

Religious Movement of Ugamo Malim in Batak Land-Indonesia

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Abstract

Religious movements developed during the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia. One of the religious movements, Ugamo Malim, emerged in Batak land, North Sumatra, Indonesia. One of the reasons behind the religious movement in Indonesia during colonialism was to revive the holy king among the people to fight colonialism. However, the movement of Ugamo Malim was not ended after independence but continually recently. Therefore, this research tries to clarify the purpose of the establishment of the Ugamo Malim movement in Batak lands and the important things that we can learn from this movement as Christians. In order to get the clarification of this movement the author uses qualitative research by using documentary research analysis of Batak's literature regarding the movement of *Ugamo Malim* and compare it to the Biblical principles. As the result the study found that before the colonialism *Ugamo Malim* was existed as the way to have a pure life, however when colonialist came the purpose of this movement became formed as a movement in against the colonization and their religion which was brought to Batak Land. For today, the purpose of *Ugamo Malim* is to conserve the Batak's culture, ceremonies, and practices in Batak's Land. Although Ugamo Malim and Biblical principles is different, however there are several similarities in beliefs and practices such as worship God as they called "Mula Jadi Nabolon" (the creator), the day of worship is Saturday, forbidden eating blood and several unclean food as written in the Leviticus 11. Therefore, the main purpose of the movement of *Ugamo Malim* was to reach the pure life but it developed due to the coming of colonialism and modernity.

Keywords: *Movement, Ugamo Malim, Parmalim, Colonialism,*

Introduction

The emblems of local power that had served as a bridge between the local population and foreign powers started to change drastically at the end of the nineteenth century when the Dutch started to increase their colonial power in Indonesia. In different regions of Indonesia, particularly North Sumatra, protest movements arose in opposition to the expansion of colonial rule. Religious movements with adherents who believed in the resurrection of their holy king frequently formed, especially among those whose symbols of power had been abolished by the Dutch. These movements can occasionally turn into millennial-style demonstrations where members vehemently demand the return of their symbol of

power and a total overhaul of the existing order¹. The Parmalim movement which anxiously awaited the revival of the harajaon (kingdom) of Si Singa Mangaraja is one such movement.

Such religious movements that periodically inspired the populace to engage in protests against the colonial authority have drawn a lot of attention from academics. According to the research conducted thus far, those individuals had no choice but to turn to such millenarian expectations in order to improve their situation because their everyday lives were founded in their magico-religious belief systems.². Additionally, the literature tends to support the idea that movements that emerged during the early periods of colonial rule were strongly revivalistic because their members were still very connected to their traditional religious beliefs. However, when we take into account the actual circumstances of the participants in such movements, such opinions seem to become extremely difficult. The colonized population was initially largely impressed by the colonial rulers' prowess since they had vanquished their traditional power symbols. They frequently developed theories that combined novel aspects of foreign power with their long-held beliefs in order to deal with such a circumstance. On the other hand, those who had long been subject to colonial rule and had afterwards come to question its validity frequently made an effort to resurrect their vanishing culture as a sign of their anti-colonialism. The Parmalim movement's history provides us with a very fascinating. In order to better understand how a religious movement that at first displayed a syncretic nature by incorporating new religious elements into Batak traditions, and later a highly revivalistic one, in which their eroding tradition was given new meanings under the colonial regime, the history of the Parmalim movement offers us a very interesting example. In this essay, I'd like to focus on the Parmalim movement's dynamism, which in the last stages of colonial rule restored devotion among the Toba Batak people for the final Si Singa Mangaraja of Ompu Pulo Batu³. Therefore, this study attempts to clarify the the purpose of the establishment of the movement *Ugamo Malim* in Batak's land and the significant things that we can learn from this movement as Christians.

¹Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), Mukhlis, "Batara Gowa: Mesianisme dalam gerakan sosial di tanah Makassar", in *Dari babad dan hikayat sampai sejarah kritis*, edited by T. Ibrahim Alfian, H. J. Koesoemanto, Dharmono Hardjowidjono and Djoko Suryo, (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1987), Jang Aisjah Muttalib, "Jambi 1900-1916: From War to Rebellion", (Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Columbia University, 1995), and M. Hirosue, "*Prophets and Followers in Batak Millenarian Responses to the Colonial Order: Parmalim, Na Siak Bagi and Parhudamdandam, 1890- 1930*", (Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Australian National University, 1988).

²Sartono Kartodirdjo, "Agrarian Radicalism in Java: Its Setting and Development", in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, edited by C. Holt with assistance of B. R. O'G. Anderson and J. Siegel, (Ithaca and London, 1972), pp. 78- 82, and J. C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, (New Haven and London, 1976), 187, 192. See also A. F. C. Wallace "Revitalization Movements," *Anthropologist*, vol. 58, (1956): 264.

