

# Appointment of Heirs as Funeral Prayer Leaders in the Bukittinggi Community: An Analysis of Designation from the Perspectives of Customary and Islamic Law

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**Abstract:** This research delves deeper into the longstanding practice of appointing heirs as leaders of funeral prayers within the cultural tapestry of the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. It endeavors to unravel the socio-cultural fabric that deems heirs as appropriate custodians of this sacred ritual, exploring the historical evolution and societal roles entrenched in traditional funeral ceremonies. Methodologically, this research utilizes a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with local community leaders to gain a direct understanding of the appointment of heirs as leaders of funeral prayers. This approach is enriched by scholarly discourse on highly relevant legal and religious issues, enhancing the analysis with theoretical perspectives and comparative viewpoints. By synthesizing these interdisciplinary approaches, the research aspires to unravel the intricate nuances and underscore the profound significance of heirs assuming the mantle of funeral prayer leadership in the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. The findings from this study are anticipated to yield nuanced insights into the intricate interplay between indigenous traditions and Islamic principles within the realm of religious practices in the Kurai community. This scholarly inquiry aims to foster novel perspectives and enrich ongoing dialogues on how local adaptations harmonize with and enrich Islamic values in everyday life. In contribution to existing literature, this research offers a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics that influence the appointment of heirs as funeral prayer leaders. It also provides a nuanced exploration of the legal and religious implications of this practice, thereby contributing to broader discussions on the adaptation of Islamic norms in local contexts.

**Keywords:** Bukittinggi Community; Customary and Islamic; Funeral Prayer; Leaders Appointment

## 1. Introduction

The appointment of heirs as funeral prayer leaders in the Kurai tradition of Bukittinggi reflects the complexity and depth of religious and traditional values embedded in the daily practices of this community. Kurai customs, as an integral part of the rich Minangkabau culture, are deeply rooted in inherited beliefs and religious practices.<sup>1</sup> In the rituals of burial and funeral prayers, the role of the funeral prayer leader extends beyond leading prayers for the departed soul; they also bear significant spiritual and social responsibilities. The process of selecting the funeral prayer leader often reflects familial hierarchy among the heirs, with closer relatives typically given priority. However, there is also a crucial consideration of religious qualifications and knowledge possessed

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<sup>1</sup> Wahyudi Rahmat, Libra Dui Putra, and Rifkah Fitriyah, 'How Do the Ethnicity Minangkabau Male Express Their Masculinity in Language: A Identity Point of View', *Culture & Psychology*, 11 September 2023, 1354067X231201389, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X231201389>.

by the prospective funeral prayer leader, highlighting the intricate integration of customary and Islamic values in this practice.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond its religious aspects,<sup>3</sup> the funeral prayer leader plays a vital role in preserving the cultural identity of the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. This religious procession is not merely seen as a formal ritual to honor the deceased but also embodies the Kurai community's commitment to preserving and passing down ancestral traditions that have underpinned their way of life for centuries.<sup>4</sup> The respect for these rituals reflects the reverence for customs handed down from ancestors, serving as a tangible effort to maintain a unique cultural identity amidst widespread modernization and globalization. Thus, research on the practice of appointing heirs as funeral prayer leaders not only provides profound insights into the social and religious dynamics within the Kurai community but also illustrates how these values remain relevant and play a crucial role in shaping the spiritual and cultural life of this community.<sup>5</sup>

In the Kurai Bukittinggi tradition, the process of appointing heirs as leaders of funeral prayers follows a series of revered traditional steps within Minangkabau society, reflecting the intricate relationship between religious values and local wisdom ingrained in the daily life of the Kurai community. The first step in this process involves collective consultation and agreement among family members and close relatives following someone's death. In these discussions, intensive deliberations occur to decide who will lead the funeral prayers, a decision heavily influenced by the religious knowledge of the prospective leader, their perceived blessings, and their closeness to the deceased.<sup>6</sup> The selection of heirs as funeral prayer leaders considers their proficiency in reciting prayers and their deep understanding of Islamic burial procedures. Those chosen for this role often hold esteemed positions in the community, recognized for their integrity and dedication to the longstanding religious and cultural customs of Minangkabau. The chosen heir assumes a significant responsibility in leading the entire sequence of funeral prayers. In their role as prayer leader, they not only deliver the prescribed prayers and recitations but also imbue the process with spirituality and profound meaning, honoring the final tribute to the deceased.

