

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE *BEUT DARÔH* AND *KENDURI KHATAM* TRADITIONS IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY OF BANDA ACEH CITY

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Received: 29/04/2022	Revised: 19/10/2022	Approved: 12/11/2022
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DOI: 10.32332/akademika.v27i2.4831



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Abstract

This research examined the issue of religious traditions in Aceh from the perspective of understanding and interpreting the *Quran*. The research focuses on the *beut darôh* tradition, which culminates with the ceremony of *kenduri khatam*. In essence, this indigenous Acehnese ritual has been practiced for a long time in Acehnese culture and is exclusively celebrated during the month of Ramadan. The aim of *beut darôh* is to color the night during Ramadan after the *tarawih* prayer is done in every mosque and *meunasah* (Muslim house of worship), frequently in the midst of rural communities. This ritual culminated at the end of Ramadan with the commemoration of the *kenduri khatam*. This closing ritual encompasses the entire community. Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh were the primary locations to observe this practice evolving and changing. This research begins with the question, "Why are the *beut darôh* and *kenduri khatam* traditions able to develop in the middle of urban Acehnese society?" This study employed qualitative methodologies, incorporating grounded research. The findings of the study indicate that the *beut darôh* and *kenduri khatam* traditions are perceived as part of the Acehnese people's religious identity and culture. *Beut darôh* is not only a custom of reading the *Quran* together, but it is also an educational space for learning the *Quran*. Meanwhile, the people of Aceh view *kenduri khatam* as a sign of thankfulness as well as a social space including religious relationships and local traditions. Nonetheless, the *beut darôh* tradition, which was originally prevalent in Aceh's village communities, gradually expanded and persisted in Aceh's urban communities. In practice, however, there are some distinctions between the *beut darôh* tradition in rural and urban Acehnese societies.

Keywords: *Al-Quran*, *Beut Darôh*, *Kenduri Khatam*, Local Culture, Urban Community.

A. Introduction

According to the historical record of Islam Nusantara, Aceh was the territory as well as the major entrance for the initial arrival of Islam. As narrated by Azra, Islam was brought directly by the preachers who taught Islam (Azra, 1999). Islam in Aceh underwent a process of acculturation and integration of values with local traditions and earlier beliefs (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Animism) during its development; this situation was referred to as the work of traditional Islamic groups (Marcus Mietzner & Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 2020). Various symbols in Aceh still bear traces of former religions, such as the toponymy of the names of several communities in Aceh Besar linked with Hinduism and Buddhism (Indrapuri, Indrapatra, and Indrapurwa). Furthermore, relics of ancient infrastructures, such as temples composed of stone constructions, can still be found, and their functions have been changed into mosques. Some historians and archaeologists suspected and claimed that the site was an imprint of Hindu and Buddhist heritage. Later on, the impact of earlier beliefs permeated the Acehese people's customs and rituals. One of them is in the *kenduri* tradition as a type of circle of life ceremony that was greatly influenced by local traditions. Furthermore, it was eventually assimilated into Aceh's customs and culture.

The Acehese *petitih* (*hadih madja*) described the close relationship between local customs and religion, noting that Islam and custom as traditions are like a strong character and form. As mentioned in the *petitih, adat bak poteu Meureuhom, hukom bak Syiah Kuala*, the evolution of Islam in Aceh has also constantly affected the power system in Aceh. Both are manifestations of the image of the connection between politics and religion, more especially between authorities and ulama (A. Ismail, 2009). Islam also has an impact on the face of Acehese religious education, which shapes identity. The most significant religious education for Acehese is to study the holy *Quran* from an early age. If a family member cannot read the *Quran*, it becomes taboo and frequently results in disgrace.

One way the Acehese show their appreciation for the *Quran* is by reciting it and demonstrating their ability to read it throughout Ramadan, especially at night. Almost all Aceh mosques (Aceh; *meunasah*), particularly in rural areas, perform *Quran* recitations until midnight, which are broadcast through loudspeakers. This is known as the *Meudarôh* or *Beut Darôh*. The term "*meudarôh*" is derived from the Arabic word "*tadarrus*". *Beut darôh* usually starts after the *Tarawih* prayer and lasts until before dawn. However, the people of Aceh have given this tradition a meaning as an identity to brighten up the night of Ramadan. Respect for this practice must be finished with a *kenduri* celebration known as *khanduri khatam darôh*.