³Massahi Hirasue, "The Parmalim Movement and Its Relations to Si Singa Mangaraja XII: A Reexamination of The Development of Religious Movements in Colonial Indonesia," *Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Budaya ETNOVISI* 1 (Desember 2005): 113.

Method

In order to get the clarification of this movement, the author uses qualitative research by using documentary research analysis of Batak's literature regarding the movement of *Ugamo Malim*. Moreover, comparative study is utilized in this study because the author will compare the practice and belief of Ugamo Malim to the Biblical principles.

Discussion

One of the largest tribes in Indonesia is the Batak. This tribe's ancestral home is in North Sumatera, near Toba Lake. Many tribes in Southeast Asia, including those in Indonesia, share similar traditions with them. Despite sharing the same island as other tribes nearby, this tribe differs from them in terms of their cultures, customs, way of life, and other aspects. The teaching of Malim makes up the majority of Batak tradition, however until a certain point it was not known as Ugamo Malim.⁴ This tribe's Ugamo Malim belief system or religious movement is one of its most distinctive features. This religious movement has existed for a long time as the Batak tribe's folk religion.

Definition of Ugamo Malim

Ugamo Malim is made up of the words "Ugamo" and "Malim." Literally, the word "Ugamo" means "pulungan" or "ambu-ambuan pelean" (collection or concoction of various objects that used as pelean or offerings). Ugamo, or religion, is a concoction or pulungan of items used as offerings. While the Malim term denotes cleanliness or pita (holy). Therefore, the purpose of Ugamo Malim as a religion is to facilitate a meeting between man and Debata (God) through holy and pure sacrifices (dibagas pardomuan hajolmaon ni tu na Debata marhite pelean ias). People who adhere to Ugamo Malim are referred to as Parugamo Malim (Ugamo Malim followers) or Parmalim.⁵

The Raise and Historical Background of the Movement Ugamo Malim

When his father Raja Sisingamaraja XI passed away in 1875, Raja Sisingamaraja XII took over as king. According to Karl Helbig and Pedersen. Sisingamaraja XII formed Ugamo Malim⁶ with the intention of preserving the elements of the Batak old religion in opposition to Christianity and the Dutch invaders. However, Raja Mulia Naipospos was the one who had the direct order from Sisingamaraja XII to carry on the Parmalim teaching and rose to the top. While Guru Somaliang Pardede, a well-known datu (shaman), served as Sisingamaraja XII's commander and advisor⁷ There are two different accounts of how Ugamo

⁴Gultom Abraham, *Agama Malim di Tanah Batak.*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2010), 4.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Mukhlis, "Batara Gowa: Mesianisme dalam Gerakan Sosial di Tanah Makassar", in *Dari Babad dan Hikayat sampai Sejarah Kritis*, edited by T. Ibrahim Alfian, H. J. Koesoemanto, Dharmono Hardjowidjono and Djoko Suryo, (Yogyakarta, Gajah Mada University Press, 1987)

⁷W. B. Sijabat, *Ahu Sisingamaraja*, (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1982), 326.

Malim's teaching first spread. First, this religion predates the introduction of Islam and Christianity in the lands of the Batak by several hundred years. According to a different account, Ugamo Malim has been teaching since the beginning of time. Ugamo Malim asserts that a divine messenger brought this religion's teachings (Debata Mulajadi Nabolon). The doctrines were brought by messengers known as Malim Debata. The four individuals described as Malim—Raja Uti, Raja Simarimbulubosi, Raja Sisingamangaraja, and Raja Nasiakbagi—were sent by God or Debata specifically for the Batak tribes. They were all listed as Malim Debatas and identified as having harajaon Malim (the royal of malim). They held the view that God is the source of the Malim kingdom (Debata Mulajadi Nabolon)⁸. The First Malim Raja Uti was a dynamic and well-respected leader in his day. Raja Uti was born close to Barus in the Central Tapanuli region. When there was social unrest among the Batak tribe, he suddenly emerged. In addition to that, the Batak tribe also underwent a shock of faith in God (Debata Mulajadi Nabolon) when they began to believe in Sipelebegu (worship of spirits), which is also known as tribute to animism. Raja Uti appears as Malim Debata with the intention of keeping people from wandering and regaining their faith in God's worship (Debata Mulajadi Nabolon).

Raja Uti was the one who initially established the rule. God (Debata) sent Simarimbulubosi as the second malim to carry on Raja Uti's teachings a very long time after he had begun it. His visit was intended to increase the Batak tribes' devotion to God by bolstering their faith (Debata Mulajadi Nabolon). However, social unrest returned once Simarimbulubosi left his people and went to visit his natorasna (father) in Banua Gijang, much as it had before Raja Uti acted as Malim Debata. The primary factor is that they previously distanced themselves from God (Debata) and caused bewilderment that came to be known as the Lumlam period (ignorance). Then, God (Debata) sent His third Malim, Sisingamangaraja, with the mission of uniting the Batak tribes under his leadership.