This process, beyond being a religious ritual, signifies a deep respect for the traditions and cultural identity of the Kurai Bukittinggi community, underscoring these customs as an inseparable part of their cultural heritage that they diligently uphold. The appointment of heirs as funeral prayer leaders not only illustrates the blending of local values and religion but also demonstrates how these traditions remain relevant and vital in navigating the challenges of an increasingly globalized modern era. It serves as evidence of the resilience and cultural endurance in facing the dynamics of social change, while steadfastly honoring and inheriting the values passed down by their predecessors.

In several schools of Islamic jurisprudence, there are varying views on who is eligible to lead funeral prayers. According to the Hanafi school, there is no obligation for the heir to lead the prayer; the

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<sup>2</sup> Zefrizal Nurdin and Hilaire Tegnau, 'Legal Certainty in the Management of Agricultural Land Pawning in the Matrilineal Minangkabau Society, West Sumatra', *Land* 8, no. 8 (30 July 2019): 117, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land8080117>.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Murtadho Emzaed, Ibnu Elmi As Pelu, and Shakhzod Tokhirov, 'Islamic Law Legislation in Indonesia: Anomalies of the Relationship between Political Configuration and Zakat Legal Product during the Reform Era', *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 1 (29 May 2023): 97–112, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v17i1.7815>.

<sup>4</sup> Elfia Elfia, Surwati Surwati, and Bakhtiar Bakhtiar, 'The Struggle of Custom and Sharia: Classic Dilemma of Inheritance Settlement in Javanese and Minangkabau Ethnic Communities in Indonesia', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 May (16 May 2023): 75, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v8i1.5480>.

<sup>5</sup> Bambang Soesatyo, Kadir Johnson Rajagukguk, and Heri Wahyudi, 'Building Legal Foundation for a Prosperous Indonesia: Insights from MPR-RI Four Pillars', *Yustisia Jurnal Hukum* 12, no. 3 (12 December 2023): 240, <https://doi.org/10.20961/yustisia.v12i3.71520>.

<sup>6</sup> Isnarmi Moeis et al., 'Intercultural Values in Local Wisdom: A Global Treasure of Minangkabau Ethnic in Indonesia', *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (31 December 2022): 2116841, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2116841>.

imam can be chosen from anyone present at the funeral procession.<sup>7</sup> This approach reflects flexibility in selecting the person to lead the funeral prayer according to the circumstances and availability. The Maliki school allows the heir to lead the funeral prayer. They consider it preferable for the heir who has a close relationship with the deceased to lead the prayer, although this does not affect the validity of the funeral prayer itself.<sup>8</sup> This approach emphasizes the importance of personal connection in leading prayers for the deceased as a sign of respect. The Shafi'i school also permits the heir to lead the funeral prayer. They argue that this allowance is based on honoring the deceased, without altering the validity of the funeral prayer. This approach demonstrates how justice and honor for the deceased are upheld in religious practices. The Hanbali school also allows the heir to lead the funeral prayer. They view this as not affecting the validity of the funeral prayer because the role of the imam in funeral prayers does not require lengthy recitations as in other prayers. This approach shows flexibility in the implementation of religious rituals within specific contexts, adhering to principles relevant to the community's needs and practices.

This research aims to delve deeper into the system of appointing funeral prayer leaders from among heirs in the Kurai customary law of Bukittinggi. Its primary focus is to trace the history and evolution of this practice over time, as well as analyze the social, cultural, and religious factors that shape it. Additionally, the study seeks to enhance understanding of Kurai customary views regarding the role of funeral prayer leaders outside of the heirs, aiming to highlight the traditional values that underpin the selection of these leaders. Furthermore, the research will explore the Islamic legal perspective on the validity of appointing funeral prayer leaders exclusively from among heirs, discussing theological arguments and the associated social and religious implications. It is expected that the findings of this research will not only provide a profound understanding of religious practices in a local context but also make a significant contribution to the discourse on adapting religious values in societies facing the dynamics of global change.

## 2. Method

This research delves into the longstanding cultural practice of appointing heirs as leaders of funeral prayers within the vibrant tapestry of the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. The study aims to unravel the intricate socio-cultural fabric that designates heirs as the custodians of this sacred ritual, tracing its historical evolution and examining its profound societal significance embedded in traditional funeral ceremonies. Methodologically, this qualitative inquiry employs in-depth interviews with local community leaders and stakeholders. These interviews are pivotal in capturing direct insights into the criteria and processes involved in selecting heirs as leaders of funeral prayers. The qualitative data gathered will be complemented by a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on relevant legal and religious themes. This approach enriches the analysis with theoretical frameworks and comparative perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of the cultural and religious dynamics at play.

