

ACEHNESE TRADITIONAL ARTS: BETWEEN SHARIA AND CONTINUITY

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ABSTRACT

The title of this research article is Acehnese traditional arts: between sharia and continuity. The objective of this research is to describe and to analyze the existence of Acehnese traditional arts from Islamic sharia point of view and related to the didactic values as reflected in some of Acehnese traditional arts. This research is focused on Acehnese traditional arts like saman dance, ranup lampuan, seudati, and others. The methodology used in this research is descriptive qualitative research where the data are described and analyzed qualitatively. The result showed that arts and cultural activities in Aceh were very influenced by conflict and tsunami era, and also influenced by the changes of political and economic situation in the past and present. Furthermore, it seems that the concept of Islamic sharia must be applied as moral instrument and not as political instrument toward all aspect of the human life in Aceh included in education and arts activities in Acehnese society. It is hoped that Islamic sharia in education, arts and cultural activities in Aceh can be implemented as a conflict resolution in the future.

Keywords: Acehnese traditional arts, sharia, and continuity.

INTRODUCTION

Since the independence of the Indonesian nation was proclaimed, in this archipelago which later became a region called Indonesian republic, has long since there are various cultures of ethnic groups (ethnic culture) which was born by citizens of ethnic groups who had been in this archipelago long before the birth of the nation of Indonesia as a nation state. But the cultural existence of these ethnic groups soon became the Indonesian culture on the basis of the political needs of the unity and unity of the nation. So in the end, the various ethnic cultures should be referred to as Indonesian culture for political purposes. Though the substance of the culture of Indonesia itself is ethnic cultures born from various ethnic groups in a particular geographic area that is also automatically were given the label as the territory of Indonesia. Likewise, the traditional Acehnese arts products seem to be also seated between exist and nothing. It means also that the Acehnese people with their traditional arts have not been fully accommodated in the middle of the nation state called Indonesia if they do not change the color into Indonesian arts style. Yet each ethnic groups in this country already has how to express various local wisdoms through the world of their arts, and also must be realized that this country is already in a condition of multi ethnic and multi culture.

Aceh as part of the territory of the unitary state of the Indonesian republic, seems to still not benefit the Acehnese from various things. Political and economic situation in Indonesia is always changing, making the condition of Aceh always in a state of decline and cornered, especially if politics has become a commander in this country. For approximately 30 years Aceh has been occupied as a prolonged conflict area. This situation is certainly affecting various cultural activities in Aceh, as well as with the development of traditional arts that lives off unwilling to die. Sound reach, *serune kale, saman, ranup lampuan*, and *seudati* had changed into a gun boom. Similarly, various other Aceh traditions appear not to run smoothly to be implemented in the midst of the community owners. All this happens because of the unfavorable situation and political conditions, and the creation of an insecure and comfortable psychological atmosphere in everyday life. It is necessary and it is time that a nation state called Indonesia can protect its people and culture throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, and not even to colonize its own country.

However, in the post conflict and tsunami period known as the Helsinki agreement (2005), it was the period of peace between GAM (Aceh independent movement) and the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, and it is a fresh breeze for the people of Aceh which in other words is also the horizon of hope for sustainable peace. The Helsinki agreement seems to position the people of Aceh in a more secure and comfortable condition, because everything is arranged and accommodated in the agreed terms of the agreement. And it is fitting that we must respect this Helsinki treaty which, although until recently, there are still ripples that should not have happened.