The Dutch started colonizing Tapanuli during the reign of Sisingamaraja XII. The 30-year conflict was then known as the War of Batak. On July 17, 1907, a Dutch force led by Christoffel invaded Pearaja, and Singamangaraja shot and killed one of the Dutch soldiers. According to the Dutch, Sisingamaraja XII passed away on July 21, 1907. However, Parmalim said that Sisingamangaraja was still alive since shortly after the tragedy, a man by the name of Nasiakbagi (who suffer) unexpectedly materialized in Tapanuli. The appearance of the enigmatic Raja Nasiakbagi is bound to excite Batak society and increase their conviction that Raja Sisingamangaraja is not actually dead. However, Raja Nasiakbagi's adherents only prioritize his students' spiritual growth when they practice hamalimon (religious). Raja Nasiakbagi gave some advice to his disciples at one point. He uttered "malim ma hamu" during the conference (become sacred). "Let you become sacred or constantly be holy in religion," in other words. Through this instruction, the doctrine he introduced was become official and well-known under the name "ugamo malim."⁹

Italian immigrant Emelio Mondigliani arrived in Tapanuli in 1890, namely in the huta (village) Sirambe, Balige-Laguboti. He is an expert in law as well as zoology and botany. Modigliani announces himself as a representative of King Rum while he is at Bakkara. Mondigliani was referring to the King of Rome, his monarch

⁸Silaen, Julianto, *Parmalim di Kota Medan, Skripsi*. (Medan: Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, USU, 2013), 20-21.

⁹ Ibid

in Italy. The inhabitants of Bakkara believe that the terms "King Rum" or "King Rom" refer to "King Stabol" (Istanbul) or "King Turkey." King Rom of Turkey was admired as a comrade in the struggle against the Dutch and by the Batak people during the Aceh War (1873–1904) and the War of Batak (1878–1907). Guru Somalaing Pardede received the news of Mondigliani known as King Stambul.

Guru Somalaing founded a movement that is known as "parmalim" in Tapanuli after he broke away from Sisingamangaraja XII in 1886 and Mondigliani in April 1891. Since then, Guru Somalaing has started to propagate the parmalim teachings along with his new teaching throughout Toba¹⁰). Julianto Silaen states that by fusing the traditional Batak beliefs with Christian and Catholic dogma as well as the teachings of Raja Sisingamangaraja XII, Guru Somalaing created a syncretic message. In his work, Silaen claims that the Parmalim were affected by a number of factors, including customs, Muslims, Christians, and the ancestors' beliefs of the Batak. These four ideas came together to form a new religion known as Parmalim.

In essence, Sisingamangaraja XII is revered as a spiritual leader in the teachings of Guru Somalaing Pardede and Raja Nasiakbagi, and Ompu Mula Jadi Na Bolon is regarded as God Almighty. However, Guru Somalaing focused more on the messianic movement that still hoped for Sisingamangaraja's greatness to manifest and believed that he was still alive. Sisingamangaraja was revered as a prophet, a messiah (savior), and the leader of a movement opposed to colonialism and Christianity. They can be distinguished by the values that Christianity teaches. The Christian trinity—Jahoba, Opu Pulo Maria, and Jesus—is worshipped in Somalaing teachings, and Guru Somalaing claimed to have received his revelation from God (Jahoba). A Parmalim puritanism movement is called Nasiakbagi. According to Nasiakbagi, the concept of sin and the origin of revelation both appear to have come from Debata Mulajadi Nabolon and Parmalim Somalaing, respectively.¹¹

The Parmalim movement is no longer growing; instead, the major effort is being made to protect and preserve the current Parmalim. According to Silaen¹², the Parmalim movement separated into four major sections. The first Parmalim group was led by Raja Mulia Naipospos and was based in Huta Tinggi Laguboti. Malim Beringin Batak, which is situated in Pulau Samosir, Malim Putih, which is situated in Balige, and Malim Sumumba, which is situated in Sigaol.

The Parmalim faith has had several challenges during its existence, from the colonial era to the present. Because the government does not recognize their religion, the Parmalim adherents feel that their constitutional rights are being disregarded. Finally, the Indonesian government approved Law No. 23, 2006 in 2006 to allow Parmalim members to register their names as citizens with the registry office. However, the government did not provide individuals the option to indicate their religion on their identity card. They also have issues with the Batak tribe's society in particular. They believe that Parmalim's religion is aberrant, and even other religious institutions have negative attitudes about Parmalim. The Parmalim believe there are also efforts being made to oppress and eradicate them. The Parmalim religion is also facing difficulties, since many of its adherents switch to other faiths as a result of marriage and the influence of the Christian mission among the Batak people.¹³

¹⁰Hirasue, *The Parmalim Movement*, 115.

