

## THE ROLE OF *TUAN GURU* AND TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SHAPING RELIGIOUS MODERATION AMONG THE SASAK COMMUNITY

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**Abstrak:** Masyarakat Sasak di Pulau Lombok memiliki struktur sosial dan budaya yang unik, di mana peran Tuan Guru sebagai tokoh agama sangat sentral dalam pembentukan identitas religius dan sosial mereka. Artikel ini mengkaji peran Tuan Guru dan lembaga adat dalam membentuk nalar moderasi beragama di kalangan masyarakat Sasak. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menggali bagaimana proses islamisasi yang dilakukan oleh Tuan Guru berintegrasi dengan adat istiadat lokal, menciptakan tatanan sosial yang harmonis dan moderat. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa strategi dakwah Tuan Guru, yang mengedepankan nilai-nilai Islam dengan pendekatan yang kontekstual, telah berhasil menginternalisasi ajaran agama ke dalam praktik budaya Sasak. Selain itu, pepatah dan peribahasa Sasak berfungsi sebagai media pendidikan yang efektif dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai keislaman. Namun, di tengah tantangan modernisasi dan globalisasi, identitas budaya dan agama masyarakat Sasak tetap terjaga melalui peran Tuan Guru dan lembaga adat. Artikel ini menegaskan pentingnya moderasi beragama dalam menghadapi perubahan sosial dan budaya, serta relevansinya dalam konteks masyarakat Sasak saat ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Tuan Guru, Lembaga Adat, Moderasi Beragama, Masyarakat Sasak

**Judul:** Peran Tuan Guru dan Lembaga Adat dalam Membentuk Moderasi Beragama Masyarakat Sasak

**Abstract:** Sasak, the indigenous community of Lombok, possesses a unique social and cultural structure, where the role of *Tuan Guru* as Islamic religious figures is central to the formation of their religious and social identity. This article examines the role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions in shaping the understanding of religious moderation among the Sasak community. Through a qualitative approach, this research explores how the Islamization process carried out by *Tuan Guru* integrates with local customs, creating a harmonious and moderate social order. The study finds that the preaching (*da'wa*) strategy of *Tuan Guru*, which emphasizes Islamic values with a contextual approach, has successfully internalized religious teachings into Sasak cultural practices. Additionally, Sasak proverbs (*sesenggak*) function as effective educational media in instilling Islamic values. However, amid the challenges of modernization and globalization, the cultural and religious identity of the Sasak community remains preserved through the role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions. This article affirms the importance of religious moderation in facing social and cultural changes, as well as its relevance in the context of contemporary Sasak community.

**Keywords:** *Tuan Guru*, Traditional Institutions, Religious Moderation, Sasak



## INTRODUCTION

The Sasak people of Lombok, Indonesia possess a unique social and cultural structure, built upon the interaction between Islamic teachings and local customs. This composition creates a strong religious and social identity, where a central role is played by *Tuan Guru* religious leaders who inherited a tradition of moderate Sunni that embraces local culture. Since the 16th century, *Tuan Guru* have been influential figures in education, social affairs, and politics in Lombok, internalizing Islamic values within the local context through various cultural institutions.<sup>1</sup> *Tuan Guru* function not only as spiritual leaders but also as catalysts for social change, promoting Islamic values in the daily lives of Sasak community.

The presence of *Tuan Guru* reflects the unique characteristics of Sasak society, which values the integration of religion and culture.<sup>2</sup> In many ways, *Tuan Guru* serve as bridges between Islamic teachings and Sasak customs, ensuring that these elements complement rather than contradict each other. This becomes crucial in building a harmonious social order characterized by moderation.<sup>3</sup> Rich in tradition and local values, Sasak customs also significantly influence the practice of Islamic teachings. In this way, Islamic teachings are not merely accepted but adapted to existing societal values, creating a positive cultural synthesis.

However, amid rapid globalization and social change, challenges to the existence of local culture and religious identity are intensifying. The swift process of globalization brings significant impacts on societal mindsets and behaviors, including in Lombok. Many argue that Islamization in Lombok represents a form of Islamic orthodoxy that suppresses local culture. This criticism often emerges from perspectives that view change as a threat to cultural identity.<sup>4</sup> However, historical evidence shows that the Islamization process conducted by *Tuan Guru* in Lombok was not a form of cultural oppression but rather a wise integration through preaching and religious interpretation (*ijihad*) that considered the social context of the community.

The moderate approach to *da'wa* adopted by *Tuan Guru* has contributed to creating conducive conditions for dialogue between Islamic values and customs. Through an inclusive approach, *Tuan Guru* have been able to present Islamic teachings in a form readily accepted by Sasak society. This includes using familiar language, local cultural symbols, and teaching methods that are not only theoretical but also practical. In this context, religious education provided by *Tuan Guru* is often packaged in an engaging format that is easily understood by

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, (Bandung: PT. Mizan Pustaka, 2009), 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> Baiq Mulianah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Memperkuat Moderasi Beragama pada Keluarga Sasak Lombok Nusa Tenggara Barat," (Mataram: Disertasi UIN Mataram), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Ma'arif, *Islam dalam Bingkai...*, 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Islam dan Transformasi Budaya*, (Yogyakarta: PT. Dana Bhakti Prima Yasa bekerjasama dengan the International Institute of Islamic Thought Indonesia (IIIT) dan Lembaga Studi Agama & Filsafat, 2002), 77-78.

various segments of society. This makes Islamic education in Lombok not merely a means of knowledge transfer but also a process of social transformation that strengthens community identity.