In addition to the Helsinki agreement, the people of Aceh post conflict and tsunami in the outer world view is a society full of Islamic sharia. But is it true that the Islamic Sharia has been implemented well in this land porch of Mecca, of course, need further reflection. It is fitting that the people outside Aceh are of the view that; the people of Aceh is one hundred percent of Islam, Islamic cultural behavior, has an Islamic political and economic system, as well as the various arts of Aceh certainly not contrary to Islamic values in this country. Such a picture of thought is an ideal view, and if we explore further that the reality to the present may be exactly the opposite of what they had imagined before. For this reason, it is time for the Aceh ulama council together with other relevant institutions to be able to reformulate how the concept of Acehese art is actually in the view of Islam. This is very important in order to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings in various arts activities in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. Therefore this article entitled: Acehese traditional arts: between Sharia and continuity.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method of describing the results of data analysis exist qualitatively. The steps taken are as follows:

- a. Conduct literature review in advance in accordance with the problems that are related to this research title.
- b. Conduct field observation.
- c. Collecting data either obtained through literature review obtained through the library or data obtained through field observation.
- d. Identify data by classifying into the type of problem related to the research title.
- e. Conduct data analysis.
- f. Describe the conclusions of the results of the analysis of existing data into several important points as a result of research and discussion.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Revitalization of traditional arts of Aceh and the relegitimation of Aceh *ulama* council.

It is impossible to taste something of an art product that our ancestors had created in the past without any special meaning for the community of their owners. The arts and cultural observers both from within and outside the country will not just stop doing studies on various arts products and cultural heritage as well as traditional arts and other Acehese cultural heritage. This is done because it is believed that Acehese arts products such as *saman* dance, *ranup lampuan*, and others, are not only entertainment in the form of spectacle, but implicitly can also provide guidance in the form of the values of teaching (didactic values).

Saman dance for example, is a very famous dance in various parts of the world and one dance that is considered as something very amazing. In some countries such as America, Australia,

and Canada for example, *saman* dance is also called as the *dance of thousand hands* that fascinates the audience. But behind the audience's fascination, *saman* dance has taught us all that there is no clutter between the hands of the dancers themselves. The meaning is that the *saman* dance, belonging to the Acehnese, has taught that fellow Acehnese do not have to clash with each other. But what has happened in Aceh so far is the opposite. Events have occurred such as; murder, slander, envy, jealousy, and each other do wrong fellow Acehnese who are also equally Muslim. Yet we all already know that fellow Muslims are brothers. It means that we do not learn through *saman* as one of the traditional forms of Acehnese arts which is more interesting for other nations outside Aceh.

In addition to traditional arts of Aceh as exemplified above, there are many more various artefact (other cultural products) which in addition to having historical value also has its own camaraderie values. Therefore it is necessary to remapping and revitalizing Aceh's cultural heritages that may have been lost or even considered insignificant because they can not make money. Whereas the development of culture should be as important as economic development in this country. As recently as post conflict and tsunami, it seems that the Acehnese have just learned that in their own territory, the Samalanga area of Bireuen-Aceh Regency, there has been a history of *Tun Sri Lanang* known as a great author whose literary works can be equalized with the works of great authors of the world such as William Shakespeare of England where some of his works are very popular all over the world such as; *Romeo and Juliet*, *Machbet*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar*, and others.

If we explore further, certainly not only the Aceh dance, Aceh literature, and various other traditional Acehnese arts that has been living since the past, but because of the change of paradigm thinking of Aceh people who are in line with the changing times have also happened the position of arts as things that are not important and even serve only as a complement. Arts activities will exist just to complement events that are political and business that serves only as "sweetener" event only and not because it is associated with the values and meaningfulness. It is ironic that the position of Acehnese traditional arts has been politicized as a "forbidden item" that should not flourish in the midst of its owner community. No wonder if the fate of traditional arts of Aceh seems to live shy away from death do not want.

From the above circumstances, it seems necessary to remapping the existence of all Acehnese cultural heritage as well as with various traditional arts products as a revitalization program. Furthermore, since the Acehnese people are one hundred percent Muslim, it is necessary to rescreen whether the values contained in some traditional arts are in accordance with Islamic law or are contradictory, and this is where the need for relegitimation from the government through Aceh *ulama* council. It is important that arts activities in Aceh can run well as an effort in building the values and character of the nation through the arts.

Portrait of arts activities that are not prohibited but also not recommended.