¹¹Johannes Paulus Saragih, *Gerakan Mesianis di Toba; Suatu Tinjauan Sosio Politis Religious*, " *Dalam Majalah Ilmiah Mahasiswa*, (2009), 8.

¹²Julianto Silaen, *Parmalim di Kota Medan*, (Skripsi, Medan: Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, USU, 2013) 20-21

¹³ Ibid.

Demographic Information

The Predicament Ugamo Malim resides in Pardomuan Nauli Huta Tinggi, District Laguboti, Toba Samosir, North Sumatra. Locals claim that the only part of the sacred Batak town still exists is the Parmalim village. because Sisingamangaraja XII's palace during his lifetime was in the area, according to local tradition (Rumah Ibadah dan Ritual Parmalim, 2011). The Inhabitant Two ethnic groups, Batak and Minang, make up the village Pardomuan Nauli's 1,250 inhabitants, or around 307 dwellings, according to data from 2008.¹⁴

Based on information received from Monang Naipospos, the central committee of Parmalim, in July 2015, it was determined that there are 42 pungan (branch) and 6 preparations branches scattered throughout Indonesia, with the number of devotees reaching roughly 1,200 families or 9,000 people (Ugamo Parmalim, Pertama di Tanah Batak, 2015). Current socioeconomic and cultural conditions Since people of the Batak ethnicity make up the bulk of the population in that region, Batak culture is well represented there. Batak ceremonies are particularly observed by Parmalim believers. Everyone in the hamlet has extremely close family links as they are all still Raja Naipospos' direct descendants.¹⁵

Beliefs of Ugamo Malim

Ugamo Malim shares certain doctrines or beliefs with other faiths, including those relating to God, the cosmos, man, the sanctity of one's own person, sin, and food.

God (debata mulajadi nabolon)

Debata Mulajadi Nabolon, a manifestation of God Almighty with supernatural powers, is real, according to Ugamo Malim. The Creator and Owner of the universe is Debata Mulajadi Nabolon. They acknowledge the existence of gods, but since Debata Mulajadi Nabolon is the one who created them all, they do not regard them as being on par with Debata. Additionally, they had faith in the ghosts who served as Debata's servants by watching people's behavior and providing them with instruction through their "conscience." Habonaron is the name given to the ghosts (Truth). Humans are warned by the habonaron (pissang-pissang) when they act in a way that is not expected.¹⁶

The Universe

Ugamo Malim claims that Debata Mulajadi Nabolon is responsible for creating both heaven and earth. According to this faith, Debata sent knowledge to Boru Deakparujar throughout the process of creation so he could create the sun, moon, and stars. The universe contains a manifestation of the truth of Debata that humans can see and feel. To respect, value, and enjoy the universe is to demonstrate Debata Mulajadi Nabolon's love. Debata Mulajadi Nabolon has provided and given power to Nagapadoaji and Boru Saningnaga in order to protect the land and water. According to Ugamo Malim, before using the water, one must request permission

¹⁴Tety Irawati Nadapdap, *Konstruksi Upacara Sipaha Lima Dalam Kepercayaan Parmalim*. (Skripsi. Medan: Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 2009), 19-27

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Abraham Gultom, *Agama Malim di Tanah Batak.*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2010), 7.

from Boru Saningnaga, and one must also request permission from Nagapadoaji before using the land for human habitation. They ought to show respect and say that they don't want to pollute the water and soil. because they think that degrading the soil and water will have terrible effects on humans.¹⁷

Human Nature

Ugamo Malim claims that Raja Odap-odap and Putri Boru Deakparujar, who are the parents of Raja Ihat Manisia and Boru Ihat Manisia, were the son and daughter of banua ginjang (heaven), and that their union resulted in the creation of man. Debata Mulajadi Nabolon took Raja Ihat Manisia and Boru Ihat Manisia after they reached adulthood, married them, and then sent them to live on earth with the understanding that they would always have a relationship with Debata Mulajadi Nabolon through sacred offerings. Blood, pig, and dog consumption are also not permitted. They teach their children how to carry out Debata Mulajadi Nabolon's instructions by giving them a "poda," or order.¹⁸

For humans to live on earth, Debata Mulajadi Nabolon says that they must use God's creations to suit their needs. People can use the knowledge Debata gives them to use the cosmos for their goals. Debata Mulajadi Nabolon also desires that people worship Him and uphold His rules. It is required to honor and praise Debata Mulajadi Nabolon. Some of the instructions Debata Mulajadi Nabolon gave to Ugamo Malim are related to people, such as haholongan dongan jolma (to love our fellow human beings). He reinforces the obligation to love others in his law (patik), which reads: "songon holong ni rohaniba di diriniba, songon ima holong niro tu dongan" (that we must love our neighbor as we love ourselves). Ugamo Malim instructs young people to love one another by saying, "unang holan diri niba sinarison, ai naringkot didongan dang ni parrohahon" (do not make yourself to be selfish, while you are ignored the necessity of others). Debata Mulajadi Nabolon also exhorts people to spread the holong (love) ideology among other people.¹⁹