This paper will examine in greater depth the role of *Tuan Guru* and Sasak traditional institutions in shaping societal reasoning, as well as how Islamic preaching in Lombok emphasizes values of moderation. This approach will address the challenges faced in maintaining cultural and religious identity in the modern era, while exploring how values inherited through Sasak proverbs (*sesenggak*) become integral parts of community education.<sup>5</sup> In this context, *sesenggak* function not only as cultural expressions but also as effective educational media. Through these words of wisdom, Sasak community is taught to value tolerance, justice, and balance in daily life.

Traditional institutions also play a crucial role in forming the identity of Sasak people. These institutions act as guardians of traditional values and become authorities in regulating social life. In many cases, traditional institutions and *Tuan Guru* collaborate to maintain community harmony and prevent conflict. Thus, the integration between *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions creates synergy that strengthens religious moderation among Sasak society. This collaboration is important in building awareness of the importance of maintaining cultural and religious identity amid rapid changes.

In facing the challenges of modernization, it is crucial for the Sasak community to remain steadfast in the values inherited from their ancestors. These values must serve as guidelines in daily life and in confronting various incoming changes. *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions must continue to play an active role in preserving cultural and religious heritage, as well as educating the younger generation about the importance of moderation and tolerance. In this way, the Sasak community can not only maintain their identity but also contribute to the creation of a harmonious and civilized society.

This article aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions in shaping religious moderation in Sasak society. By exploring the history and social context behind the Islamization process in Lombok, we can understand that religious moderation is not merely a concept, but a reality manifested in the daily life practices of the community. In this regard, religious moderation in Lombok serves as an example of how religion and culture can collaborate to create a better and more meaningful life for all parties.

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<sup>5</sup> Roby Mandalika Waluyan, I. Made Suyasa, and Akhmad H. Mus. "Nilai-nilai Pendidikan dalam *sesenggak* Sasak pada Masyarakat Pujut Kab. Lombok Tengah." *Jurnal Ilmiah Telaah* 6, no. 1, 2021, 97. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31764/telaah.v6i1.3866>. Diakses pada hari senin, 23 September 2024. Pukul : 15.37 Wita.

## METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data was obtained from literature relevant to the themes of religious moderation and the roles of traditional institutions and *Tuan Guru* in Sasak community. The literature encompasses books on the history of Islam in Lombok, studies on *Tuan Guru*, Sasak customs, and academic articles related to moderation in Islam.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, empirical data was collected through interviews with Sasak community leaders, analysis of Sasak sayings and proverbs, and direct observation of religious and customary practices in Sasak community.<sup>7</sup> A historical approach was also utilized to examine the development of Islamization in Lombok and the role of *Tuan Guru* in building socio-religious reasoning.<sup>8</sup>

This research also employs an ethnographic approach to understand how preaching practices conducted by *Tuan Guru* integrate with Sasak customs and how the community interprets religious teachings through cultural institutions.<sup>9</sup> The collected data was then analyzed using structural theory regarding the formation of social reasoning (*al-'aql al-mukawwan*) and the concept of moderation in Islam.<sup>10</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Role of *Tuan Guru* and Sasak Customs in Shaping Religious Moderation

Since the introduction of Islam to Lombok in the 16th century, *Tuan Guru* have played a central role in the Islamization process of Sasak community. These *Tuan Guru* serve not only as religious figures but also as educators (*murabbi*), spiritual leaders, and protectors of social and cultural values. Their influence extends beyond religious matters into the political and educational sectors of Sasak. The Islamic teachings they convey interact with local customs and traditions, making Islam appear not as a foreign, oppressive force but as an element that complements Sasak culture.

A crucial aspect of the *Tuan Guru*'s preaching approach is their emphasis on *tanzīl al-abkām* -- a concept emphasizing the contextualization of Islamic teachings within the local socio-cultural framework.<sup>11</sup> This approach, rooted in Sufi tradition, is characterized by cultural sensitivity and promotes an inclusive and moderate interpretation of Islam. The *Tuan*

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Ali, *Islam and Colonialism: Becoming Modern in Indonesia and Malaya*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 112-117.

<sup>7</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia*, (Crow's Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004), 89.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 148-153.

<sup>10</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 45-49.

<sup>11</sup> Fachry Ali dan Bachtiar Effendi, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1986), 62.

*Guru* did not seek to replace Sasak customs but rather to harmonize them with Islamic principles, creating a balanced and cohesive cultural-religious identity.

