

THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE SOWING OF RELIGIOUS LITERACY AND IDEOLOGY IN TABBAE, BENTENG TELLUE VILLAGE, BONE REGENCY

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Abstract

This study highlights the spiritual transformation experienced by the Tabbaqé community, located in Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, known as the "Texas Village." This study aims to understand the transformation that occurs in the community's daily behavior that is influenced by the religious dimension. The type of research used is field research using historical, phenomenological, and ethnographic approaches. This study reveals the background of the formation of negative stigma against the Tabbae community and their self- and collective identity. This study also highlights how the spirituality of the Tabbaqé community both in the past and in the present and the important role of religious leaders in transforming religious life patterns. This study shows that religious literacy plays a significant role in changing the negative stigma attached to the Tabbaqé community using stigma theory. It was found that changes in the community's social identity occurred through a process of negotiation of meaning between individuals and external groups. The previously entrenched stigma began to erode with increased understanding of religion and better spiritual practices. Meanwhile, from the perspective of tazkiyah an-nafs, the spiritual transformation that occurs helps people purify their souls to build collective awareness in living a life that is more based on religious values. Keywords: Phenomenology, Tabbae Society, Transformation of Spirituality.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyoroti transformasi spiritual yang dialami oleh masyarakat di Tabbaqé yang terletak di Desa Benteng Tellue Kecamatan Amali Kabupaten Bone yang dikenal dengan julukan "Kampung Texas." Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami transformasi yang terjadi pada perilaku keseharian masyarakat yang dipengaruhi oleh dimensi keagamaan. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan ialah field research (penelitian lapangan) dengan menggunakan pendekatan historis, pendekatan fenomenologis, dan pendekatan etnografi. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan latar belakang terbentuknya stigma negatif terhadap masyarakat Tabbae serta identitas diri dan kolektif mereka. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti bagaimana spiritualitas masyarakat Tabbaqé baik di masa lalu maupun di masa kini serta peran penting tokoh agama dalam mentransformasikan pola kehidupan keagamaan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa literasi agama berperan penting dalam mengubah stigma negatif yang melekat pada masyarakat Tabbaqé dengan menggunakan teori stigma. Ditemukan bahwa perubahan identitas sosial masyarakat terjadi melalui proses negosiasi makna di antara individu dan kelompok eksternal. Stigma yang sebelumnya mengakar mulai terkikis dengan meningkatnya pemahaman agama dan praktik spiritual yang lebih baik. Sementara itu, dalam perspektif tazkiyah an-nafs, transformasi spiritual yang terjadi membantu masyarakat dalam menyucikan jiwa untuk membangun kesadaran kolektif dalam menjalani kehidupan yang lebih berlandaskan dengan nilai-nilai agama. Kata Kunci: Fenomenologi, Masyarakat Tabbae, Transformasi Spiritualitas.



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INTRODUCTION

One of the villages with historical significance in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi Province, is Tabbae. Tabbae is renowned for its courageous people and is highly respected by the surrounding community due to the birth of prominent figures such as La Mannaq, H. Page, and Alimuuddin Page. These figures were known as friendly, respected, firm, and empathetic leaders towards all elements of society. However, during the reign of Alimuuddin Page, Tabbae was known as "Kampung Texas" due to its reputation as a place of crime, such as robbery (thief) and murder. This perception has permeated the judgment of outsiders in Sulawesi and throughout Indonesia. This phenomenon has fueled the perception that Tabbae is a place dominated by crime and the emergence of a stigma as a "village of thieves." This stigma attached to society is a negative perception directed at a group or community due to certain characteristics that are considered inconsistent with prevailing social norms.