According to the book "*Runtuhnya Gampong di Aceh*" (The Collapse of Gampong in Aceh), *kenduri* festivities and ceremonies in Acehese society cannot be understood as ordinary rites. Every *kenduri* has a specific meaning. *Kenduri* is ingrained as a value in all aspects of Acehese society. As a cultural tradition, every religious action always begins and ends with a *kenduri*. *Kenduri* is even incarnated as a need in all aspects of life (birth to death) (Afadlal, 2008). This ritual also applies to the *beut darôh* tradition, which ends with a *kenduri khatam darôh* (the closure of *tadarus*) as a sign of reverence for the Muslim holy book, which was revealed during the month of Ramadan.

This ritual was originally solely practiced in Aceh communities and villages. Nonetheless, the *beut darôh* and *kenduri khatam Darôh* traditions gradually spread and influenced Aceh's urban communities, such as Banda Aceh City. The application of *beut darôh* in Aceh's urban community differs from the rural *beut darôh* tradition. For example, reading the *Quran* over loudspeakers is not permitted until before dawn, and only groups of *Quran* readers who are well-established in their ability to read the

Quran based on correct *tajwid* (*Quranic* reading rules) are allowed to recite the *Quran* over the loudspeaker. This restriction does not apply in rural society, where everyone who can read the *Quran* can participate in *beut darôh*.

According to the aforementioned description, this study focuses on efforts to comprehend the significance of the *meudaroeh* and *kenduri khatam Qur'an* traditions in the context of Aceh's urban life. The purpose of this research is to observe and explain the development of the *meudaroeh* tradition from rural communities in Aceh to urban communities in Banda Aceh City. The main questions in this study are "why is the *beut darôh* tradition changing in Aceh's urban society, and what is the shape of the shift in the *beut darôh* tradition in Aceh's urban society?".

Many normative studies on the holy book of the *Quran* have been conducted, taking into account the existence of the *Quran* as a sacred scripture in an Islamic community. In Aceh, like in other Muslim countries, efforts to study the *Quran* and recopy the holy book have been ongoing for a long time, especially since Islam established its influence at the pinnacle of Aceh civilization during the reign of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam. The enormous number of handwritten copies of the *Quran* (read: manuscripts of the *Quran*) and the presence of the earliest Malay interpretation in Southeast Asia, *Turjumanul Mustafid*, penned by Shaykh Abdurrauf as-Singkily, demonstrate this condition (Azra, 1994; Fairusy, 2014).

Studies of the holy book of the *Quran* in Aceh can be discovered through many historical studies, such as philology through *Quranic* manuscripts and a series of Acehese historical documents that explain the existence of Islam as the Acehese identity. Many historical sources describe how Islam and the tradition of studying the *Quran* came to Aceh. Several academics had also conducted studies on local traditions that put the holiness of the *Quran* in the Acehese community, particularly those that pertain to the circle of life and *kenduri* (B. Ismail, 2019; Said, 1981; Snouck Hurgronje, 1985). However, it appears that the research on the shift of tradition in understanding the *Qur'an* based on culture is still severely limited.

Many studies on local culture and traditions in Aceh have also been conducted. One of them is research concerning how Islam has had a tremendous effect on Aceh's culture and the persistence of Aceh's culture in embracing Islam as an identity. In addition, Badruzzaman Ismail, one of Aceh's traditional leaders and writers of traditional traditions, undertook research on customs and culture. This Acehese traditional figure depicted Islam as a part of the Acehese cultural spirit and an essential identity in the Acehese civilization's development. Islam has an impact on almost every aspect of Acehese life, particularly the circle of life (Badruzzaman Ismail & et al, 2018; B. Ismail, 2019). Islam is the way of life of the Acehese people, like *Piil Pesenggiri* in Lampung, as described by Basyar, and has become a "...reflection and representation of the ethics and characteristics of the Lampung indigenous people." (Basyar et al., 2020a).

The holiness of the holy book, *al-Quran*, in Aceh is flanked by other sacred cultural traditions such as *kenduri*, which also has outstanding value for the Acehese people. The position of the holy book, *al-Quran*, will be recognized as one of the essential components associated with Aceh traditions such as *kenduri* in this research. This cultural event can be witnessed directly from the end of the Ramadan ritual of reading the *Quran*. These two keywords become the focal point of this study. *Kenduri*, as it is widely known, functions in Acehese culture to build social interaction and social solidarity, including the implementation of the *beut darôh* tradition, which is closed with a *kenduri khatam daroeh*. A German sociologist named Ferdinand Tönnies divided his notion into two parts: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.