Scholars such as Tuan Guru Lopan, Tuan Guru Ahmad Tretetet, and Tuan Guru Muhammad Shaleh Hambali Bengkel played key roles in this integration process, particularly in adapting Islamic legal practices and daily rituals to align with Sasak customs.<sup>12</sup> This strategy enabled Islam to be accepted by Sasak society without abandoning their cultural heritage. Over time, this integrative preaching approach helped build a distinctive Sasak Muslim identity, where Islam and local customs became inseparable.

### ***Islam and Sasak Customs as a Unified Framework***

In Sasak community, customs form an integral part of daily life, encompassing both secular and religious practices. These customs are profoundly influenced by Islamic teachings, particularly in the areas of law, social organization, and moral values.<sup>13</sup> For instance, many *sesenggak* reflect Islamic ethics, emphasizing piety, communal harmony, and respect for knowledge.<sup>14</sup> The integration of Islamic values into local customs facilitated the acceptance of Islam among the Sasak, as the religion was viewed not as an imposition but as a reinforcement of existing moral and cultural frameworks.

Sasak customs embody key Islamic values such as devotion to God, communal solidarity, and the pursuit of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> This symbiotic relationship between Islam and custom can be understood through the concept of *al-'aql al-mukawwan* (formed reasoning), which refers to societal thinking shaped by cultural and religious values. In the Sasak context, this means their worldview is guided by a combination of Islamic and traditional principles, which together shape their social behavior and ethical judgments.<sup>16</sup>

For example, Sasak ceremonies such as *ngurisang* (hair-cutting ritual) and *nyongkolan* (wedding procession) are accompanied by Islamic prayers and rituals, demonstrating how local traditions have been adapted within an Islamic framework.<sup>17</sup> This fusion between Islam and culture evidences the success of the *Tuan Guru's* preaching approach, which prioritized cultural continuity alongside religious instruction.

### ***Challenges of Modernization and Globalization***

Although the integration of Islam and Sasak customs has progressed well, the Sasak faces significant challenges in the modern era. The currents of modernization and globalization bring rapid social changes that threaten the continuity of Sasak culture and

<sup>12</sup>Mulianah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 75.

<sup>13</sup>Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1979), 103.

<sup>14</sup>Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, Vol. 1, (Jakarta: UI Press, 1974), 136.

<sup>15</sup>Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, "Kearifan lokal Suku Sasak sebagai model pengelolaan konflik di masyarakat Lombok." *Mabasan* 12.1, 2018, 65-66. <https://doi.org/10.62107/mab.v12i1.34>.

<sup>16</sup>Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 99.

<sup>17</sup>John Bowen, *Muslims Through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 88.

religious identity.<sup>18</sup> The younger generation, increasingly exposed to global influences through education, media, and technology, tends to question traditional practices and adopt more cosmopolitan lifestyles.<sup>19</sup> This shift creates a dilemma for Sasak community: how to maintain their cultural and religious identity amid these external pressures.

One major challenge is the growing influence of fundamentalist Islamic movements that promote more rigid interpretations of Islam, often conflicting with the moderate and inclusive version embraced by Sasak community.<sup>20</sup> These movements, driven by global networks and ideologies, attempt to impose a purified form of Islam and reject local customs as “un-Islamic.” Consequently, tension exists between those who wish to maintain the traditional Sasak way of life, with its blend of Islam and customs, and those who advocate for a more orthodox approach.

In response to these challenges, *Tuan Guru* and traditional leaders are taking active steps to strengthen religious moderation and cultural preservation. Educational institutions, religious lectures, and community meetings serve as platforms to promote values of tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for cultural diversity. *Tuan Guru*, as prominent religious leaders in Lombok, emphasize the need for the Sasak to maintain their cultural and religious identity while remaining open to positive aspects of modernity.<sup>21</sup>

### ***The Role of Sasak Proverbs in Islamic Education***

Sasak proverbs, commonly known as *sesenggak*, play a crucial role in education, functioning as media for transmitting cultural and religious values.<sup>22</sup> These proverbs contain important lessons about life, morality, and spirituality. Additionally, majority of them are influenced by Islamic teachings, providing guidance on how to live a pious and balanced life.<sup>23</sup>

In this way, *sesenggak* functions as a form of preaching which reinforces Islamic values in a culturally appropriate manner. These proverbs are frequently used by *Tuan Guru* and other community leaders in their sermons and teachings to foster and internalize religious principles in the daily lives of Sasak people. Through this process, *Tuan Guru* have successfully instilled a moderate and harmonious understanding of Islam deeply rooted in local culture.

The integration of Islam and Sasak customs, facilitated by the culturally sensitive preaching approach of the *Tuan Guru*, has created a unique religious identity among the Sasak

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<sup>18</sup>Mark Woodward, *Islam Nusantara: A Globalisation and Changing Meanings of Islam in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2018), 117.

<sup>19</sup>Richard Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 72.

<sup>20</sup>M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions, c. 1830-1930* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 53.

<sup>21</sup>Ali dan Effendi, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, 70.

<sup>22</sup>Roby Mandalika Waluyan, I. Made Suyasa, and Akhmad H. Mus, “Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan, 100.