Sanctity of Self

All followers of Ugamo Malim must subscribe to a number of its creeds. If that individual has adhered to all the teachings precisely and correctly, they will possess personal purity (tondi hamalimon). Knowing that a person who follows the instructions will be endowed with Debata Mulajadi Nabolon's soul or light holiness. To achieve the level of tondi hamalimon, one must pass through a phase of roha hamalimon (sacred feelings or thoughts), as well as ngolu hamalimon (holy life). To attain roha hamalimon and ngolu hamalimon, a Parmalim must refrain from any behaviors that could cause sin (marsolam ngolu) and refrain from anything that could prevent worship (marsolam tondi). People who have demonstrated self-control have been able to restrain themselves from committing sin (marsolam diri). A person should be able to marsolam diri, marsolam ngolu, and marsolam tondi if they wish to be a devout guy. If they are successful in doing so, someone will enter the stage to perform Martondi Hamalimon (have a holy soul). They think that tondi hamalimon is a result of being wrapped around a person. Discussion or tondi Porbadia (Holy Spirit). People who possess "martondi hamalimon" will exhibit virtues such as

¹⁷Silaen, *Parmalim di Kota Medan*, 20, 21.

¹⁸Ibid., 21.

¹⁹Ibid.

kindness toward others and diligence in devotion.²⁰

Sin

In Ugamo Malim, it describes how Debata Mulajadi Nabolon so hates sin, like stealing, murder, adultery and others. They believe that sins that exist in humans originated from nature and evil deeds (haangaton) which arise out of love for the world and the greedy appetite to have everything. In the teaching of Ugamo Malim, there are two kinds of sins are small sin (na metmet) and great sin (na balga). Small sin can be classified as minor sins such as stealing, insulting and others. As for the great sin is an act beyond the limits of humanity such as murder. If someone had committed a sin, then they need to ask forgiveness for their sins (manopoti dosa). For minor sin, they should ask forgiveness when religious ceremony held and promised to repent. As for the great sin, they must hold a special event that is mardebata to ask for forgiveness of sin.²¹

Food.

Restriction on what can be eaten is also included in the Ugamo Malim teaching. Every adherent of this faith is forbidden from eating pig, dog meat, and other types of wild animals as well as blood (Malim: *Inilah Agama Suku Batak Dulu*, 2012). Because consuming pork or blood will render Ugamo adherents impure or not malim. According to Ugamo Malim's doctrine, people must first sanctify themselves since Debata is a holy place before they may bring offerings to her.²²

Practices of Ugamo Malim

A couple of the Ugamo Malim religion's rites are used to communicate with Debata Mulajadi Nabolon. Religious rites are divided into two types by Ugamo Malim: scheduled ceremonies and unscheduled events. Mararisabtu (Saturday worship), for example, is performed according to the weekly timetable every week. According to the Batak calendar, festivities such as sipaha sada (Simarimbulobosi's birthday), sipaha lima (dedicate big offerings), and mangan na paet are celebrated every year (eat bitter food). Unplanned ceremonies are based on a person's life events, such as births (martutuaek), marriages (mamasumasu), burials (pasahat tondi), purifications (manganggir), and worshiping Debata (mardebata).

Ceremony of Mararisabtu (*Worship on Saturday*).

The Mararisabtu ceremony is a significant religious ceremony in Ugamo Malim. This ritual needs to be performed every Saturday. Because Siboru Daekparujar rested on Saturday when he created the heavens and the earth, that is how people came to practice worship on that day. Then Raja Ihat Manisia and Siboru Ihat Manisia (the first human couple) were instructed to carry out Siboru Daekparujar's directive till Raja Singamangaraja. It continued up until this point and is a requirement for Ugamo Malim devotees. The Parmalim must sanctify Saturday by refraining from performing their regular jobs on it. Another reason for Saturday

²⁰Benny Rafael Pardosi, *Parmalim*. (Skripsi. Medan: Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, USU, 2010), 43.

²¹Ibid.