Gesellschaft is described as a society, whereas Gemeinschaft is related to the concept of a group or association. Gemeinschaft, according to Tonnies, is a value-oriented, aspirational, role-playing, and occasionally habitual state that controls social dynamics. In the Gemeinschaft concept, the urge to relate is formed from inside the individual, and it is founded on similarities in desire and conduct. The individual resemblance is a reinforcing component of social ties in this situation, which is then reinforced by the presence of social relationships, which are then reinforced by the existence of emotional relationships and interactions between individuals. Gesellschaft is a concept that refers to the relationship between members of a community who have weak links. It can also apply to individuals that do not know each other, values, standards, and attitudes that cause them to behave inappropriately (Martono, 2012).

According to the two Tonnies' concepts, gemeinschaft appears to be more appropriate for describing the phenomena of *beut darôh* and *kenduri khatam Qur'an* in current Acehese society, particularly Acehese people who reside continuously in cities and villages. These two areas frequently carry out the *beut darôh* tradition and the *kenduri khataman* because of their rich social solidarity, morals, work equality, and social interactions wrapped in culture and local wisdom. Meanwhile, the author believes that the second Tonnies' notion is better relevant for social situations in urban (city) societies.

In terms of urban society, we can read about some of the experiences that were applied in society, such as what was done by the people of Campago Guguak Bulek Nagari in West Sumatra, who attempted to protect an economy based on local community traditions from the onslaught of the swift currents of the global market, even if in practice they still accepted things from outside but prioritized the filtering of local culture (Helfi et al., 2021). The same thing goes for the *kenduri khatam Quran* as a part of the local wisdom of the Acehese people that has been preserved until now.

This implies that there is a strong relationship between religion and local culture, which is interpreted by the community. Furthermore, this condition demonstrates the face of acculturation, in which Islam and local culture collaborate to form a heritage that can be supported collectively. As previously mentioned, if Islam and local culture in Aceh are linked to people's social activities, they are like two sides of an indivisible coin, both of which complement each other's roles (duality).

In his book "*Islam and Local Culture*", Lebba Kadorre Pongsibanne believes that a rule can be implemented if it has been recognized by previously existing customary law without contradiction. According to this reception theory, religion will be readily accepted by society if its teachings are not conflicting and have commonalities with the community's culture. Religion, on the other hand, will be rejected by the community if the community's culture differs from religious precepts (Pongsibanne, 2017).

On the other hand, a society's culture will be heavily impacted by the religion it practices. If religion has been accepted by the community, the religion will influence the community's cultural framework. These alterations can be fundamental (assimilation) or simply affect some aspects (acculturation) (Pongsibanne, 2017). This condition can be viewed in the context of Aceh's *khataman al-Quran* tradition.

Several prior studies had addressed social and religious culture connected to the completion (*khataman*) of the *Quran* based on the local point of view and culture that applied in each author's site in Indonesia. These studies were published in journals, books, articles, and other scientific works, such as Wirdanengsi's research entitled *Enculturation of Cultural Values in the Family in the Mandoa Khatam Al-Qur'an Tradition in the Balai Gurah Community, West Sumatra*. The other study was a study that was published in the same Journal with the same author entitled *Meaning and*

Traditions in the Series of Children's Khatam Qur'an Traditions in Nagari Balai Gurah, West Sumatra. She chose a slightly different notion but used the same setting, West Sumatra.

The other study was written by Lebba Kadore Pongsibanne; *Islam and Local Culture: An Anthropological Study*. The book's content emphasizes the study of culture and religion, as well as the acculturation of Islamic culture and religion. Due to the author's constraints, there may be further literature that the author has not mentioned. However, as far as the author was aware, no one has written the topic of *Kenduri Khatam Qur'an: Study of Local Wisdom of Acehese People Respecting and Understanding the Al-Quran*. Even if there is a study on this topic, it could be undertaken at a different place.

On page 253 of the book *Serambi Mekah yang Berubah*, written by Arskal Salim et al, it is discussed that *kenduri* of Death in South Kluet Aceh. The article studied the substantive meaning of *kenduri* of death in Kluet society. The authors viewed a parallel in the discussion, notably the *kenduri*. In the book, Geertz identified *kenduri* as one of the syncretic rituals in Muslim society in which local culture based on Hinduism added color to Islamic teachings (Salim & Sila, 2010).

To help readers comprehend *beut darôh*, the authors included several sources that illustrate the diverse traditions and civilizations that exist in Indonesia. One of the references is a book written by Sumanto Al-Qutuby and Izak Y.M Lattu entitled *The Tradition and Culture of Nusantara* discussing the distinctions and similarities between tradition and culture (Al Qurtuby & Lettu, 2019).