<sup>23</sup>Mulianah, “Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 76.

community. This identity is characterized by a moderate interpretation of Islam that embraces local traditions rather than rejecting them. However, the Sasak community now faces new challenges from modernization and the spread of fundamentalist Islamic ideologies that threaten this harmonious balance.

Ongoing efforts by *Tuan Guru* and traditional leaders to promote religious moderation and preserve cultural heritage offer hope for the future. By strengthening the values of tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for tradition, the Sasak community can face the complexities of modern life while maintaining their distinctive cultural and religious identity. The role of *sesenggak* in transmitting these values further strengthens the relationship between Islam and Sasak culture, ensuring that the legacy of religious moderation will continue for generations to come.

### **The Role of *Tuan Guru* in the Socio-political Life of Sasak People**

Since the early period of Islam in Lombok, *Tuan Guru* have played a vital role in the community life, not only in religious matters but also in social, economic, and political spheres. They act as central figures in spiritual life who bridge religion and society and provide moral guidance. As respected scholars, *Tuan Guru* are sources of authority in various aspects of Sasak life, particularly in internalizing Islamic teachings into daily practice.<sup>24</sup>

Some important means used by *Tuan Guru* in mainstreaming Islamic teachings are educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasah, and religious study groups (*majelis taklim*).<sup>25</sup> These institutions serve not only as places to learn religious knowledge but also as centers for intellectual and moral development within the community. Pesantren in Lombok are often highly respected institutions due to their role in educating young Muslims with moderate and inclusive Islamic values.<sup>26</sup> *Tuan Guru* who lead these institutions frequently adapt educational methods relevant to contemporary developments, including instilling values of religious moderation, harmony, and tolerance.

Beyond formal education, the *Tuan Guru* utilize various cultural media and sociolect-economic-political empowerment programs to disseminate Islamic teachings. They teach not only through lectures in mosques or madrasahs but also through local Sasak arts to convey moral and religious messages.<sup>27</sup> This reflects a culturally sensitive approach to religious propagation, similar to the methods employed by the *wali/sunan* (saints) in Java. One of the

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<sup>24</sup>Nazar Naamy, "Tuan Guru, Islamic Da'wah, and Competition: The Fragmentation of Authority in Lombok-Indonesia." *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture* 34, 2023, 820. <https://doi.org/10.59670/jns.v34i.1126>. Diakses pada hari senin, 23 September 2024. Pukul : 15.37 Wita.

<sup>25</sup> Fachry Ali dan Bachtiar Effendi, *Merambah Jalan*, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah*, 104.

<sup>27</sup>Kamarudin Zaelani, and Baiq Mulianah. "Pendidikan Damai untuk Dunia: Menelusuri Konsep Dialog Rumpun Agama Ibrahim tentang Pluralitas dalam Merespon Perbedaan." *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, dan Fenomena Agama*, 24.1, 2023, 72. <https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v24i1.16329>. Diakses pada hari senin, 23 September 2024. Pukul : 15.37 Wita.

key principles used is *al-taisir fi al-fatwa*, which involves making religious practice easier for the community through manageable religious edicts, and *al-tabsyir fi al-da'wah*, which emphasizes pleasant and enjoyable religious propagation.<sup>28</sup>

### ***The Involvement of Tuan Guru in Social and Political Affairs***

The role of *Tuan Guru* in Sasak community extends beyond religious matters. They are involved in social, economic, and political affairs. *Tuan Guru* in Lombok often serve as community protectors, providing counsel on various aspects of daily life, including social and political issues. This role has strengthened as social and political dynamics in Lombok have become more complex, particularly in addressing contemporary challenges such as social conflicts, poverty, and economic disparity.

In social life, *Tuan Guru* frequently act as mediators in resolving conflicts within the community. When disputes arise, whether in family matters, trade, or other social relations, *Tuan Guru* are called upon to provide advice and seek fair solutions based on Islamic law and local customs.<sup>29</sup> They function as respected peacemakers, whose decisions or advice are often accepted by all parties involved.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond conflict resolution, *Tuan Guru* are also active in community social and economic empowerment. Many are involved in establishing Islamic-based financial institutions such as *Baitul Maal wa Tamwil*, which provide micro-financing to the community.<sup>31</sup> This demonstrates how they consider not only the spiritual aspects but also strive to improve the economic welfare of the community. These efforts align with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of balance between spiritual and material life.

In the political sphere, the involvement of *Tuan Guru* has become more apparent, especially in the context of local politics in Lombok. Some *Tuan Guru* are even involved in formal politics, either as leaders of political parties or as members of legislative councils. Their involvement in politics is often based on the intention to ensure that public policies adopted by the government align with Islamic principles and benefit the wider community.<sup>32</sup> *Tuan Guru* possess strong moral legitimacy in the eyes of the community, so their political support is often crucial in the election of regional heads or council members.

### ***The Influence of Tuan Guru on Religious Moderation***

The significant role of *Tuan Guru* in Sasak society is also evident in their efforts to promote religious moderation. Lombok, with its Muslim majority population, has great

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<sup>28</sup> Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family: A Study of Kinship and Socialization* (New York: Free Press, 1961), 48.