By synthesizing these interdisciplinary approaches, the research endeavors to illuminate the intricate nuances and underscore the profound cultural significance of heirs assuming the role of funeral prayer leaders in the Kurai community of Bukittinggi. The findings from this study are expected to offer nuanced insights into the complex interplay between indigenous traditions and Islamic principles within the domain of religious practices among the Kurai community. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how local adaptations harmonize with and enrich Islamic values in everyday life. Furthermore, the research aims to foster novel perspectives and enrich ongoing dialogues on how these adaptations contribute to the cultural resilience and identity of the Kurai community amidst global influences. This scholarly inquiry aims to provide valuable contributions to the existing literature, offering insights into the socio-cultural dynamics influencing

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<sup>7</sup> Rika Astari et al., 'The Controversy over the Hadith on Martyrs in the Context of COVID-19 Corpse Handling', *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 14, no. 4 (2024): 157–79, <https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v14i04/157-179>.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Bursi, 'A Holy Heretical Body', *Studies in Late Antiquity* 2, no. 2 (1 May 2018): 147–79, <https://doi.org/10.1525/sla.2018.2.2.147>.

the appointment of heirs as leaders of funeral prayers, and exploring the legal and religious implications of this practice. Thus, it contributes to broader discussions on the adaptation of Islamic norms in diverse local contexts, shedding light on the broader implications for religious practices and cultural heritage preservation.

### 3. Analysis or Discussion

#### 3.1. Impact of Islamic Influence in West Sumatra

According to Tambo Minangkabau, the Minangkabau people trace their lineage back to Iskandar Zulkamain, a ruler who wielded influence across regions extending to India in the third century BC. Legend holds that their ancestors arrived by sea and made landfall on Mount Merapi, settling in Pariangan.<sup>9</sup> From this pivotal arrival point, their community thrived, gradually spreading and establishing settlements in what are now recognized as Tanah Datar, Agam, and Lima Puluh Kota. These areas, known as luhak in antiquity, evolved over time into the modern districts known today. As the Minangkabau community expanded, they migrated further afield, settling in regions such as Solok, Pasarnan, Pesisir Selatan, Padang Pariaman, and Sawahlunto Sijunjung, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of West Sumatra.

Archaeological and historical research provides insights into the origins and development of the Minangkabau people.<sup>10</sup> They are identified as part of the broader Malay ethnic group, believed to have migrated from Indo-China between the fifth and first centuries BC. The pre- and protohistory of West Sumatra is vividly documented through archaeological discoveries, including megalithic remnants found in various sites like Guguk, Suliki, and Puar Datar (Lima Puluh Kota), as well as pottery shards unearthed in Gua Kamang (Agam Regency) near Puar Datar. Noteworthy artifacts, such as a gold plate charter discovered at Tanjung Medan Temple and sites in Padang Nunang, Rao, North Pasaman district, highlight the region's ancient cultural heritage. In the late thirteenth century, West Sumatra gained historical significance with the Pamalayu expedition led by Kartanegara in 1275 AD. By the fourteenth century, the appearance of Adityawarman's inscriptions in Batusangkar further solidified West Sumatra's cultural and political importance during this early period of its history.<sup>11</sup>

By the fifteenth century, Islam had begun to permeate the cultural fabric of West Sumatra, marking a significant shift in religious and social dynamics. This transformation was pivotal as it laid the foundation for subsequent developments that would shape the region's identity and history. Moving into the nineteenth century, a pivotal era unfolded with the arrival of three influential pilgrims from Mecca—Haji Miskin, Haji Sumanik, and Haji Piobang—who brought back renewed Islamic teachings and sparked a movement for religious reform. This period also witnessed a profound clash between traditionalist factions and reformist elements within Islam, culminating in the emergence of the Paderi movement. The Dutch colonial presence in West Sumatra exploited these internal divisions, siding with traditionalist groups against the reformist Paderi, thereby escalating tensions. The ensuing Paderi War, spanning from 1821 to 1837, was a protracted conflict led by figures like Imam Bonjol, symbolizing the struggle for both religious autonomy and resistance against colonial rule. Despite the eventual suppression of the Paderi resistance by Dutch

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<sup>9</sup> Yusuf Karataş et al., 'Traditional and Complementary Medicine Use and Beliefs during COVID-19 Outbreak: A Cross-Sectional Survey among the General Population in Turkey', *Advances in Integrative Medicine* 8, no. 4 (December 2021): 261–66, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aimed.2021.09.002>.

<sup>10</sup> Erwati Aziz, Mohammad Dzofir, and Aris Widodo, 'The Acculturation of Islam and Customary Law: An Experience of Minangkabau, Indonesia', *QIIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 8, no. 1 (30 June 2020): 131, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.7197>.