According to stigma theory Rahman, the stigma attached to the Tabbae community reflects negative perceptions of groups deemed to deviate from prevailing social norms. Discrimination often manifests in the form of negative labels, causing individuals to lose social status and be viewed as inferior by their surrounding community. This stigma still lingers, often referred to as "Texas Village." This label has a real impact on both individuals and groups within the Tabbae community, both within their neighborhoods, as well as in outside the region. For example, one informant named Suriadi, who had attended school outside Bone Regency, felt that being a foreigner Tabbae di people's village is a challenge because they are often seen as negative individuals by others.¹ Nur Faizah also experienced something similar, receiving negative views from her friends in Makassar because of her origins from Tabbae.² This creates discomfort for them in daily social interactions. This stigma has serious consequences, including discrimination, rejection, and unfair treatment of the Tabbae community. Previous research suggests that Tabbae community behavior can be linked to the concept of *siri' na pacce* in Bugis-Makassar culture. *Siri'* is defined as high self-esteem and maintaining honor for oneself and one's family.³ Meanwhile, this pace encourages individuals to help others who are in difficulty or suffering. At first glance, the Tabbae community's treatment is similar to this.⁴ This principle is reflected in the Tabbae community's response to problems

¹Suriadi, "Interview" (Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, January 27, 2024).

²Nur Faizah, "Interview" (Makassar, 2024).

³ Rizal Darwis and Usman, Asna Dilo, "Implications of the *Siri' Na Pacce* Philosophy in the Makassar Tribe in Gowa Regency," 186 *El Harakah* 14, no. 2 (2012): 186–205, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285224980_Implikasi_Falsafah_Siri'_Na_Pacce_Pada_Masyarakat_Suku_Makassar_di_Kabupaten_Gowa/fulltext/5688e30408aebccc4e16d672/Implikasi-Falsafah-Siri-Na-Pacce-Pada-Masyarakat-Suku-Makassar-di-Kabupaten-Gowa.pdf.

⁴ Auliah Safitri and Suharno, "The *Siri' Na Pacce* and *Sipakatau* Cultures in the Social Interactions of South Sulawesi Society," *Journal of Anthropology: Socio-Cultural Issues* 22, no. 1 (May 31, 2020): 102–11, doi:10.25077/jantro.v22.n1.p102-111.2020.

involving one of their members: the entire community unites to defend that individual. While this solidarity fosters a sense of community, this dominant trait often reinforces negative stereotypes about them.

Strong social stigma like this is a big challenge in efforts for social change in Tabbae. Therefore, it is important to identify and explore factors that can change this negative stigma. One very relevant factor is religion which functions as a source of moral and ethical values in people's lives. Tazkiyah al-nafs is a very strong concept for religious transformation, especially with the moral principles of Sufism advocated by Al-Ghazali. According to Al-Ghazali, tazkiyah al-nafs is the process of purifying the soul from all bad qualities (*mazmumah akhlak*) that exist in a person.⁵ The process not only focuses on cleansing the soul of unclean deeds but also adorns it with pious deeds. Tazkiyah al-nafs is a persistent and serious effort to cleanse the soul from despicable traits and returning them to a pure state of nature with the concepts of *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* as a framework for effective spiritual transformation. The *takhalli* process helps cleanse the soul of negative prejudices and discriminatory attitudes while *tahalli* instills the values of compassion, tolerance, and justice. Finally, *tajalli* becomes a tangible manifestation of an enlightened soul, reflected in harmonious behavior within the community..⁶ *Tazkiyah al-nafs* not only based on the principle of purifying the soul from heart disease but also aims to build and develop a positive and constructive soul and is relevant when applied in a wider social and communal context.

Religious figures like Idham Halid play a crucial role in recognizing the significant impact of religiosity on societal behavior. As a figure deeply concerned with the religious conditions of society, Idham Halid believes that stronger religious practices can have a significant positive impact on societal morals and ethics.⁷ The role of religious leaders and community leaders is key in motivating this change by promoting religious-based ethics and morality. As Neliwati explained, the lack of public knowledge about religious practices is a problem faced by religious leaders. Religious leaders can help facilitate this through teaching, encouragement, and spiritual support.⁸ Religious leaders impart knowledge tailored to the needs of the community, inviting and guiding them to engage in positive activities. This leads to a more focused religious community and greater diligence in carrying out religious obligations.⁹ Idham Halid took concrete steps, such as inviting

⁵ Zainal Abidin, *Life History of Imam Al-Ghazali* (Jakarta: Bulan and Bintang, 1991).

