

Chapter 7

Islamic Educational Values in Life–Cycle Rituals: An Ethnographic Study in Kluet Timur Community, Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the series of life cycle rituals the people of Kluet Timur, South Aceh implement. The study focuses on five main rituals—the rituals of pregnancy, giving birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. Islamic educational values contained in each ritual are also described. To collect this data, this qualitative study applied observation and interview methodologies. The values of customary education, Tawheed, health, and correct decision making can be found in the rituals of pregnancy and childbirth. The values of responsibility and health appear in the ritual of circumcision. The people of Kluet Timur develop the values of deliberation, consensus, and togetherness in the ritual of marriage. The values of solidarity and cooperation are reflected in the implementation of the death ritual.

BACKGROUND

Tanoh Kluet is one of the areas in South Aceh, consisting of four sub-districts, namely, North Kluet, South Kluet, Kluet Timur, and Central Kluet. The Acehese, Aneuk Jamee, and Kluet ethnic groups inhabit the four sub-districts. As a society

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that profoundly upholds local cultural values, Kluet people still maintain the use of Kluet language and traditional rituals. The local people perform rituals that include the life and death rituals whose aim is to retain the religious, cultural, and educational values of their ethnic group. In fact, this developing tradition strongly agrees with the teachings of religion, evident in the *hadih maja*¹ (Acehnese proverb), '*hukom ngen adat lagee zat, ngon sipheuet*' ("Law and custom is like a substance and its inseparable nature"). The differences in culture and customs in several regions of Aceh are supported by Act No. 44 of 1999, concerning the Implementation of the Privileges of the Special Province of Aceh. Regions in Aceh are permitted to implement various policies in an effort to empower, preserve, and develop customs and traditional institutions in their territories if they comply with Islamic law. In addition, Act No. 11 of 2006 concretely underlies the implementation of customs in Aceh.

This study discusses the series of traditional rituals, including those of the life cycle and death, which the people of Kluet Timur still carry out. The area is considered to represent the originality of the Kluet community culture, reflected in each stage of the birth-to-death ceremonies. This study also aims to display the Islamic educational values of life-cycle rituals of the Kluet community.

LIFE-CYCLE RITUALS OF THE KLUET TIMUR COMMUNITY

As a one of the sequences in life which happen within a community, life-cycle rituals occur in the form of either ceremonial or custom festivals. From the perspective of the religious dimension, those practices always aim to be closer to God (Muhammad, 2007, pp. 1-2). Indonesia, a country consisting of numerous tribes, has its special customs in the deployment of life-cycle rituals. The tradition of the Balinese, for instance, appears in the form of values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, customary laws, and other distinctive rules (Sirtha, 2013). Likewise, the customary values of the Sundanese also do the same thing, reflecting on Islam (Maulana, 2013). Meanwhile, acculturations of the local culture also contribute to the foundation of the new tradition. For example, the people of Pidie, Aceh, execute the ritual of *rah ulei* (washing the head with water) in the cemetery of *ulama* (Islamic scholar) (Arifin & Khambali, 2016). Therefore, the customary tradition to which the community commits cannot circumvent containing the theological, sociological, political, family, and educational values. The last-mentioned values, the focus of this study, attempt to discover the concepts of education contained and believed among the people of Kluet Timur, Aceh. This aligns with what Manan has conceptualized—that the life-

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