<sup>11</sup> Surya Afranius et al., 'Development of GIS for Buildings in the Customary Village of Minangkabau Koto Gadang, West Sumatra, Indonesia', *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information* 9, no. 6 (2 June 2020): 365, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi9060365>.

forces, intermittent uprisings persisted, underscoring the enduring local resistance to external domination and the quest for autonomy.<sup>12</sup>

Entering the twentieth century, West Sumatra emerged as a pivotal center in Indonesia's national awakening. The region hosted branches of Java-based nationalist movements and fostered its own indigenous political organizations, such as the Indonesian Muslim Association (PERMI), which played a crucial role in mobilizing local sentiments against Dutch colonialism. The culmination of these efforts came with Indonesia's proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, marking a definitive turning point in West Sumatra's history and solidifying its place in the national struggle for freedom. West Sumatra's historical narrative embodies a rich tapestry of religious evolution, socio-political upheaval, and resistance to colonial oppression. From the early propagation of Islam to the tumultuous Paderi War and the fervent nationalist movements of the twentieth century, the region has navigated complex challenges while steadfastly asserting its cultural identity and contributing to Indonesia's broader quest for independence and sovereignty.

### 3.2. Scholarly Opinions on the Appointment of Imams for the Funeral Prayer for Heirs

Death is a certainty decreed by Allah (sunnatullah) that will inevitably come to every human being when their appointed time arrives. According to Islamic law, when a Muslim dies, it is obligatory for the surviving Muslims to perform the rites for the deceased. This obligation includes several important steps.<sup>13</sup> Firstly, the body must be bathed to cleanse it of all impurities. This is followed by shrouding the body in a sufficient amount of cloth, with the recommendation that the shroud be white, clean, thick, tight, and simple. The simplicity and purity of the shroud symbolize the humble return to Allah. Once the body has been properly dressed, the next obligation is to perform the funeral prayer (salat al-janazah). This prayer is an essential part of the burial process and serves as a final act of worship for the deceased. After the funeral prayer, the body is then buried according to Islamic customs.<sup>14</sup>

Muslims universally agree that the ruling on the funeral prayer is fardhu kifayah, meaning it is a communal obligation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged his followers to pray for the deceased, highlighting the significant role of the funeral prayer. It is believed that the deceased will benefit from the intercession of the Muslims who offer the prayer, provided they do not commit shirk (associating partners with Allah). This underscores the importance of the funeral prayer for the deceased, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) consistently made time to perform this prayer, even if the person had already been buried. The funeral prayer holds immense spiritual significance, ensuring the deceased receives prayers and intercessions from the living, reinforcing the bonds of the Muslim community in both life and death. This communal aspect of the funeral rites demonstrates the deep sense of responsibility and solidarity within the Muslim ummah, as they come together to honor the deceased and seek Allah's mercy and forgiveness for them. The practices surrounding death and burial in Islam not only provide a dignified farewell to the deceased but also serve as a powerful reminder to the living about the transient nature of life and the importance of preparing for the hereafter.

In one of the traditions, it is mentioned that the person who has the right to lead the funeral prayer is the family of the deceased. This is based on the narration of an-Nasai from Abu Mas'ud who prohibited a person from leading another person in his jurisdiction. This tradition underscores the familial authority and responsibility in leading the funeral rites, reflecting the close bond and duty that family members hold towards their deceased loved ones. However, on the other hand, there is

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<sup>12</sup> Fitri ArsiH et al., 'The Exploration of Educational Value in Randai Minangkabau Art, Indonesia', *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists* 7, no. 4 (15 December 2019): 1225–48, <https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.605463>.

<sup>13</sup> Teacher Shahin Siham AbdulRazaq, 'Reform and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire', *ALUSTATH JOURNAL FOR HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES* 226, no. 2 (1 September 2018): 115–40, <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v226i2.81>.

<sup>14</sup> Mohammed Madadin et al., 'The Islamic Perspective on Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia', *Medicine, Science and the Law* 60, no. 4 (October 2020): 278–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0025802420934241>.



also a narration that states that the person who has the right to lead the funeral prayer is the guardian or leader. This is illustrated by the incident where Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), told Sa'id bin al-Ash, who was the governor of Medina at that time, to lead the funeral prayer over the corpse of his brother Husain (RA). This shows a precedence of leadership and governance in performing religious duties, suggesting that leaders or guardians may have a rightful place in such significant religious acts.