²²Charly Silaban, *Parmalim: Kami Bukan Penganut Ajaran Sesat*," Accessed on June 23, 2022 <http://www.silaban.net/2007/01/07/parmalim-kami-bukan-penganut-ajaran-sesat/>.

worship is to atone for past transgressions by presenting offerings to Debata.²³

Ceremony of Sipaha Sada (Tuan Simaribulubosi Birthday)

For Ugamo Malim, this rite marks the beginning of the new year. The Mangan na Paet ceremony was performed the day before this occasion, therefore it is joyfully greeted. This ceremony involves eating bitter foods as a symbol of freedom from sin. Simaribulubosi's birthday is celebrated and gifts are given the following day (sesajen). Ceremony of Sipaha Lima (Thanks giving to Debata).²⁴The purpose of this gathering is to pay respect and pray to Debata Mulajadi Nabolon for all of the blessings He has provided. From December 12 to December 14 of the fifth month, this event lasts three days. The ritual is referred to as a sacrifice ceremony because they sacrifice a buffalo or bull on that particular day. All Ugamo Malim devotees participate in the Sipaha Lima ceremony on a grand scale, and they typically travel from all over the nation to attend it in High Huta, Laguboti.²⁵

Ceremony of Martutuaek (Childbirth)

The Martutuaek ceremony for Ugamo Malim entails more than merely naming the newborn child and celebrating the child's birth. The celebration's goal is to welcome the human spirit, or "tondi," from Debata. It suggests that it's crucial to welcome a child both physically and spiritually when they're born. The child's spirit needs to grow up in order to be ready to return safely to its owner, Debata. In order to safely return the spirit or tondi to the owner, which is Debata, parents and families are responsible for ensuring that their children get the teaching of Ugamo Malim²⁶.

Ceremony of Pasahat Tondi (Funeral or Death)

Pasahat means to impart or assign, and *tondi* denotes spirit, according to the definition of the word. *Pasahat tondi* is a ritual that is used to transmit or transfer the spirit of a deceased person. To ask Debata Mulajadi Nabolon to set the dead on His sides and to transfer the spirit of the deceased to Debata, a ceremony known as Ugamo Malim is carried out. They hold that the dead ghost will continue to weep until the *pasahat tondi* rite is conducted if it has not already been submitted.²⁷

Ceremony of Mardebata (To Worship Debata)

This ritual in Ugamo Malim include worshiping Debata by making offerings or *sesajen* (*pelean*), all while listening to the sound of *gendang* (*gondang sabangunan*) or *gendang kecap* (*gondang hasapi*). Since this ceremony is an adjunct to private worship, it is not required in theory. However, if someone disobeys the rule or legislation of Ugamo Malim, then this ritual may be required.²⁸

²³Pardosi, *Parmalim*, 43

²⁴Jadiman Hutapea, "Upacara Ritual Parmalim," accessed on Sept 23, 2022, <http://jadimanhutapea.blogspot.com/2011/04/upacara-ritual-parmalim-lagubotitoba.html>.

²⁵Ibid

²⁶Pardosi, *Parmalim*, 99, 100.

²⁷Ibid, 102, 103.

²⁸Ibid

Ceremony of Mangan Na Paet (Eat Bitter)

Every member of Ugamo Malim is required to participate in the worship service known as "mangan na paet" that is held at the conclusion of the year. They will consume bitter foods during this event, including papaya and anggir-anggir beans. The symbolism in this event represents the "bitterness" (hapaeton) Malim Debata (the messenger of Debata) felt while fighting for His people. This service also provides an opportunity for each participant to perform a penance.²⁹

Ceremony of Mamasumasu (Wedding Ceremony)

In Ugamo Malim, mamasumasu refers to blessing a wedding. Its members must adhere to a few rules about marriage in Ugamo Malim. If both the bride and the husband are Ugamo Malim members, one of them must donate a certain amount of money. Giving money is customary to honor the Malim religious official who performs the wedding and to sustain tradition. A partner who is not a follower of Ugamo Malim must first formally convert to Ugamo Malim by meeting specific prerequisites. The marriage won't work if it isn't done.³⁰

Ceremony of Maranganggir (Sanctify of self)

The manganggir rite is comparable to Christian baptism. The word "manganggir" derives from the word "anggir" (lime), since this lime was frequently employed as a purifying element. This rite is considered by Ugamo Malim to be a ritual of self-purification from all sins, impurity brought on by eating the prohibited (ramun), and bodily contamination. This ritual has two goals in mind. Due to a person's purposeful decision to change from another religion to Malim. Second, because there have been instances of Malims who have left the faith but afterwards returned. To become a Ugamo Malim proselyte, a person must go through a process of bodily and spiritual purification.³¹

Similarities of Beliefs and Practices with Biblical Principles

Ugamo Malim is a religious movement that seeks to protect Batak culture and beliefs from the importation of western religions during the nineteenth century's period of colonization. Although Ugamo Malim originated in a separate culture and location, there are similarities between its ideas and the movement of Christianity. The principles and practices of these two religions are similar.

