instruction, and family reunion—by considering participants' meanings, observable social effects, religious boundaries, and the presence of *maṣlaḥah*. This analysis can be described through the five classical dimensions of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah:

³⁴ Julia Day Howell, "Indonesia's Islamic Revival and the Re-Localization of Piety," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 2 (2019): 247–73.

1. Ḥifẓ al-Dīn (Preservation of Religion)

This aspect of ḥifẓ al-dīn is most evident at the beginning of the pilgrimage, when the community gathers at the mosque for prayer, tahlil, and dzikir together. These actions strengthen spiritual awareness and maintain the continuity of faith as a social experience. These rituals function as cultural da'wah, conveying Islamic values through locally acceptable expressions, such as congregational prayer, almsgiving, and dhikr. This is in line with Auda (2008) and Azra (2021), who emphasize that religious practices adapted to the local context can function as a maqāṣid-based mechanism for maintaining religious awareness and moral integrity.³⁵

2. Ḥifẓ al-Nafs (Preservation of Life)

The collective nature of pilgrimage fosters a sense of shared caring and psychological well-being. As villagers walk together, greeting and supporting one another, they build emotional and spiritual resilience. The provision of food and drink along the route is an expression of loving solidarity, reflecting the Qur'anic principle of ta'āwun 'alā al-birr wa al-taqwā (cooperation in righteousness). Such practices are in line with Muhtada's (2023) findings that religion-based philanthropy strengthens community safety nets and social harmony.³⁶

3. Ḥifẓ al-'Aql (Preservation of Mind)

The value of ḥifẓ al-'aql is reflected in the educational function of the pilgrimage tradition. This activity teaches reflective awareness about death and mortality, while strengthening the ethics of social life. For the younger generation, this tradition is a means of moral education (tarbiyah akhlāqiyah), where they learn to respect their ancestors, honor their parents, and understand the spiritual meaning of life. In addition, the annual pilgrimage also serves as a forum for the transmission of local and religious knowledge from community leaders and scholars to residents, through brief advice delivered during communal prayers at the mosque. Thus, this tradition not only protects the mind from moral deviation and hedonism, but also enriches the religious and cultural knowledge of the community..³⁷

4. Ḥifẓ al-Māl (Preservation of Property)

³⁵ Azyumardi Azra, "Islam Nusantara and the Localization of Maqāṣid Al-Shari'ah in the Malay World."

³⁶ Muhtada, "Faith-Based Philanthropy and Social Solidarity in Indonesia."

³⁷ Howell, "Indonesia's Islamic Revival and the Re-Localization of Piety."

The dimension of *ḥifẓ al-māl* is clearly evident in the philanthropic practices that accompany the pilgrimage tradition. Migrant communities usually take advantage of this moment to make donations for the advancement of mosques, the improvement of public facilities, or to help underprivileged families. Similarly, the distribution of food and drink to pilgrims is a form of simple economic redistribution at the community level. This activity shows that wealth is not viewed as individual property, but as a trust that must be used for social welfare. Practices such as this reinforce the *maqāṣid* value that wealth must be preserved, developed, and distributed fairly in order to bring collective benefits (*maslahah ‘āmmah*). Thus, the pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang becomes a social mechanism that upholds the principle of distributive justice in the local context.³⁸

5. *Ḥifẓ al-Nasl* (Preservation of Descendant and Social Community)

The pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang also plays a role in preserving *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, both in biological and socio-cultural terms. This activity strengthens relationships between family members and generations, as it is an annual event where migrants return to their hometowns to meet their relatives. This tradition ensures the continuity of family values, respect for ancestors, and the preservation of the social identity of the community. Women play an important role in this aspect, namely by preparing food together at the mosque, which not only demonstrates social solidarity but also maintains family and community cohesion. Thus, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* is not only maintained through biological descent but also through the regeneration of values and traditions that are collectively inherited.³⁹

Integration of Islamic Law and Local Customs

The tradition of grave pilgrimage in Pasir Sialang Village reflects a negotiated relationship between Islamic norms and local customs rather than a simple harmonious integration. This integration did not occur suddenly, but rather through a long historical process in which Sharia norms were internalized into the social structure and value system of the community. Islamic law, within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, provides universal principles that emphasize benefit, balance, and social solidarity. Meanwhile, local customs provide a concrete cultural framework for realizing these principles in the form of social practices that are acceptable and can be carried out together. In this context, the

³⁸ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein & Nasir, “Localizing Islamic Ethics in Plural Societies: A Malay-Indonesian Perspective.”

³⁹ Azyumardi Azra, “Islam Nusantara and the Localization of *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah* in the Malay World.”

pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang is not merely a cultural expression, but a negotiated religious practice that is shaped through the interaction between Islamic norms, local customs, religious authority, and communal participation.⁴⁰

This integration is evident in the way the community interprets Islamic teachings on grave pilgrimage and philanthropy. From a normative Islamic perspective, grave pilgrimage is encouraged as a means of tazakkur al-maut (remembering death) and strengthening spiritual awareness. However, the Pasir Sialang community expands its meaning through accompanying social institutions: togetherness, friendship, and sharing blessings. Sharia values such as ukhuwah islāmiyyah (Islamic brotherhood), ta'āwun (mutual assistance), and ṣadaqah (voluntary giving) are articulated through the custom of collective pilgrimage accompanied by spontaneous almsgiving along the way. In the Pasir Sialang case, this practice may be understood as a form of negotiation between Islamic norms and local socio-cultural arrangements, where religious teachings are interpreted through both normative references and everyday communal practices.⁴¹