These two narrations seem to contradict each other, presenting a complex picture of who holds the authority to lead the funeral prayer. This discrepancy raises questions about the interplay between familial duty and governance in religious practices. Apart from the above problems, the phenomenon that occurs today when it comes to leading the funeral prayer is that preference is often given to the family of the deceased without paying attention to their fluency in reading the Qur'an. This practice might overlook the importance of having someone well-versed in Qur'anic recitation and Islamic rituals to lead the prayer, which could affect the spiritual efficacy of the prayer itself. The modern-day practice reflects a blend of respect for familial bonds and perhaps a gap in religious education and preparedness among the community members. It is important to note that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself sometimes refrained from praying over certain corpses. Among the bodies that he did not pray over were those of adulterers and the perpetrators of *ghulul* (embezzlement of war spoils). The act of *ghulul* during the time of the Prophet (SAW) was considered a severe transgression, and his refusal to pray over such individuals' bodies highlighted the serious nature of their actions. This selective approach to funeral prayers by the Prophet (SAW) indicates a significant moral and ethical consideration in the performance of religious duties, which served as a deterrent against sinful behaviors within the Muslim community.

One of the hadiths that explain the preference for rulers to lead the funeral prayer is found in the book "*Ahkaam al-Janaaiz wa Bid'uha*" written by Shaykh Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani. In this hadith, Tsauri from Salim from Abu Hazim recounts witnessing Husayn, who, upon the death of Hasan, tapped Sa'id bin al-Ash on the shoulder and said, "Come forward, had it not been for the sunnah I would not have sent you forward." At that time, Sa'id was the governor of Medina. This narration shows that even though Husayn had a rightful place to lead the prayer as family, he deferred to the governor, following the tradition and respecting the position of leadership. After the prayer, Abu Hurairah stood up and said, "Will you smear your Prophet's grandson with the soil you used to bury him. Whereas I have heard the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) say, 'Whoever loves them means he loves me, but whoever hates them means he hates me.'" This hadith, also narrated in meaning by Imam Baihaqi in *Sunan al-Kubra* and Thabrani in *Mu'jam al-Kabir*, was transmitted by the *tabi'in* and is not directly attributed (*marfu'*) to the Messenger of Allah. This reflects the deep respect and affection the companions and followers of the Prophet (SAW) had for his family, reinforcing the intertwined roles of familial respect and leadership in Islamic funeral rites.

#### 4. Impact of the Receptie Theory on Indonesian Legal and Colonial History

In exploring the hadiths about who should lead the funeral prayer, the author finds two key narrations that shed light on this matter. The first hadith is narrated by Shu'bah, who recounts that Isma'il bin Raja' heard from Aus bin Dham'aj about Abu Mas'ud al-Badri. According to Abu Mas'ud al-Badri, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stated, The person most entitled to lead a group is the one with the best recitation of the Qur'an. If their recitation is equal, then those who migrated first. If they are equal in migration, then the oldest among them should lead. No one should lead another in his domain, and no one should sit in a place of honour in another's home without permission. This hadith outlines a hierarchy for selecting an imam, starting with the best reciter of the Qur'an, followed by those who migrated first, and then the eldest. It also emphasizes respecting territorial

and social boundaries, underscoring the Prophet's (SAW) teachings on manners and respect within the Muslim community.<sup>15</sup>

The second hadith expands on the Prophet's (SAW) guidance about prayer leadership. Scholars have interpreted the phrase *yaummu al-qauama aqrauhum likitabillah* (the one who has the right to lead the people is the one who reads the Qur'an best) in different ways. Some scholars believe that the best Qur'anic reciter should always lead the prayer, while others take into account additional factors such as piety, knowledge, and community status. This variety in interpretations highlights the nuanced understanding of religious leadership in Islam. The hadith also includes instructions to avoid leading prayer in someone else's jurisdiction without permission and not to sit in places of honour in another's home without consent. These guidelines stress the importance of respect and proper behaviour in communal and social settings, illustrating the ethical framework established by the Prophet (SAW) for his followers. By examining these hadiths, we gain a better understanding of the considerations and etiquette involved in leading prayer, as well as the broader implications for leadership and respect within the Muslim community.

In discussing the nuances of who should lead prayers, an-Nawawi's perspective underscores the primacy of religious comprehension over mere recitation skills. He argues that while recitation follows a set format, the application of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is essential for addressing potential issues during prayers. This view is rooted in the Prophet Muhammad's practice of appointing leaders based on their understanding of religious principles rather than just their ability to recite proficiently. For example, Abu Bakr, renowned for his profound knowledge of the Sunnah from his close association with the Prophet, was often chosen over others who might have been more eloquent in recitation. This illustrates the Prophet's preference for individuals who possess deep religious insight and the ability to apply Islamic teachings practically in guiding congregational affairs.<sup>16</sup>

An-Nawawi distinguishes between the early companions of the Prophet and later generations in their approach to the Qur'an. The early companions not only memorized and recited the Qur'an but also delved deeply into its meanings, allowing them to interpret its teachings and apply them effectively. This comprehensive understanding empowered them to navigate complex religious issues and provide guidance to the community. In contrast, subsequent generations tended to prioritize memorization and recitation over deeper comprehension, potentially leading to a gap in understanding and application of Islamic principles. An-Nawawi's analysis emphasizes the enduring importance of *fiqh* and religious insight in guiding communal practices, echoing the Prophet's teachings that knowledge and understanding are fundamental in matters of religious leadership and community guidance.