⁶ Indo Santalia, *Sufism Morals* (Makassar: Alauddin Press, 2011).

⁷ Sanre, "Interview" (Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, January 27, 2024).

⁸ Neliwati and Samsul Rizal, "The Role of Religious Figures in Increasing Motivation for the Implementation of Religious Practices in Society," *Geneology of Islamic Religious Education Journal* 9, no. 1 (2022).

⁹ A Ryan, "The Role of Religious Figures in Preparing Village Regulations from a *Siyasah Syari'iyah* Perspective," *Siyasatuna Journal* Vol. 4, no. No. 1 (2023): 98–109.

the community to play a more active role in various religious activities, both in congregational prayers and religious studies.

Tazkiyah an-nafs became a crucial instrument for reducing the stigma attached to the Tabbae community. Through this approach, the community began to become more open to studying religious teachings and implementing moral values in their daily lives. This led to an increase in collective awareness, such as the increasing number of young hafidz (literate) from Tabbae descent and the increasing involvement of adults and children in worship.

This research is highly relevant because it provides insight into how religious literacy can play a role in reducing strong social stigma and building a more inclusive social identity. Practically, this research provides an alternative solution for the Tabbae community to improve their image and reduce the discrimination they experience. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the understanding of social and spiritual dynamics in the context of a marginalized community facing negative stigma. By utilizing stigma theory and the concept of *tazkiyah an-nafs* (religious self-discipline), this research demonstrates that a faith-based approach can accelerate the process of negative stigma, leading to its elimination. *Tazkiyah an-nafs* and the involvement of religious leaders are effective solutions to strengthen community morale, reduce discrimination, and improve social relations in Tabbae. This shows that although the Tabbae community faces strong stigma, the potential for social and spiritual transformation remains, especially by using religion as a tool to improve morale and build a more positive collective consciousness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is a qualitative approach (field research) to review in depth and Transformation of Communal Spirituality: Phenomenological Study in Tabbae, Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency. and focus it on the results of information obtained from predetermined informants. The data collection process is through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations make observations and important notes that focus on the early history of negative stigma, self- and collective identity of the Tabbae community, the role of religious and community authorities, and the influence of religiosity. Interviews by collecting data through interviews with various parties, namely historical figures, religious and community authorities, village heads, police, and communities who are in direct contact with the object of study such as local residents. The data collected includes the early history of negative stigma, self- and collective identity of the Tabbae community, the role of religious and community authorities, and the influence of religiosity. The presentation of this research data aims to present accurate, clear, and appropriate data findings and support further analysis processes, and verification and conclusion of

data in the final stage is data verification where researchers test the consistency and validity of the data obtained by means of triangulation tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background of the Formation of Negative Stigma in Tabbæ Society in the 18th Century Tabbæ began to be inhabited by La Mannaq and his followers. La Manna is an Indo Anang (old man of the region) who came from Baringeng, the territory of the king of Soppéng. However, due to differences of opinion, La Manna left Baringeng and migrated to the territory of Arung Amali, namely Bottoe (currently known as Tabbæ) and received permission to settle by Arung Amali with three conditions: full autonomy, complete territorial boundaries with territorial boundaries, and a defense alliance with Amali. Bottoqé became a strategic location on the border of Soppéng and Amali, so that hunting incidents often occurred that triggered tension. La Mannaq tightened security with a firm military strategy, namely *si tabba bessiko* (fight with spears) *sengadi maretto lisena cenranae muaddampeng soro* (do not retreat even a step unless your weapon has been broken three times). This assertiveness gives the impression that the area guarded by La Mannaq's troops was named Tabbæ.¹⁰