Perhaps how arts activities in Aceh today can be likened to what happens in the world of health. If we feel unwell and go to the doctor, then the doctor has never forbidden us to drink herbal medicine, but also do not recommend to drink herbs so we stay healthy. Likewise, various arts activities in Aceh are also seem to have no ban from parties related to Islamic Sharia, but also there is no suggestion to repromote arts activities especially in the post conflict and tsunami. This means that the position of arts activities are in the middle between the Islamic Sharia as a supervisory system attached to the values and on the other hand is in a situation of the necessity of continuity of values itself.

In other words, the traditional arts of Aceh that will be displayed in various arts and cultural activities of course also must be still within the framework of Islamic sharia. If until now there

is still no ban, this means that arts activities in Aceh has not been out of the frame of Islamic law. But if until now also there is no suggestion to increase the activity of arts, this is caused by several things. 1) It seems that we can not feel something values through arts activities that can provide learning. 2) The presumption that arts activities can not produce material benefits that can sustain a better life. 3) The strong public oversight associated with Aceh as a sharia area of Islam so that it can lead to the perception that everything related to arts activities will bring more harm than benefit.

In the situation and conditions are not prohibited and not recommended as described above, it seems that the existence of Acehnese traditional arts will be weak without the support of the community and local government. This means that there is still a perception of society that anything related to the implementation of arts activities in Aceh can be considered by society in general as something that contradicts both religion (religious constraint) and social (social constraint). In other words, there are boundaries that should not be violated by the people of Aceh, either religious or social limits. And although until now various arts activities in Aceh are still not considered to violate these two limits, but there is probably a principle that prevention will be better than treatment. This is where we need to build a stream of consciousness in a continuity that the activities of arts can actually be made a strengthening of the values of religiosity and not just otherwise reduce or erode and even damage the values of religiosity living in the middle of society.

It is said that the story on the island of Java, the nine guardian (*wali songo*) has also been using cultural instruments to preach in the midst of society to further assure the existence of substance contained in Islamic values. Likewise, the traditional arts of Aceh certainly can function as a medium of learning values that can provide reinforcement of the implementation of Islamic values in our daily lives. As an example we will see the existence of learning harmony through *saman* dance, we also can see how the people of Aceh have a tradition of glorifying guests or others through dance of *ranup lampuan*, and others that are all not against the Islamic Sharia. This has been done by PMTOH an oral tradition leaders in Bireuen-Aceh whose name is very popular throughout the corners of this porch land of mecca. It is said that the story of PMTOH is a reliable storyteller who can amaze the audience. Like a puppeteer, using the Acehnese language PMTOH tells a variety of stories that are loaded with life values that seem more easily attached to the psyche of the audience. In other words, the art of PMTOH here is not only a spectacle but also a guide. But unfortunately the history of PMTOH as a storyteller in the oral tradition of Aceh seemed to have disappeared just swallowed by the period.

Islamic Sharia as an inherent supervision and not a political instrument that ensnare.

It should be realized that in order to maintain the continuity of values and various local wisdom contained within Aceh's traditional arts heritage, it appears outside the Aceh region. This is marked by a program of learning about dance of *saman* for example, *seudati*, *rapai*, *ranup lampuan*, and others that have been studied in several schools, arts studios, and some educational institutions in Java island and even abroad. Even *saman* dance in particular has been packaged well and has a high selling price abroad. No wonder *saman* dance in addition has been recorded as a world heritage also in the activities of arts has become familiar things in the international scope. On the contrary, various arts activities in Aceh seem to be foreign in the area of their own owners. This situation is as if we are not confident with what we already have that ultimately "scapegoat" was sought and did not provide a solution.

The facts have shown that Aceh as a region that has enacted Islamic law must be responded positively. In the post-conflict and tsunami period, there have been several caning times in Bireuen district and several other places. This means that it is fitting that we will take action

to refer to social, cultural and religious boundaries, as well as in the context of arts activities in Aceh. In other words, this is where Islamic sharia has functioned as an inherent supervisory system against individuals and groups who will pass an action. Furthermore, what is meant by the inherent supervision here is something that refers to the moral qualities and values of religious truth as the absolute truth and not the political truth of interest.