The Hadith "*walaa yaummu arrajulu fii baitihi walaa fii sulthanihi walaa yajlisu 'ala takrimatihi illa bi idznihi*" underscores the principle that ownership entails authority, just as a leader's jurisdiction mandates their authority. This principle is exemplified in the instance where Ibn 'Umar prayed behind al-Hajjaj, acknowledging the precedence of a designated imam in conducting prayers. Zain Ibn al-Munayyar further elucidated that when a supreme leader such as a caliph or governor visits a region, the local owner or ruler should defer from leading prayers. This deference respects the rights of the appointed imam and acknowledges the owner's authority within their own premises. It underscores the hierarchy of authority within Islamic practice, ensuring that those with designated leadership roles maintain their responsibilities in leading congregational prayers.

Ash-Shafi'i provided additional clarity on the matter, emphasizing that if a ruler or homeowner aspires to lead prayers but lacks proficiency in Qur'anic recitation, it is preferable for them to yield to someone more qualified. This ensures the correctness and spiritual efficacy of the

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<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Jalaluddin Assuyuthi Chalil and Maulana Siregar, 'Pelatihan Fardhu Kifayah Jenazah Pasien Terpapar Covid-19 Pada Perawat Ruang Intensive Care Unit (ICU)', *Aksiologi: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 7, no. 1 (19 October 2022), <https://doi.org/10.30651/aks.v7i1.10400>.

<sup>16</sup> Salsabila Noor Assyfa, 'Konflik Sosial Dan Nilai Sosial Budaya Novel Segala Yang Diisap Langit Karya Pinto Anugrah Serta Relevansinya Dalam Pembelajaran Di SMA', 2023, <https://digilib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/detail/104566/>.

congregational prayer, as the imam's fluency in recitation is crucial for guiding the prayer effectively. Ash-Shafi'i's teachings highlight the importance of competence and qualification in leading religious rituals, ensuring that the spiritual integrity of congregational worship is maintained. Furthermore, when a ruler or host appoints another individual as the imam, it signifies a transfer of responsibility and authority, where the appointed imam assumes the leadership role on behalf of the ruler or host during the prayer. This delegation underscores the significance of respecting hierarchical structures and adhering to religious guidelines in Islamic worship, promoting decorum and spiritual alignment within the community. In addressing this variance, an-Nawawi reasoned that a deeper understanding of religious principles qualifies one better to lead prayers than mere proficiency in recitation. This is because recitation follows established rules, while fiqh, or understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, requires nuanced judgment in handling various situations that may arise during prayers. Hence, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) prioritized Abu Bakr as an imam due to his profound knowledge of the Sunnah, gained from his close companionship with the Prophet, despite others being more skilled in Quranic recitation. This highlights the importance of knowledge over mere technical ability in Islamic leadership.<sup>17</sup>

The Prophet also favored those who had both belief and comprehension from a young age, emphasizing that understanding should precede recitation in Quranic learning. This ensured that during the time of the Sahabah (companions of the Prophet), every scholar of Islamic law was also proficient in Quranic recitation. However, as subsequent generations focused on Quranic memorization from childhood before understanding its deeper meanings, not every proficient reciter became a jurist. Additionally, the Hadith "wala yaummu arrajulu fii baitihi wala fii sulthanihi wala yajlisu 'ala takrimatihi illa bi idznihi" confirms that the owner holds authority over his domain, while the highest imam assumes authority in his jurisdiction. Thus, Ibn 'Umar's choice to pray behind al-Hajjaj, a ruler, underscores the precedence of a designated imam in congregational prayers, respecting the hierarchy of authority in Islamic worship contexts. Similarly, Zain Ibn al-Munayyar's assertion highlights that when a supreme leader visits, local authorities should defer to the imam's leadership in prayer, respecting both the imam's role and the owner's authority within their domain. This adherence ensures the proper conduct of prayers and upholds decorum in Islamic religious practices.