In 1964, a major conflict between Amali and Timurung forced both sides to build defensive fortifications. Three Arung Amali forts in Bottoqé became the basis for the formation of Tellue Fortress Village, with the capital of Bottoqé now known as Tabbæ. Under La Manna's leadership, Bottoe flourished in prosperity and security, making him a respected figure in Amali. After La Manna's death, the leadership was continued by his nephew I Santa (1900–1950), Jalide (1951–1957), H. Page (1957–1966), Rusi (1966–1975), and Alimuddin Page (1975–1983) who continued to maintain the legacy of La Mannaq's government.¹¹ During the reign of Alimuddin Page, several events caused Tabbæ to be known as the “Texas village”, including:

1. Very High Crime Rate

a. Theft

According to the Amali Police, the Amali Sector was once designated a “red zone” due to the high rate of theft in the area. Many of the thefts reportedly originated in Tabbæ, particularly livestock theft. This phenomenon is due to the high level of poverty in the area. Poverty, as defined by Nasrullah, is the inability of an individual or household to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter,

¹⁰ Latest Amali TV, History of Tabbæ Fort Tellue Village, 2020, <https://youtu.be/Kg-5gN4UQRk?si=fHtiwSR0-AclFY6S>.

¹¹ Alimuddin Page, “Book at a Glance 1983/1984 Benteng Tellue Village, Ajangale District, Bone Regency” (Tabbæ, 1984).

education, and housing.health.¹² This problem is a complex issue that not only affects people's quality of life but is also one of the main triggers for crime.¹³ What's interesting about this case is the local community's reaction to the theft. Many victims, who witnessed the theft in their neighborhood, felt powerless to do anything. This was due to the realization that the perpetrators were from Tabbae. The Tabbae community's dominance in the neighborhood created fear among the local community, making them reluctant to fight back or report the incident. However, this situation has changed significantly. According to local residents, the thefts are no longer occurring because the community now has a better life.

b. Conflict with outside communities

The Tabbae community has always been at the forefront of conflict within their communities, as they hold a strong sense of dominance and a strong ideology of mutual assistance under any circumstances. Some of the conflicts that have occurred include:

- 1) In July 2024, a disturbance occurred involving a resident of Pompanua, Ajangale District, Bone Regency, and two Tabbae residents who felt deeply ashamed and angry because the victim had denigrated the perpetrator's hometown. In their anger, the two perpetrators searched for the person they believed was responsible for the disturbance, but did not find him at home. As a form of revenge, they vandalized the house they suspected the victim lived in. The motive was a spontaneous reaction to the insult to the village martabak, where the individual was due to be suspicious. Siriq in the Bugis tribe is interpreted as self-respect.¹⁴
- 2) On February 12, 2022, four youths from Tabbae killed a retired police officer in Soppeng Regency. The incident began with a street incident between the son of the retired police officer and a group of Tabbae youths. Although the Tabbae youths apologized for the inconvenience, the police officers continued to act violently, resulting in one of the Tabbae youths stabbing him with the retired police officer's own dagger. Despite the argument and violence, the Tabbae community remained united and did not abandon their members. They went into hiding after

¹² Adon, Jamaluddin Nasrullah, *Urban Sociology* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2015).

¹³ Sukarna, Ahmad Zaki, and Muh Ilham, "Path Modeling on Factors Influencing Crime in South Sulawesi 2021," *Journal of Mathematics and Statistics and Its Applications* 10, no. 1 (2022): 4–5.

¹⁴ Agung Pramono, "Two Men in Bone Burn Down Resident's House Because Victim Caused Trouble at Wedding Event," *Detik SulSel*, July 18, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/watampone/d-7444829/2-pria-di-bone-bakar-rumah-warga-gegara-korban-bikin-onar-di-acara-pengantin>.

the incident to consult and resolve the issue internally. With courage and determination, the Tabbae youths finally decided to surrender to the police.¹⁵

2. Identity Abuse

The thefts are not always the work of indigenous Tabbae people, but rather outsiders who assume Tabbae identities or who have married indigenous people. They exploit local identities to perpetrate their crimes. However, it cannot be denied that indigenous Tabbae residents are also involved in these crimes, often driven by economic factors.¹⁶ In other words, even though the main actors are outsiders, the economic factors that encourage the involvement of native residents also play an important role in this phenomenon.