Beliefs

The Ugamo Malim have faith in God, who they believe to be the universe's and the world's creator. The name of the creator is Debata Mulajadi Nabolon, which translates to "the highest God that from everything made". However, God provided Boru Deakparujat the knowledge required to create the sun, moon, and stars as the earth and the universe were being created.³² Christians also believed in the existence of God. He created both the universe and the earth. The difference is that although Ugamo Malim are monotheists, they worship a variety of deities,

²⁹Ibid

³⁰Ibid

³¹Ibid

³²Silaen, *Parmalim di Kota Medan*, 37.

with Debata Mulajadi Nabolon establishing him as the supreme God.³³ The Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is a monotheistic concept that most Christians hold to. While Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is God and active in all things as part of the Trinity, Ugamo Malim believe in the existence of a spirit that serves as a warning for people who have done wrong³⁴.

Additionally, according to Ugamo Malim, Raja Ihat Manisi and Boru Ihat Manisi are humans who were created as a result of the union of Raja odap odap and Boru deak parujar and lived in Pusuk Buhit, North Sumatra.³⁵ God Manukmanuk Hulammujadi and Debata (god) Batara Guru created Raja Odap Odap and Boru deak parujar in heaven. Debata Mulajadi Nabolon's initial creation, Manukmanuk, was what he termed God. Debata Batara Guru and two other gods descended from Manukmanuk.³⁶ Male and female were created by God and placed in the Garden of Eden, according to Christians (Genesis 1 and 2).

Ugamo Malim hold to the notion that sin exists. Mulajadi Debata Nabolon despises sin. Sin keeps us from loving our neighbors and other people. Evil acts and the nature of sin are its roots. They do, however, have two categories of sin: little and large. Small sins include things like stealing, cheating, gossip, and so on, while large sins include things like murder and others like it. Christians also hold that sin exists. Satan is the cause of sin. Sin is the act of disobeying God and transgressing His Law. There is no such thing as a tiny sin or a major sin for Christians, though. Similar effects result from sin.³⁷

Additionally, Ugamo Malim forbids his adherents from consuming pig, dog, and blood. Since their blood was counted as impure, they ate these animals. As stated in Ugamo Malim, the major rule for purity in Malim is to abstain from consuming pig, dog, and blood. This is because purity is the main goal of the followers. According to the book of Leviticus, eating pig, dog, and blood is also forbidden for Christians. However, only pork, dog, blood, and wild animals are prohibited for Ugamo Malim, although the details of forbidden foods are contained in the book of Leviticus 11.

Another area of commonality and distinction is salvation. Ugamo Malim had a positive outlook on the future. One of the main goals of humans is to be happy in the future. Christians share the conviction that there is salvation for those who trust in Jesus Christ in the future. According to Ugamo Malim, persons who carry out good deeds and travel to Debata Mulajadi Nabolon to ask for forgiveness of their sins would be happy in the hereafter. For Ugamo Malim, at times, redemption depends on doing good things. However, Christians must rely in Jesus Christ and God's grace in order to be saved. Jesus is the Savior for Christians, but Malim does not have a Savior (John3:16).

³³Gultom Abraham, *Agama Malim di Tanah Batak*, 33, 34.

³⁴Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 291.

³⁵Robert Siburian. "*Kearifan Ekologi Dalam Budaya Batak Sebagai Upaya Mencegah Bencana Alam*". *Dalam Manusia Indonesia, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia. Vol. XXXIV No. 1* Yayasan Obor Indonesia. (2008): 73–76

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Norman R. Gulley. *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*, Vol. 1. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 259.

Practices

In Ugamo Malim, numerous festivities take place. Some of the rites take place both yearly and regularly. There are some practices in those ceremonies that are similar to those in Christian rites, but there are also variances.

Every Saturday, Ugamo Malim worships Debata Mulajadi Nabolon; this is known as *mar ari sabtu*. The Ugamo Malim members hold a ceremony to praise God every Saturday. Worshiping Debata Mulajadi Nabolon is the fundamental goal of the ritual in order to maintain purity. They adhere to and revere Debata Mulajadi Nabolon. During the six days, Saturday is a portion of purification from wicked deeds. The primary reason Ugamo Malim worship God on Saturday is because, after six days of creation operations, Boru Deak Parujar slept on the seventh day. Despite the fact that this day is the first of the week, Christians often observe a day of worship on Sunday. The seventh day of the week is Saturday. The main purpose of worship God on Saturday is to remember that God is the creator (Exodus 20:8-11) and rested on the Seventh day after six days of creation heaven and earth (Genesis 2). Therefore, Ugamo Malim and Christian has the similarity in the day of worship and the cause of worship, although the purpose of worship is different.

For Ugamo Malim, the wedding ceremony has special meaning. For those family members getting married soon, the ceremony is needed. The couple gives the celebrant a sum of money before the ceremony begins. Members of Ugamo Malim are not obligated to have a wedding ceremony. equivalent to Christian Couples who do not identify as Christians or members of a specific Christian denomination are not permitted to get married, and the pastor must perform the wedding ceremony. The distinction is that financial support is not necessary.