<sup>29</sup> Geertz, *The Religion*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Mulianah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 75.

<sup>31</sup> M. Ali, Padlurahman Supiandi, and Baiq Mulianah. "The Role of Social Capital in Reducing the Level of Non-performing Loans: A Case Study on the Mawar Emas Program of West Nusa Tenggara." *International Journal of Health Sciences* 6, 2022, 861-862. Diakses pada hari senin, 23 September 2024. Pukul : 15.37 Wita.

<sup>32</sup> Bowen, *Muslims*, 210.



potential to become a center for moderate and inclusive Islamic development, thanks to the influence of *Tuan Guru* who emphasize the importance of tolerance and harmony.<sup>33</sup> They recognize that religious moderation is key to maintaining peace and harmony in a plural and diverse society.

One concrete example of their role in building religious moderation is through encouraging respect for differences among religious communities, both within the Muslim community and with other faiths. In their sermons and Friday prayers, *Tuan Guru* often convey messages about the importance of maintaining unity and avoiding extremism. They encourage the community to reject ideologies that tend toward radicalism or violence in the name of religion.<sup>34</sup>

The religious moderation education conveyed by *Tuan Guru* is also reflected in the curriculum taught at the pesantren and madrasas in Lombok. These educational institutions teach fundamental Islamic principles such as *wasathiyah* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *tawazun* (balance). These values are instilled in students from an early age, with the hope that they will become a generation of Muslims capable of respecting differences and living peacefully alongside other communities.

### ***Tuan Guru's Challenges in Confronting Radicalism***

Although *Tuan Guru* have played a crucial role in promoting religious moderation, they face challenges from the growing radical movements in this era of globalization. Some extremist groups attempt to spread radical ideology among Muslims in Lombok, particularly through social media and other digital platforms. *Tuan Guru* must work harder to counter these radical narratives by spreading peaceful and moderate Islamic teachings.

One approach taken by *Tuan Guru* to combat radicalism is through interfaith dialogue and cooperation with other religious leaders. These dialogues aim to create mutual understanding and prevent misunderstandings that could trigger interfaith conflicts.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, *Tuan Guru* actively participate in government-facilitated deradicalization campaigns, focusing on moderate and inclusive religious education.

The role of *Tuan Guru* in Sasak society is very broad and diverse, encompassing not only religious aspects but also social, economic, and political dimensions. Through educational institutions such as pesantren, *majelis taklim*, and madrasas, as well as through socio-political activities, the *Tuan Guru* have succeeded in internalizing moderate and inclusive Islamic teachings among the Sasak community. Their involvement in various aspects of community life has made them highly respected central figures.

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<sup>33</sup>Muhammad Haramain, *Dakwah Moderasi: Kajian Pemikiran dan Gerakan Dakwah Tuan Guru KH. M. Zainuddin Abd. Madjid*, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2024), 32.

<sup>34</sup>Ali dan Effendi, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, 70.

<sup>35</sup> Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 87.

Globalization and the development of radical ideologies have forced the *Tuan Guru* to continually strengthen their moderate preaching while combating the influence of radicalism. By prioritizing education in religious moderation and utilizing local cultural media, *Tuan Guru* in Lombok strive to maintain peace and harmony in an increasingly diverse society. Their roles as spiritual leaders, social mediators, and political actors demonstrate the importance of their position in maintaining the stability and welfare of Sasak society.

### **Moderation in Islamic *Da'wa* (Propagation)**

Moderation (*wasathiyyah*) is a fundamental principle in *da'wa* implemented by *Tuan Guru* in Lombok. This moderation is not merely a teaching but has become part of daily life in the predominantly Muslim Sasak community. *Tuan Guru* serve not only as disseminators of religious teachings but also as guardians and protectors of local social and cultural values. Islamic propagation in Lombok, led by *Tuan Guru*, is not conducted through forceful means but through wisdom and prudence.<sup>36</sup>

In the context of moderate propagation, the principle of *amar makruf nahi munkar* -- encouraging good and preventing evil -- becomes one of the main pillars. The application of this principle in Lombok is always adapted to local social and cultural situations.<sup>37</sup> *Tuan Guru* do not immediately implement religious teachings in a strict or extreme manner; rather, they consistently consider the impact of implementing these principles on social stability. They prefer to invite community participation through wisdom, considering whether their actions will bring benefit or cause social damage.<sup>38</sup> This approach enables Islamic propagation in Lombok to create harmony between religious teachings and local customs that have long been part of community life.

This moderate approach is reflected not only in moral and ethical aspects but also in how the *Tuan Guru* conduct *ijtihad* -- intellectual efforts to understand and apply Islamic teachings. They are known for the principle of *al-murunah*, which is flexibility in implementing religious teachings without sacrificing the essence of those teachings.<sup>39</sup> In their view, the fundamental principles of religion must be maintained (the principle of *al-thabat fi al-maqasid*), but the methods of implementation can be adapted to the local socio-cultural context.<sup>40</sup> The flexibility allows the Sasak community to continue practicing their customs without conflicting with Islamic teachings. A clear example is how the *Tuan Guru* have managed to

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<sup>36</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Sejarah Sosial Intelektual Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2004), 112-113.