Although the region developed rapidly during Alimuddin Page's leadership, several events introduced a negative stigma against Tabbae, which later became known as the "Texas village." This stigma developed along with the emergence of several disturbing social phenomena, such as the high crime rate in the area. As Erving Goffman explained, stigma is an attribute that distinguishes an individual from their group, thus weakening that individual's social identity. This attribute can be a physical, behavioral, or social characteristic that is considered inconsistent with prevailing norms in the community.¹⁷ Stigma not only damages a person's self-image but also negatively impacts their social relationships. Link and Phelan also expand on Goffman's thinking by explaining that stigma is more than just a label or perception, but involves three main processes: labeling, separation, and discrimination.¹⁸ These three processes are interrelated in forming and reinforcing stigma in society.

3. Labeling

According to Erving Goffman, the initial process in stigmatization is where a group or individual is given negative attributes or identities that make them different from the norms of society.¹⁹ The stigma attached to the Tabbae community stems not only from external perceptions but also from a combination of cultural values and historical events

¹⁵ Tvoneneews, "4 Youths Kill Retired Police Officer," Tvoneneews.Com, February 12, 2022, <https://www.tvoneneews.com/amp/channel/investigasi-tvone/54751-4-pemuda-habisi-nyawa-purnawirawan-polisi>.

¹⁶ Majid, Abdul Page, "Interview" (Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, January 25, 2024).

¹⁷ Erving Goffman, *Stigma : Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Simon & Schuster Inc, 1963.

¹⁸ Scheid T. L and Brown, *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health Social Sontext, Theories, and Systems Second Edition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Novia Suhastini and Herlina Fitriana, "Societal Stigma Towards Children in Conflict with the Law," *JUPE: Jurnal Pendidikan Mandala* 7, no. 3 (2022).

that shape the community's identity. The Tabbæ community is known for its strong traditions, passed down through the noble messages of ancestral figures like La Mannaq.

La Mannaq as a Patriot passed on to his descendants several messages which are La Mannaq's oath to his descendants, including the following:

- a. Anything done, whether good or bad, must be accompanied by sincerity and preparedness to face the consequences.
- b. Message in Bugis Language:
 - 3) *Molaki Laleng natomakkalitutu*(Treading the path with caution) emphasizes the importance of commitment and responsibility in every action. This message reflects the culture of hard work and deep seriousness in Tabbæ society, where every decision and action must be carefully considered, and the community must be prepared for both positive and negative consequences.
 - 4) *Molaki lempe' nato marola soro*(Facing a flood, you must retreat) demonstrates the importance of vigilance and strategy in facing challenges. The Tabbæ community is expected to always be cautious and think strategically in every step they take, avoiding risks and adapting to the situation.
 - 5) *Narekko polei salaga mawatangnge, rebbako nalalo*(If a giant or powerful force comes, avoid it until the traffic has passed) illustrates the value of strength in facing problems. This reflects a resilient attitude in facing difficult situations.
- c. Message in Bugis Language:
 - 1) *Pakkanna mawatange ripalippi' Botto*(The troops of soldiers who survived around Bottoq é) and *Belo jajareng melle ritoddang Baringeng* (Young people born at the foot of the Baringeng climb) emphasize the strength of the community and a sense of pride in their place of origin. This reflects the Tabbæ community's strong sense of identity in tradition, which is a source of strength and pride.
 - 2) *Taddanrang puli leba risope passiring na calowoi nainring pattawe ininnawa*²⁰(They will remain calm in their own area and with gentle persuasion is a guarantee of feelings) the importance of steadfastness and peace in the community.