Therefore, the truth of religion is the absolute truth as the basis of reference in acting and activity in arts in the midst of the people of Aceh. If in reality it shows that the various arts activities are alive and reluctant to die, this does not mean that the world of arts has been entangled in the articles of Islamic law, but only the maximum exploration of arts activities is not yet maximal. In other words that the Islamic Sharia here is not a political instrument that is seen to inhibit the activity, but rather as an instrument of morality that serves to be able to provide a "fence" against the various behavior of the people of Aceh in particular. This is where the need to build a stream of consciousness in which the Islamic Sharia in Aceh will strengthen the existence of traditional Acehnese arts through Islamic values, and Islamic values are certainly not only in words but also in an action.

In the context of Islamic values, of course there is no harm if the Islamic label should also be attached to the name and type of Acehnese arts, as well as the tourism world of Aceh which probably has the same fate so far. For example: traditional Islamic arts, Islamic tourism, and so forth. This means that all forms of arts and tourism world must be attached by Islamic label will be able to provide strengthening to its existence, to the owner, and also to the audience, especially the people of Aceh and people from outside Aceh in general.

In addition to providing reinforcement of values, it will also build its own distinctive character and identity that is Islamic identity. It means that if one hears and says something concerning Aceh it will be immediately imagined that Aceh is equal to one hundred percent of Islam, Aceh is equal to the Islamic Sharia, Aceh portico of Mecca, Aceh one thousand and one *dayah*, and so on. Likewise, the various cultural products will automatically be attached to the identity of the existing deity. For example, if we see or hear about *saman* dance, then immediately that *saman* is identical with Aceh and Aceh is identical with Islam and so on there are photographed Islamic values such as harmony, cohesiveness, togetherness without clutter, and so forth.

It should be understood with full awareness that Islamic values as which are portrayed in the traditional arts of Aceh are not in conflict with the values of *Pancasila* as the State ideology. Quite the contrary that the Islamic values are photographed in a variety of traditional arts of Aceh that we can see as a local wisdom which will provide reinforcement of the values of *Pancasila* as the ideology of the nation. Therefore, of course, there is nothing to worry about for the State to the continuity of Islamic arts activities in the land of this mecca in the future after the conflict and the tsunami. This means that the people of Aceh should not be trapped by the political conspiracies of individual and certain groups of interests that could harm the people of Aceh morally. Moreover, if the political interest is associated with the term "death price" without considering the values as well as the cultural and religious values that have the right to live within a multi ethnic and multicultural nation state.

Furthermore, Islamic sharia in the context of Acehnese traditional arts continuity that serves as an inherent supervision of the existence of Islamic values reflected through artistic and cultural activities is a basic need for Acehnese people in the past, present, and future. No wonder if the various relics of non-Muslim arts and culture, especially the influence of Hinduism for example, seems not to be seen anymore. This happens as a cultural necessity to keep the people's behavior in order not to deviate sharia. Although there may be various views that there are still many Hindu influences such as the "*peusejuk*" event, for example,

the cultural tradition of "peusejuk" in the midst of Acehnese society has adapted the cultural adaptation that is not contradictory and is only placed as a local tradition and not something substantial in Islamic shari'a. In other words that everything that can be viewed as a form of cultural deviation will always have inherent supervision that is to restore everything into the framework of Islamic sharia.

Restoring ethnicity and maintaining a sustainable education of Islamic values.

What is meant by ethnicity here are the characteristics that have been attached to an ethnic group that will distinguish one ethnic group with another ethnic group. Likewise, Aceh's ethnic groups with all their ethnicity, Acehnese traditions, such as the religion of Islam, communicate using the Acehnese language, respect the Aceh tradition both in the birth, marriage, to death, and other characteristics, typical of arts that has been embedded in the middle of the people of Aceh. In other words that Islam and all Islamic values contained therein are as distinctive features of the Acehnese society that are also manifested in its traditional arts.