<sup>37</sup> Ma'arif, *Islam dalam Bingkai*, 98.

<sup>38</sup> Herdi Sahrasad, Abdullah Al Chaidar, *Fundamentalisme, Terorisme Dan Radikalisme: Perspektif Atas Agama, Masyarakat Dan Negara*, (Jakarta: CSS UI & Freedom Foundation, 2017), 354.

<sup>39</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2006), 47.

<sup>40</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyyah Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi Beragama*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2019), 175.

integrate local traditions, such as traditional wedding ceremonies and religious events, with Islamic values.

### ***The Flexibility of Da'wa in Sociocultural Context***

The flexibility in Islamic preaching practiced by the *Tuan Guru* in Lombok is crucial not only in maintaining harmony between religion and culture but also in addressing social change and globalization. As respected spiritual leaders, the *Tuan Guru* must be able to respond to various evolving social dynamics, including the challenges of modernization and globalization that may threaten local cultural identity. Their moderate approach allows the Sasak community to embrace change without losing their religious and cultural identity.

In this regard, the *Tuan Guru* implement a preaching strategy that focuses not only on ritual and worship aspects but also encompasses various dimensions of social life. They are active in education, both through the pesantren and madrasas they establish, as well as through their role in community development via religious *majelis taklim* and other religious activities.<sup>41</sup> The Islamic education they teach emphasizes not only religious knowledge but also values of togetherness, tolerance, and moderation that are highly relevant to the social life of the Sasak.

Besides education, the *Tuan Guru* also play a crucial role in resolving social and political conflicts. They often act as mediators in various conflicts within the community, both internal conflicts among Muslims and conflicts between Muslims and other religious groups. In this role, the *Tuan Guru* always prioritize dialogue and deliberation, aiming to achieve peace and harmony. Their moderate approach to conflict resolution reflects their wisdom in understanding the socio-cultural complexities in Lombok.

### ***Religious Moderation within The Da'wa of Tuan Guru***

The moderation in the *Tuan Guru's* preaching is applied not only in spiritual aspects but also in political and economic spheres. They are known as leaders who play roles not just in religious life but also in advancing community welfare. In the economic field, the *Tuan Guru* are often involved in various community economic empowerment activities, such as establishing cooperatives and small businesses based on Islamic principles. These activities aim not only to improve material welfare but also to strengthen social solidarity and reduce economic inequality in the community.

Moderation in the *Tuan Guru's* preaching is also evident in how they respond to the challenges of globalization, especially regarding the spread of radical and extreme ideologies. With their moderate approach, the *Tuan Guru* become a strong bulwark in protecting the community from the negative influences of globalization, particularly those related to

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<sup>41</sup>Habibul Umam Taqiuddin, Baiq Mulianah, and Baiq Solatiah, "Organisasi kemahasiswaan sebagai wadah pembelajaran nilai-nilai demokrasi pancasila." *Jurnal Riset Intervensi Pendidikan (JRIP)* 5.1, 2023, 37-43. <https://doi.org/10.36765/jrip.v5i1.583>. Diakses pada hari senin, 23 September 2024. Pukul : 15.37 Wita.

religious radicalism. They are actively involved in deradicalization campaigns through moderate education and preaching, both in pesantren environments and in the wider community. In this way, the *Tuan Guru* succeed in keeping Islamic teachings in Lombok consistent with the values of moderation that characterize their preaching.

### ***The Influence of Religious Moderation in The Life of Sasak People***

The influence of moderation in Islamic preaching conducted by the *Tuan Guru* is significant in maintaining social harmony in Lombok. This moderation allows the Sasak community to maintain their cultural identity without conflicting with Islamic teachings. The flexibility in implementing religious teachings, as demonstrated by the *Tuan Guru*, provides space for the community to continue practicing their traditions while still adhering to religious precepts.

On the other hand, the moderation applied by the *Tuan Guru* also plays a vital role in maintaining good relationships between Muslims and other religious groups in Lombok. Lombok is a pluralistic island with considerable ethnic and religious diversity. In this context, the role of the *Tuan Guru* is crucial in maintaining interfaith harmony and preventing conflicts that could disrupt social harmony.

Overall, the moderate and inclusive Islamic preaching applied by the *Tuan Guru* in Lombok has brought positive impacts to the life of the Sasak. They have not only succeeded in maintaining social stability but also in promoting peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive Islamic teachings. This moderate preaching approach becomes a relevant model in facing various socio-cultural challenges in the modern era.

Thus, the moderation (*wasathiyah*) applied by the *Tuan Guru* is important not only in the religious context but also in maintaining socio-cultural balance in Lombok. This flexible and wise approach allows the Sasak to continue practicing their local traditions while still adhering to Islamic teachings. This moderation is also key in maintaining harmony between religious communities and in facing increasingly complex global challenges..