²⁰Page, "Book at a Glance 1983/1984 Benteng Tellue Village, Ajangale District, Bone Regency."

These messages emphasize vigilance, responsibility, and resilience in the face of challenges. However, in social reality, these messages are often misunderstood by outsiders, who then label the Tabbae community as rigid, respected, or even unapproachable. Furthermore, the reality of Tabbae's frequent involvement in riots reinforces the negative labeling as "Texas Village."

4. *Separation (Separation)*

Separation occurs when society begins to draw a clear line between "us" and "them." The separation experienced by the Tabbae community can be seen in the fear that outsiders have of interacting with them.²¹ This social separation manifests itself in various ways, one of which is the fear of people from other villages visiting Tabbae. One concrete example is Suriadi's statement that "in the past, people from other villages didn't dare set foot in Tabbae because they were afraid something would happen."²² Outsiders perceive Tabbae as a dangerous and uncertain place, which ultimately reinforces social segregation. This fear is not only based on personal experiences but also reinforced by stories circulating within the community, creating negative perceptions that limit social interaction.

One real example also came from a travel driver who transported a passenger from Taccorong Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi Province, who was from the Makassar tribe in 2023. When the driver informed them that their trip would be to Tabbae, the passenger showed his fear by opening his cellphone repeatedly and ensuring the safety of his belongings. The passenger even personally explicitly expressed her fear to the driver. This feeling of fear not only reflects the stigma attached to the Tabbae community but also demonstrates how that stigma has shaped the perceptions of the outside world, creating a deep divide.

This separation is seen in real forms such as avoiding interaction, refusing collaboration, to *stereotype* which is continuously reinforced through public narratives. This process of separation not only harms the Tabbae community collectively but also affects individuals within it, who feel isolated from broader social and economic opportunities. Therefore, efforts are needed to build inclusive dialogue and improve social relations to foster better understanding between the Tabbae community and the outside world.

²¹ Ana M. Aranda et al., "Standing on the Shoulders of Goffman: Advancing a Relational Research Agenda on Stigma," *Business and Society* 62, no. 7 (September 1, 2023): 1339–77, doi:10.1177/00076503221148441.

²² Suriadi, "Interview."

5. Discrimination

Discrimination is a further stage in the process of stigmatization where labeling and separation turn into real actions that harm the individual or group that is the target of the stigma.²³ The Tabbae people have long experienced discriminatory treatment that reinforces negative stereotypes about their community.²⁴ As expressed by one of the sources, Syakirah (2024), "School outside my village makes me proud and a little embarrassed if my friends know my hometown, because sometimes my friends have characters like the stories circulating."²⁵ This statement illustrates how stigma not only impacts social relationships but also creates a psychological burden for individuals, especially the younger generation of Tabbae, who often feel limited in expressing their identity. Discrimination is also evident in the structural barriers faced by Tabbae youth. For example, those who aspire to become civil servants (police or military) often face rejection or prejudice simply because of their Tabbae origins. The "red village" label attached to Tabbae is often used as a reason to question their integrity or suitability for these formal institutions.

This kind of stigma not only blocks individuals' access to development but also reinforces the social exclusion experienced by the Tabbae community as a whole. Repeated discriminatory actions against the Tabbae community contribute to a cycle of marginalization that is difficult to break because it influences the perception of the outside community towards them. Therefore, the Tabbae community needs to make efforts to eliminate this discrimination through an inclusive approach through religious literacy, using the concept of *tazkiyah an-nafs*. This concept focuses on improving the spiritual and moral qualities of individuals, which will become an effective tool in rebuilding a positive self-image and social identity. The stigma and discrimination that have shackled the Tabbae community can gradually be erased from the memory of the outside community.