Because Islam has been attached to the people of Aceh as one of its ethnicity, it would not be surprising if the Acehnese would be angry right when harassed about their Islam. The Acehnese are the same as Islam, and Muslims are the same as Aceh. Until now, Islamic ethnicity of Aceh still feels there, but it needs reinforcement because in times of conflict seems to have been devastated by various political policies in this country. So there arose suspicion as a form of vigilance caused by past political trauma that has damaged the Islamic Acehnese society. Suspicion also occurred until the post-conflict and tsunami period when the number of humanitarian aid came from various NGOs from inside and outside the country allegedly will carry certain missions that will damage the ethnicity of Aceh that is Islamic. This is all because of the exaggerated fear that past traumas will not happen again.

It is not surprising that the above circumstances also have an impact on the arts activities in Aceh without conducting a review first. Arts activity is suspected as something that is not useful and can even bring immoral amid the Islamic community of Aceh. Yet in reality until now the traditional arts of Aceh is still considered as the only entertainment amid the community owners. As an example lately there has been a *saman* dance involving 12,262 dancers and has received an overwhelming response (Serambi, August 13, 2017). It means that *saman* dance and other traditional Acehnese arts are still alive in the midst of its owner who has been considered to exist between existence and nothing.

Therefore, it is time to restore the ethnicity of Aceh which may have been obscured by various political conspiracies. To restore the ethnicity of Aceh here means to restore the integrity of the Acehnese with all the ethnicity attached to them. In other words also restore its main characteristic as a whole Acehnese people who is one hundred percent of Islam, and live in sharia with all activities that are also not contrary to Islamic sharia. This is where the traditional arts position of Aceh today seems to lie in the middle between Islamic sharia and continuity. This means that on the one hand it should not conflict with Islamic sharia and on the other hand that traditional arts of Aceh should be seated as a medium of spectacle as well as guidance that can provide Islamic educational values. For this reason the traditional arts of Aceh as the cultural heritage of Aceh and also the world heritage needs to be preserved so as not to be lost swallowed by the period or even damaged by various political and business interests that can eliminate important substance in the form of moral teaching values.

CONCLUSION

Acehnese traditional arts that is born, grow, and develop, and live in sharia land is definitely not as "illicit product" which must be inhibited its continuity. Especially if it must be

destroyed because of entangled by political policy where a product of arts itself is not as a political product but as a cultural product of a particular group of people who in this case is the people of Aceh. For that reason, it is necessary to do cultural policy so that there will be no conflict between the community of culture owner with the local and central government. Islamic Sharia in this case is not something that ensnares, but it will provide a moral policy that will also provide reinforcement to the values contained in the traditional arts of Aceh itself whether in accordance with the Sharia or not. Therefore it is necessary to first studies on various traditional arts products of Aceh to see how far the Islamic values are portrayed therein. Furthermore in the study of course involving Islamic religious experts in this case is the Aceh *ulama* council that at the same time can legitimize about the existence of traditional arts in Aceh so as not to reappear the various suspicions in the middle of society.

Already 72 years we live as an independent nation, but the independence of individuals and the independence of an ethnic group to express its arts seems to still be fought for its existence. In other words, the existence of Acehnese traditional arts currently experiencing life is reluctant but do not want to die. This situation will affect the feeling of lack of confidence in arts activities in the land of this mecca compared with some other places such as on the island of Java and Bali. Therefore it is necessary to revitalize the arts as a necessity in the midst of Aceh community post conflict and tsunami. This revitalization must still be in the Islamic corridor which believes that with our living religion will be more focused, with the science of our lives will be easier, and with the arts of our lives become beautiful. In other words, if these three aspects are explored further, it is likely to be a better resolution of the conflict than the political approach which has resulted in the creation of prolonged new conflicts.

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