### **The Internalization of Islamic Values into Sasak Customs**

Sasak proverbs and sayings passed down through generations serve as one medium for internalizing Islamic values in Sasak community. For example, the proverb “*pacu pacu ntan punik akbera*” teaches the importance of diligent good deeds as provisions for the afterlife, while “*aiq meneng tonjung tilah empaq bau*” teaches the importance of maintaining peace and preventing conflict. These *sesenggak* become effective educational tools in Sasak community, especially in instilling Islamic values from an early age.<sup>42</sup>

Sasak proverbs and sayings, passed down through generations, play a crucial role in shaping the character and social norms of the Sasak. Through these proverbs, Islamic values

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<sup>42</sup>Mulianah, “Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 76.

integrated with local culture are internalized by the community from an early age.<sup>43</sup> This educational system has functioned as an effective medium for transferring moral and ethical values, not limited to interpersonal relationships but also involving the relationship with God. Throughout history, this tradition has formed the foundation of the community's understanding of religion and social life.

One widely known proverb in the Sasak community is “*pacu-pacu ntan punik akherat*,” which can be literally translated as “compete in doing good deeds as provisions for the afterlife.”<sup>44</sup> This proverb contains a moral teaching that humans should always increase their good deeds as preparation for life after death. This concept aligns closely with Islamic teachings, where every human action will be judged on the Day of Judgment, and the good deeds done in this world will determine one's fate in the afterlife.

Another well-known proverb in the Sasak community is “*aiq meneng tonjung tilah empaq bau*,” meaning “still water carries away the lotus flower.” This proverb illustrates the importance of maintaining calmness and peace when facing problems. In this context, the Islamic teaching about maintaining good relationships with fellow humans and the importance of creating peace is closely related to the local values taught by this proverb. Through this expression, the community is taught to refrain from conflict and try to resolve problems peacefully, without triggering disputes.

*Sesenggak* also function as an effective educational medium, especially in the context of instilling Islamic values from an early age. In Sasak community, the use of *sesenggak* is not only applicable in daily conversations but also in education within family and community environments. Parents and community leaders use these proverbs to teach religious and cultural values to children, which are then passed down from generation to generation.

The values contained in the *sesenggak* cover various aspects of life, including piety, honesty, hard work, and togetherness. For example, proverbs emphasizing the importance of hard work are often uttered in the context of educating children to study and work diligently to achieve success. Additionally, many proverbs emphasize the importance of maintaining good relationships with fellow humans, such as proverbs that teach about the importance of mutual cooperation and helping each other in the community. These values reflect Islamic teachings that encourage its followers to always uphold the principles of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and hard work in achieving life goals.

These proverbs not only provide moral teachings but also serve as the foundation for social ethics in daily life. One important principle taught is the balance between individual obligations to God (*habl min Allah*) and social obligations to fellow humans (*habl min an-nas*). This principle is reflected in proverbs such as “*pacu-pacu ntan punik akherat*,” which teaches

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<sup>43</sup> Mulianah, “Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 76.

<sup>44</sup> Mulianah, “Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai, 76.

that humans should not only focus on worldly life but also prepare themselves for the afterlife through good deeds and actions that benefit others.

Furthermore, *sesenggak* also play an important role in spreading teachings about the importance of maintaining social and environmental harmony. As in the proverb “*aiq meneng tonjung tilah empaq bau*,” which reminds that conflict and chaos will only destroy the peaceful social order. In the context of Islamic teachings, peace and harmony are at the core of ideal life, where Muslims are taught to always maintain good relationships with neighbors and their environment. This proverb also contains meaning relevant to current social situations, where more conflicts arise due to differences in views or beliefs.

This oral tradition in the form of proverbs and sayings not only provides guidance for the Sasak community in daily life but also functions as an effective *da'wa* tool. *Da'wa* in Sasak society is conducted in subtle and wise ways, using media that can be understood by all levels of society, including *sesenggak* inherited from generation to generation. Thus, the Islamic values contained in these *sesenggak* can be internalized naturally by the community without feeling forced or pressured.

The role of *Tuan Guru* in preserving and teaching Sasak proverbs is also very significant. *Tuan Guru*, as spiritual leaders and educators in Sasak society, not only teach religious teachings through lectures or sermons but also through local culture such as *sesenggak*. They utilize this local wisdom to convey Islamic messages that are easier to understand and accept by the community. The *da'wa* carried out by *Tuan Guru* becomes more effective because it uses an approach that is in line with cultural values deeply ingrained in the life of the Sasak community.

The wisdom of *Tuan Guru* in integrating Islamic teachings with local customs reflects the principle of *wasathiyah* or moderation in Islam. They do not impose a rigid or strict understanding of religion, but rather adapt *da'wa* to local socio-cultural conditions. This aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of ease (*al-taysir fi al-fatwa*) and joy in *da'wa* (*al-tabshir fi al-da'wah*). Thus, Islamic values conveyed through *sesenggak* can be accepted by the community without causing resistance or conflict.