Religious Patterns of Tabbae Society

Tabbae is located in a remote area of Bone Regency, which still faces challenges in religious literacy. This low level of religious understanding reflects the gap between their beliefs and the religious practices they practice in their daily lives. Islam has become part of their identity, but the application of religious teachings is not always consistent. This is evident in the minimal community participation in religious activities at mosques, where prayer facilities are readily

²³ Rury Muslifar and Andi Wahyu Irawan, "The Advice of Asera Temmallaiseng: Affirming the Social Identity of the Bugis Tribe in Samarinda and Its Implications for the KIPAS Model of Counseling," *Jurnal Bikotetik* 6, no. 1 (2022): 5–12.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Syakirah, "Interview" (Benteng Tellue Village, Amali District, Bone Regency, January 30, 2024).

available. Poor religious understanding among the community, due to limited access to religious literacy, the influence of local traditions, and the busyness of earning a living, also contribute to a lack of awareness of practicing Islamic teachings in their entirety.

Tazkiyah al-nafs It is present to cleanse the heart of spiritual ailments such as laziness, selfishness, and tendencies toward negativity. *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* can be achieved through three ways: *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli*.

1. *Takhalli* (Emptying Yourself from Worldly Dependencies)

Takhalli is the initial stage in the spiritual journey in which a person or community tries to cleanse themselves of despicable traits and habits.²⁶ This stage is evident in the Tabbae community's efforts to abandon irregular religious practices and various negative behaviors. The Tabbae community previously tended to be more tied to local traditions and daily life that did not prioritize Islamic values. Several behaviors that occurred within the community, such as neglecting prayer, a lack of religious literacy, and the emergence of social conflict due to competition and negative prejudice, still frequently occur. This is in line with Al-Ghazali's thinking, which emphasizes that reprehensible traits such as excessive worldly ambition, envy, and doubt in faith are the main obstacles to achieving spiritual purity.²⁷

The community is beginning to shed habits that reinforce negative stigma, such as social practices that contradict Islamic teachings and low participation in religious life. Breaking free from stigma involves not only changing others' perceptions but also an internal effort to free oneself from the negative identity that has become embedded in the Tabbae community's daily lives. The community is beginning to build a self-identity that aligns with morals and religion by increasing participation in religious services and changing patterns of social interaction.

2. *Tahalli* (Fill Yourself with Praiseworthy Qualities)

After the self-purification process in the *takhalli* stage, the Tabbae community begins to enter the *tahalli* stage, which is an effort to fill the soul with good habits, noble morals, and a better mindset. According to the concept *riyadah al-nafs* This process requires gradual practice, starting from simple practices to more difficult habits.²⁸ This

²⁶ Santalia, Sufism Morals.

²⁷ Zidni Nuran Noordin and Zaizul Ab. Rahman, "Comparison of the Process of *Tazkiyah Al-Nafs* According to Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim," *Al-Turath; Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah*, 2017, 37–46.

²⁸ Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, "Tazkiyah Al-Nafs in the Islamic Counseling Process from al-Ghazali's Perspective," *Ibn Khaldun International Journal of Economic, Community Empowerment and Sustainability* 1, no. 1 (2022): 19–28, <http://ejournal2.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/IJECES/>.

transformation is evident in their increased participation in religious activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and Quranic study for both children and adults. It also fosters more harmonious social relations, marked by the fact that conflicts that once occurred have begun to raise people's awareness to think before acting. This process also reflects Al-Ghazali's teachings on building faith by increasing religious practice and adorning oneself with the qualities of *mahmudah*.

The Tabbae community is beginning to rebuild its identity with stronger Islamic values. This process is not only spiritual but also sociological. Increased participation in worship and religious studies is inseparable from efforts to internalize ancestral messages in accordance with Islamic teachings. At this stage, it's not just about adding Islamic elements to daily life but also about how these elements are interpreted in behavior and social interactions. The presence of religious leaders and various da'wah initiatives from the Tabligh Jama'ah help guide the community to abandon habits that are inconsistent with Islamic teachings. They are beginning to realize the importance of freeing themselves from these negative influences. This is marked by the mosque, which was once only filled at certain times, now becoming a bustling and active center of religious activity thanks to the efforts of religious leaders and the community in raising awareness and motivating the community to practice Islamic teachings more consistently. Although they are busy with their work as farmers and previously often neglected the spiritual aspect, they now make time for it. to study religion consistently, such as adults who without shame learn directly from Mr. Idham Halid after congregational prayers, learn prayer readings and recite the Koran, and regular studies conducted by the majlis ta'lim.²⁹ Awareness of the importance of religious literacy makes people committed to making time for it even in their busy daily lives.