Another tradition is child dedication. The definition of child dedication, or *Martuataek*, includes commemorating a child's birth, giving the kid a name, greeting the spirit from the Debata, and dedicating the child to God. The act of dedicating a child is important in Christian culture because it demonstrates that the kid is a gift from God and belongs to Him. One way to preserve this commitment is to teach God's way both at home and at church.

Furthermore, funeral ceremony is one of similar practice that commonly hold in Christian and Ugamo Malim. Funeral ceremony for Ugamo Malim is *Pasahat tondy*, which means, to deliver the spirit from the death body to God in order to have forgiveness and having peace after dead. Meanwhile, for Christian, the main purpose funeral ceremony is to comfort the family and give the hope of the resurrection of the one who believe in Jesus.

The *Maranggir* rite, which sanctifies life, comes last. The *manganggir* rite is comparable to Christian baptism. *Maranggir* is a ritual performed to rid oneself of all sins, the impurity that comes from consuming the forbidden (*ramun*), and bodily contamination. This ritual has two goals in mind. Due to a person's purposeful decision to change from another religion to Malim. Second, because there have been instances of Malims who have left the faith but afterwards returned. To become a Ugamo Malim proselyte, a person must go through a process of bodily and spiritual purification (Ibid). In Christian belief, baptism is the symbol of the the believers received and believed Jesus is the personal saviour. Baptism is never accounted as the means of purifying according to the Scripture. However, in Roman Catholic's teaching, baptism is remission of the original sin, but is not convey in the Bible.

To sum up, Ugamo Malim is a religious movement in Indonesia, especially

in the Batak Land region of North Sumatra. This movement is comparable to Christian rituals and ideas. It is impossible to deny the fact that differences follow similarities. Due to the similarities between this movement and religion, it is interesting for Christians to participate in it as a mission.

Summary and Conclusion

Ugamo Malim, which translates to "meeting between man and God," is a religion that encourages living a pure life and making pure offerings to God. There are two alternative theories as to when Ugamo Mali initially appeared; one places it hundreds of years before Indonesian colonization and the other places it in the 17th century, when colonists first arrived in Indonesia. Although they serve different purposes, both of these viewpoints are tied to one another. In order to live a pure life, Ugamo Malim existed in the Batak culture long before invasion, but the structure and the leadership had not yet been established. Then, when the colonialist came to Batak Land, this religious movement became formed as a movement in against the colonization and their religion which was brought to Batak Land. The initial leader of this movement was Raja Sisingamaraja XII, who was referred to as the messiah or a savior of the Batak people from the colonialists from 1870 till the present day³⁸.

Ugamo Malim has six beliefs, believe in God which the called Debata Mulajadi Nabolon, and the Debata Mulajadi Nabolon is God who created earth and the universe. This movement also believe human nature, Moreover, Parmalim also believe in sin, universe, sanctify life, and food.

In this religious system, there are numerous rites. All those adhere to in order to live a pure life are followed by all members. Some of the rites are performed yearly, regularly, and in response to events. This movement is comparable to Christian rituals and ideas such as the day of worship on Saturday, wedding ceremony, child dedication, baptism. However, it is impossible to deny the fact that differences follow similarities.

Several important lessons can be drawn from this religious movement. Culture comes first. This movement was culturally relevant. The Batak people still practice their ancient traditions in practically all of their ceremonies. The religion known as Ugamo Malim preserves the entire Batak tradition and ceremony. Sacred life comes next. According to Ugamo Malim, a person's body is a gift from God, hence it should be kept pure by participating in all rituals and abstaining from banned foods. The third step in asking for forgiveness is confession of sin. The fourth is the idea that God rested on the earth and all of its inhabitants after six days. Since God created the heavens and the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, which is known as the Sabbath Day, they worship God on Saturday every week as the seventh day of the week. Finally, they hold a wonderful festival known as Sipaha Sada. Once a year, the Sipaha Sada festival is held as a day to give appreciation to God for guiding all of the members throughout the previous year. All of the participants in this event are gathered together as one in Ugamo

³⁸Mei Leandha, "Kisah Penganut Agama Leluhur Batak yang Terasing di Negeri Sendiri," *Harian Kompas*. diakses 5 September, <http://regional.kompas.com/read/2016/05/24/08191341/kisah.penganut.agama.leluhur.batak.yang.terasing.di.negeri>.

Malin, Huta Tinggi, Balige-North Sumatra.

In sump up, Ugamo Malim is a religious movement in Batak Land that aims to preserve the customs, traditions, and culture of the Batak people. Since its founding during colonial times in the 17th century, the movement has faced many difficulties, which continue to this day. Ugamo Malim shares many beliefs and practices with Christianity, especially with the understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, although the method and approach are different. With these similarities, it helps to approach the followers of Ugamo Malim in introducing the truth of the Bible.

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