In the social order of Pasir Sialang, Islamic norms and local customs are not entirely separate, but their relationship is shaped through practical negotiation among religious leaders, customary figures, women's groups, migrants, and local residents. For example, the role of religious leaders and traditional leaders in planning pilgrimages shows how these two religious and cultural authorities work synergistically. Mosques are the center of spiritual activities, while residents' homes are the center of social and philanthropic activities. Women, although not participating in the physical pilgrimage, perform religious functions through social charity by cooking and preparing food for pilgrims, which in the maqāṣid perspective reflects ḥifẓ al-nafs (preservation of the soul) and ḥifẓ al-māl (preservation of wealth through the distribution of sustenance). Thus, Islamic law is interpreted not only in the form of fatwas or written laws, but through concrete actions that have social and spiritual value.⁴²

The Pasir Sialang pilgrimage can be discussed through the concept of *'urf* in *usul al-fiqh*, but only with clear limitations. A custom may be considered acceptable when it does not contradict explicit Islamic principles, does not generate harm, and does not transform social respect for the deceased into a

⁴⁰ M. Adhim Rajasyah, "Integrasi Agama, Masyarakat dan Budaya: Kajian Tentang Tradisi Haul dan Ziarah dalam Masyarakat Palembang," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 3, no. 1 (2023): 235–47, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v3i1.23521>.

⁴¹ Muhammad Deni Putra et al., "Filantropi Islam Di Minangkabau: Membentuk Solidaritas Sosial Melalui Adat Dan Agama," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Economics and Business (IJIEB)* 9, no. 2 (2024): 356–68.

⁴² Rajasyah, "Integrasi Agama, Masyarakat Dan Budaya: Kajian Tentang Tradisi Haul Dan Ziarah Dalam Masyarakat Palembang."

theological act that compromises *tawhīd*. Based on the field data, the pilgrimage is locally framed through prayer, *tablil*, remembrance of death, kinship, charity, and communal support. These specific elements may be cautiously interpreted as compatible with Islamic ethical norms. However, this study does not claim that the entire tradition is automatically *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ*; rather, it limits the analysis to those practices supported by informants’ explanations and observable social effects, while excluding meanings or actions that could be understood as asking help from the deceased. This is a form of negotiation between Islamic norms and local custom that is not hegemonic, but dialogical: local customs are interpreted through religious values, while Islamic norms find concrete expression within the community’s social context. This process suggests the adaptability of Islamic law in responding to local realities without necessarily losing its ethical orientation. In the Pasir Sialang case, such negotiation gives rise to a form of religiosity that is shaped by prayer, charity, kinship, and communal participation.⁴³

Thus, the Pasir Sialang case suggests that Islamic norms operate not only through formal legal discourse, but also through negotiated social practices such as prayer, charity, food sharing, and communal participation. However, these practices remain subject to local interpretation and theological boundary-making. Local customs become a medium for grounding Sharia values, while Sharia provides moral and spiritual direction for the continuity of customs. From this arises a contextual model of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* praxis, in which Islamic law is not only understood as text, but is brought to life in social practices that maintain a balance between individual piety and communal benefit.

Taken together, the Pasir Sialang case shows that the relationship between Islamic norms and local custom should not be understood as a simple harmony, but as an ongoing process of negotiation. Field interviews indicate that local actors value the pilgrimage as prayer, remembrance, kinship, charity, and village solidarity, yet they also maintain theological caution by emphasizing that *ziarah* must remain centered on prayer and *tablil*, not on making requests to the deceased. This suggests that the tradition is neither purely cultural nor automatically Islamic in every aspect; rather, its religious meaning is continuously shaped through the involvement of religious leaders, customary figures, women’s groups, migrants, and local residents. Therefore, the integration of *ziarah* and community philanthropy in Pasir Sialang is better understood as an ethnographically grounded process of adaptation, boundary-making, and social negotiation, rather than as an idealized model of harmonious Islam and culture.

⁴³ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein & Nasir, “Localizing Islamic Ethics in Plural Societies: A Malay-Indonesian Perspective.”

Conclusion

This study has examined the annual grave pilgrimage and community-based giving in Pasir Sialang as an ethnographic case of how local Muslim actors negotiate religious devotion, customary practice, and communal welfare. The findings show that the ziarah raya enam is not only a ritual of prayer and remembrance for the deceased, but also a social event through which kinship, village belonging, migrant return, food sharing, and donation practices are organized. Community philanthropy in this context does not primarily operate through formal institutions, but through informal mechanisms of giving, shared meals, voluntary labor, and mosque-based donations. These practices form a local moral economy in which household resources are transformed into communal support and social reciprocity.

The main contribution of this article lies in showing how maqāṣid al-sharī'ah can be used as an interpretive lens only after empirical meanings have been identified from field data. Rather than treating pilgrimage and philanthropy as automatic manifestations of maqāṣid, this study demonstrates the need to move from ethnographic evidence to thematic analysis, and only then to maqāṣidic interpretation. In this sense, the article contributes to community-based maqāṣid studies by proposing a more cautious method: local practices should be examined through actors' meanings, observable social effects, religious boundaries, and the presence of maṣlaḥah, rather than through direct theoretical labeling. This approach also shifts the discussion from a harmonization narrative to a negotiation analysis, showing that Islamic norms and local customs in Pasir Sialang are adapted, interpreted, and sometimes limited through theological caution.

The study is limited to one village context and to a specific annual pilgrimage tradition in Pasir Sialang; therefore, its findings cannot be generalized to all Malay-Muslim communities or to all forms of grave pilgrimage in Indonesia. Future research may compare similar traditions in other regions, examine voices that are less represented in this study, including younger participants and reformist critics, or investigate how informal philanthropy develops beyond ritual moments into longer-term community welfare practices. These limitations also indicate that maqāṣid-based analysis of local traditions requires further empirical grounding, clearer methodological steps, and greater attention to internal differences within Muslim communities.

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