According to the teachings of Ash-Shafi'i, when a ruler or leader enters a region under his authority, he holds the primary right to lead prayers, encompassing obligatory, voluntary, or Eid prayers. It is crucial for the imam, whether a ruler or a homeowner, to possess a robust ability to fluently recite the Qur'an. This proficiency ensures the validity and correctness of the prayer, as recitation forms an integral part of the Islamic worship rituals. Should the designated imam lack this essential skill, there is a risk of the prayer being deemed invalid, particularly if someone more adept in recitation and knowledgeable in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) is present within the congregation. Thus, the appointment of an imam by a ruler or homeowner carries significant weight, serving as a legitimate representation of authority during the communal act of worship.<sup>18</sup>

The ideal imam is someone who excels in both the recitation of the Qur'an and the understanding of fiqh. When a ruler lacks proficiency in either recitation or fiqh, it is advisable for them to delegate the role of imam to an individual who meets these criteria, ensuring the prayers are conducted correctly and in accordance with Islamic principles. Importantly, it is strictly prohibited for anyone to assume the role of imam without explicit permission from the ruler, underscoring the importance of respecting hierarchical authority structures during congregational prayers. Similarly, when a homeowner assumes the role of imam, they must also fulfill the prerequisites of proficient recitation and sound fiqh knowledge. Failure to meet these standards necessitates prioritizing a more qualified individual among the worshippers, thereby upholding the integrity and sanctity of

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<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Gazali, 'MAQASID AL-SYARIAH DAN REFORMULASI IJTIHAD SEBAGAI SUMBER HUKUM ISLAM', *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 18, no. 2 (7 February 2020), <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v18i2.3133>.

<sup>18</sup> Abd Hakim Abd Razak, 'Multiple Sharia' Board Directorship: A *Maslahah* (Public Interest) Perspective', *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 11, no. 3 (20 May 2020): 745–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-10-2018-0185>.



the prayer rituals within the Muslim community. These guidelines uphold the principles of order and respect within Islamic worship, emphasizing the harmonious balance between spiritual devotion and administrative authority in prayer settings.<sup>19</sup>

In Islam, the concept of honoring leadership extends not only to secular governance but also to matters of religious practice and devotion to Allah. This principle is exemplified vividly in the conduct surrounding funeral prayers, where despite being recited silently, the skill in recitation remains crucial due to its potential to alter the meaning if mispronounced. Hence, it is recommended to prioritize a leader who is proficient in Quranic recitation to lead the funeral prayer. This emphasis on fluency was underscored by Husayn's actions upon the death of Hasan, as he directed Sa'id bin al-'Ash, the governor of Madinah at that time, to lead Hasan's funeral prayer, stating, "Come forward, if it were not for the sunnah, I would not have told you to come forward."<sup>20</sup>

This incident not only highlights Husayn's deep understanding of the Prophet's teachings (sunnah) but also his deference to authority in matters of religious practice. According to Ibn Hazm, when a ruler is present at a funeral prayer, they are given precedence to lead, similar to the protocol observed during Friday prayers and the Eid festivals. Scholars further elaborate that the term "wali" in this context refers specifically to leaders, judges, or those with significant authority. If such a figure is absent, the responsibility then falls to the highest-ranking official or judge available. Should both positions be vacant, the duty is passed down within the deceased's family hierarchy, following the guidelines set by the Prophet's companions (ashabah) regarding inheritance and leadership in religious ceremonies. This hierarchical structure ensures both respect for authority and the continuity of religious practices within the community.

In delineating who holds the right to lead the funeral prayer, adherence to the general principles articulated in the hadith narrations by Abu Dawud, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, and an-Nasai is crucial. These sources underscore that a leader or ruler should be given precedence over an imam in conducting the funeral prayer, provided they possess the requisite qualifications of being a proficient reciter (qari) and knowledgeable in fiqh (faqih). This criteria ensures that the leader can effectively fulfill the duties of leading the prayer with competency and understanding of the Islamic legal framework governing such rites. Hasan's decision to appoint Said bin al-'Ash, the governor of Medina, to lead Husayn's funeral prayer serves as a practical example of this principle in action. Hasan evidently trusted Said bin al-'Ash's proficiency as both a qari and faqih, acknowledging his ability to perform the prayer in accordance with Islamic teachings.<sup>21</sup>

The absence of any testament from Hasan regarding the choice of imam for his own funeral prayer, as indicated in Abdul Razaq's narration, underscores the importance of respecting the deceased's wishes in matters of religious observance.<sup>22</sup> This tradition of bequeathing the responsibility for leading one's funeral prayer dates back to the early Islamic era, initiated by Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and continued by subsequent companions such as Umar bin al-Khattab, Umm Salamah, Abu Bakrah, 'Aisha, and Ibn Mas'ud. Each companion's choice reflected their trust in the designated individual's knowledge and capability to fulfill the spiritual and procedural requirements of the funeral prayer. Such practices highlight the continuity of religious traditions and the profound respect accorded to

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<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Ilham, 'HUKUM ISLAM PERSPEKTIF PARADIGMA BARU KEILMUAN', *SANGAJI: Jurnal Pemikiran Syariah Dan Hukum* 5, no. 2 (16 October 2021): 148–68, <https://doi.org/10.52266/sangaji.v5i2.695>.