3. Tajalli

The final stage in the spiritual journey is *tajalli* where a person or community attains higher spiritual awareness and feels the presence of God in their lives.³⁰ At this stage, the Tabbae community entered the *tajalli* stage, marked by changes not only in the form of increased worship practices but also in a deeper spiritual awareness. This transformation made Tabbae more religious and harmonious and helped transform its negative image among outsiders into a more Islamic and civilized environment. The mosque now became a center of social life, functioning not only for worship but also as a place of learning and character building. Public awareness of religious values grew naturally, not through

²⁹ Muhammad Yamin, "Interview" (Tabbae, July 1, 2024).

³⁰ Miswar, *Sufism Morals Building Islamic Character* (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2015).

coercion, but rather as a result of a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. The community valued the values of togetherness more, supported each other in social life, and demonstrated a stronger commitment to practicing religious teachings. Al-Ghazali emphasized that *tajalli* is the moment when a person achieves true happiness and realizes the divine essence of their life.³¹ The Tabbae community is seen in how their religiosity is no longer just a routine but has become part of their soul and culture.

Proses tazkiyah al-nafs This occurred due to the crucial role of religious leaders in coordinating the community to the point of spiritual transformation. Idham Halid, as a religious figure, played a key role in improving and strengthening worship practices in the community. One important step taken was appointing an imam to lead congregational prayers. The presence of a qualified imam helps ensure that congregational prayers are performed properly and in accordance with Islamic teachings.³² Apart from that, the presence of the Tabligh congregation, who are often invited to provide advice and lectures, also plays an important role in fostering society through *da'wah*.³³ The presence of the Tabligh Jama'ah also helps overcome the negative stigma that may exist against the Tabbae community from outsiders. Through their sermons and advice, the Tabligh Jama'ah strives to improve the Tabbae community's image by demonstrating their commitment to positive Islamic principles. The Tabbae community's religious practices reflect a spiritual transformation aligned with the concepts of *Takhalli*, *Tahalli*, and *Tajalli*, demonstrating that religious change does not occur instantly, but rather through a gradual process that leads to a more Islamic and harmonious life.

CONCLUSION

The religious transformation of the Tabbae community can be understood as a process of social purification that is not only spiritual but also difficult to free from the stigma that has long been attached to them. From Erving Goffman's perspective, stigma is an attribute that tarnishes the social identity of an individual or group and creates social separation and discrimination. The stigma experienced by the Tabbae community, such as being labeled as a less religious community, tends to always create conflict that shapes their social reality, increasingly isolating them from the outside world. The changes occurring in Tabbae demonstrate that stigma is not something permanent. The process of their religious transformation can be understood through the concept of *Tazkiyah al-*

³¹Noordin and Ab. Rahman, "Comparison of the Al-Nafs Tazkiyah Process According to Imam al-Ghazali and Ibnu Qayyim."

³²Sudirman, "Interview" (Tabbae, 2024).

³³ Abdul, Agus Rahman, *Social Psychology* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013).

Nafs, which includes three main stages: takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. The community begins to shed habits that reinforce their stigma through a spiritual religious transformation. Changing stigma by drawing closer to God is not only a symbolic effort but also a form of self-purification that requires sincerity in worship practices and changes in social behavior. This approach not only demonstrates adherence to religious teachings but also serves as a path for the community to reconstruct their identity more deeply. With increasing involvement in religious activities, people not only cleanse themselves of negative behavior but also rebuild more harmonious social relationships at the internal community level and in interactions with the outside community.

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