In facing rapid social changes due to modernization and globalization, Sasak proverbs and sayings remain strongly relevant. The values contained in these *sesenggak* provide a foundation for the community in facing the challenges of modern life, such as increasing individualism, inter-group conflicts, and economic pressures. By adhering to the teachings contained in these proverbs, the Sasak community can maintain social harmony and remain firmly rooted in moderate Islamic values.

In a broader context, this tradition of proverbs and sayings demonstrates how local wisdom can be an effective means of preserving religious and cultural values in society. This tradition not only maintains the continuity of Sasak culture but also becomes a medium for

profound and relevant *da'wa* amidst the development of the times. By continuing to preserve this tradition, moderate and inclusive Islamic values can continue to be passed down to future generations.

### **Challenges in Preserving Cultural and Religious Identity**

In the modern era, the Sasak community faces significant challenges in maintaining their cultural and religious identity amidst the tide of globalization. The rapid flow of information and modernization in various aspects of life has brought considerable influence to local culture, including perspectives on traditions, values, and religious practices. One of the most impacted aspects is education, where the modernization of education has brought changes in how society understands and practices traditional values.

Globalization has introduced new values that differ from the traditional teachings and practices of the Sasak community, which are largely rooted in Islamic teachings. One of the emerging challenges is the shift in traditional values that have long been the identity of the Sasak community, including in social and religious life. Young people, who are increasingly exposed to outside cultures through social media and technology, tend to experience disorientation in understanding their own identity. Changes in lifestyle and more materialistic values often conflict with Islamic teachings and local values that have long been held firmly by the Sasak.

However, amid such rapid changes, the role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions remains crucial in preserving the nobility of Islamic values and local culture. *Tuan Guru*, as religious and social leaders, not only play a role in teaching religious doctrines to the community but also function as guardians and preservers of Sasak culture. Through *da'wa* and education, *Tuan Guru* strive to maintain Islamic values that have become an inseparable part of Sasak cultural identity, albeit in a modern context.

*Tuan Guru* also play an important role in facing the challenges of modernization that bring major changes to the social and economic structure of society. For example, although professions in Sasak community are no longer bound to inherited parental professions such as farmers or fishermen, in terms of character education, the exemplary patterns taught by *Tuan Guru* continue to persist. This exemplary behavior not only includes religious teachings but also encompasses local wisdom values that have been passed down from generation to generation. In daily life, the Sasak community still views *Tuan Guru* as figures who provide examples in living a balanced life between worldly and spiritual obligations.

Through various formal and non-formal educational institutions, religious and cultural values continue to be taught and preserved. Education in pesantren and madrasas, for instance, becomes one of the last strongholds in maintaining religious teachings and local culture. In these institutions, moderate Islamic values that align with Sasak customs continue to be instilled in the younger generation. Education in pesantren not only focuses on

religious aspects but also provides an understanding of the importance of maintaining cultural identity in facing global challenges.

Moreover, traditional institutions also have a significant role in preserving local culture amidst modernization. Sasak customs regulated by traditional institutions continue to be practiced, albeit with adjustments to current conditions. For example, in traditional ceremonies such as *nyongkolan* or *sorong serah*, Islamic values that have been absorbed by the Sasak community continue to be maintained and practiced. This local wisdom becomes an important part of the Sasak community's identity, which is based not only on religion but also on long-standing traditions.

The challenges in maintaining cultural and religious identity amidst modernization come not only from outside but also from within the community itself. One of the main challenges is how to maintain a balance between technological advancement and social change while preserving the values inherited from ancestors. In this regard, the roles of family, education, and religious figures become very important. Character education taught at home, for example, can be the first line of defense in preserving the cultural and religious identity of the younger generation.

Furthermore, another challenge faced is how to integrate modern values with traditions without sacrificing the basic principles of religion and culture. Globalization indeed brings change, but it doesn't mean abandoning existing identities. *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions must continue to innovate in delivering their teachings, to remain relevant to the times while adhering to Islamic principles and local culture.

In conclusion, although the Sasak community faces various challenges in maintaining their cultural and religious identity in the modern era, the important role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions cannot be ignored. They remain at the forefront in guarding and preserving Islamic values and Sasak traditions. Through formal and non-formal education, as well as the examples they set, these values continue to be passed down to the next generation. The challenges of globalization may be great, but with strong cultural and religious foundations, the Sasak community can continue to maintain their identity amidst the currents of changing times.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This writing affirms that the Islamization process in Lombok Island was not a form of local cultural suppression, but rather a wise integration between Islamic teachings and Sasak customs. The *Tuan Guru*, in their role as *murabbi* (educators), have successfully shaped the moderate and tolerant socio-religious reasoning of Sasak society. Sasak customs that have been internalized with Islamic teachings strengthen the community's religious identity while



preserving local culture. Amid globalization, the role of *Tuan Guru* and traditional institutions remains relevant in maintaining the religious and cultural identity of Sasak society.

The principles of religious propagation that prioritize wisdom, elastic religious interpretation (*ijtihad*), and encouraging good while preventing evil (*amar makruf nabi munkar*) adapted to socio-cultural contexts become important foundations in maintaining religious moderation in Sasak society.

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