<sup>20</sup> Chaima Ahaddour, Stef Van Den Branden, and Bert Broeckaert, "'God Is the Giver and Taker of Life": Muslim Beliefs and Attitudes Regarding Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia', *AJOB Empirical Bioethics* 9, no. 1 (2 January 2018): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23294515.2017.1420708>.

<sup>21</sup> Nali Eka, 'UPACARA KEMATIAN PADA MASYARAKAT DAYAK TUMON DI DESA GUCI KABUPATEN LAMANDAU (KAJIAN AGAMA DAN BUDAYA HINDU)', *Bawi Ayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Budaya Hindu* 8, no. 2 (9 August 2019): 63–82, <https://doi.org/10.33363/ba.v8i2.297>.

<sup>22</sup> Yohanes Sehandi, 'Nilai-Nilai Religius Dalam Upacara Adat Rowa Pada Masyarakat Manggarai Di Flores', *Retorika: Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia* 3, no. 2 (27 June 2022): 127–37, <https://doi.org/10.37478/rjpbsi.v3i2.2366>.

the deceased's wishes within Islamic teachings, ensuring the proper observance of rites across generations and reinforcing communal bonds through shared religious practices.

The precedence given to a designated imam over a ruler or leader highlights a nuanced balance between customary authority and religious duty. While rulers traditionally hold authority over their subjects, this narration illustrates that in matters of religious observance, the wishes expressed by the deceased take precedence, even over a ruler's customary right to lead. This reflects a broader principle in Islamic jurisprudence where personal autonomy in religious matters is respected, provided it does not contradict established religious principles. It also serves as a reminder to leaders and communities alike of the importance of honoring the deceased's spiritual requests, ensuring that funeral prayers are conducted by those best suited to fulfill the religious obligations and maintain the integrity of the ritual.<sup>23</sup>

In contemporary contexts, where Quranic fluency and fiqh expertise may vary among leaders and family members, the narration prompts reflection on the responsibility of those entrusted with leadership roles in the Muslim community. Leaders are called upon to recognize their limitations and, if necessary, defer to more qualified individuals among the congregation to lead funeral prayers. This approach not only upholds the dignity of the deceased but also fosters a sense of communal responsibility in ensuring that religious rites are conducted with due reverence and adherence to Islamic principles. Thus, the tradition of testamentary appointment for funeral prayers serves as a practical and ethical guide, reinforcing the importance of competency and sincerity in fulfilling religious duties within the Islamic framework.

## 5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study explores the longstanding cultural practice where heirs are designated as leaders of funeral prayers within the rich socio-cultural framework of the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. The study aims to unravel the intricate cultural dynamics that establish heirs as custodians of this sacred ritual, tracing its historical evolution and examining its profound societal significance embedded in traditional funeral ceremonies. Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with local community leaders and stakeholders. These interviews are crucial for gaining direct insights into the criteria and processes involved in selecting heirs as leaders of funeral prayers. The qualitative data collected will be complemented by a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on relevant legal and religious themes. This approach enriches the analysis with theoretical frameworks and comparative perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of the cultural and religious dynamics at play.

By synthesizing these interdisciplinary approaches, the study aims to depict the complex nuances and highlight the profound cultural significance when heirs assume the role of funeral prayer leaders within the Kurai community in Bukittinggi. The findings from this research are expected to offer deeper insights into the complex interaction between local traditions and Islamic principles in the realm of religious practices among the Kurai community. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how local adaptations align with and enrich Islamic values in everyday life. Furthermore, the study aims to foster new perspectives and enrich ongoing dialogues on how these adaptations contribute to cultural resilience and community identity amidst global influences. This scholarly inquiry aims to provide valuable contributions to existing literature, offering insights into the socio-cultural dynamics influencing the appointment of heirs as leaders of funeral prayers, and exploring the legal and religious implications of this practice. Thus, the study contributes to broader discussions on the adaptation of Islamic norms in diverse local contexts, shedding light on broader implications for religious practices and cultural heritage preservation.

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<sup>23</sup> Destuliadi Destuliadi, 'AKULTURASI "TRADISI MANDOA SETELAH KEMATIAN" PADA MASYARAKAT JORONG NAN IX NAGARI SALIMPAUNG', *JUDAKUM: JURNAL DEDIKASI HUKUM* 2, no. 1 (2023): 67–80.

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