From another standpoint, the authors stated a book written by Alfian in 1977 entitled *Socio-Cultural Aspects of the Acehese Community*. The book is based on a study conducted in numerous Aceh residential areas employing grounded research methodologies. It stated how the socio-cultural that applies particularly to rural populations in Aceh, as well as diverse anthropologists' viewpoints, serves as the basic foundation for the overall success of scientific research (Alfian, 1977).

The authors' final reference for this research is a study undertaken by Anastasia Pudjutriherwanti et al, *Cultural Studies from Cultural Structuralism to Modern Orientalism*, which investigates the structure of culture as a civilization, cultural aspects, and contemporary complexities (Pudjutriherwanti et al., 2019). In this study, the existence of *beut darôh* is viewed in the context of current urban society in terms of living behavior.

B. Method

This study employed a descriptive and analytical approach, searching for a description of a situation with a grounded research method. Grounded research, as defined by Abdurrahman in his book *Study on Religion: Problems and Thoughts* is a qualitative method that enables researchers to do research without being constrained or seeking to verify the validity of a theory presented by experts (Sumardi & Dkk, 1982). Qualitative approaches usually emphasize individuals' perspectives and experiences, as well as how they make meaning of life. As a result, the participant is designated as a topic (emic) to be examined as a source of knowledge (Creswell, 2010).

This study followed qualitative research methods. Data were gathered through observation and in-depth interviews. Researchers also captured visual data by documenting photos which will be presented in this paper report. Before doing the field study, the researcher reviewed several works of literature on the notion of consensus and the culture of the group to be investigated. According to Strauss and Corbin, a grounded theory is a theory developed inductively from an investigation of

the phenomena it represents (Anselm & Juliet, 2005). As a result, this theory was discovered, gathered, and temporarily proven by systematic data collection and analysis of data that are relevant to the phenomena. Thus, data collection, analysis, and theory are inextricably linked. Researchers did not begin inquiries with a certain theory and then prove it, but they started with understanding a topic of study and objects linked to that field.

According to Abdurrahman, there is a strategy known as a constant comparison in the application of grounded research, which is the researcher's attempts to build categories and field conceptions based on the reality gained as an analytical development. As a result, this approach does not require random sampling guidelines, which are typically used in quantitative structural research, because there will be numerous analytical changes in the field.

Data collection starts from the observation as an effort to understand the phenomenon of the *khataman Quran* tradition as the focus of this research, as said by Jorgensen "...direct observation is the primary method of gathering information" (Jorgensen, 1989). The next data collection technique is an interview, which can be conducted without a plan (unstandardized interview) or with one (focused interview). This endeavor is planned to provide data, information, and perspectives about the Singkel families. The researcher lived with the community for several months to investigate the genuine situation as a sort of study consistency.

The researchers are outsiders and newcomers to society in this research setting. Thus, the initial step is to identify some key informants. In qualitative research, informants are the primary subject of knowledge sources. Spradley pointed out two criteria for selecting essential informants: 1) locals who comprehend and have significant experience, and 2) locals who can provide analysis and interpretation from the standpoint of folk theory (local concept) (Spradley, 1997). In this case, key informants refer to community leaders in the research setting.

Furthermore, during the data collection phase, the literature study becomes an inseparable aspect of the research. Before undertaking research and investigating community activities, researchers continue to study, particularly the culture of the locale to be examined. By conducting a literature study, researchers can gain a better understanding of local culture and the meaning of family for the people living on the border of the Aceh region. This study also employed a historical approach, as stated by Koentowijoyo, who argued that the advancement of history science must occasionally be combined with other interdisciplinary disciplines (Kuntowijoyo, 1994).

The importance of historical sources is in sorting out data that can be used and determining how to represent it in written form into a good historical writing approach that is neither speculative nor fantastical. Writing history always necessitates methodology and research as a reconstruction of scientific data, so that its existence does not become a myth and merely a tale.

The final step is data analysis using qualitative methodologies to answer research questions. Data analysis must be conducted with caution, forethought, and discretion. Data gathering and analysis must occur concurrently in qualitative research (Mariam 1998, Marshall and Rossman 1989 in (Creswell, 2010a)). Data analysis has been started since the research process began, and researchers must be astute, creative, and sensitive in selecting and sifting out essential data.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

The Tradition of *Beut Darôh* and *Kenduri Khatam al-Quran* in Acehese Society

Education and efforts to understand the *Quran* among the Acehese have started since they were children (Sufi et al., 2019). The integration of Islamic religious education for Acehese youngsters aims to discipline them in the future implementation of Islamic norms. The strictness of Islamic religious education in Aceh can be seen in the efforts of parents to provide religious understanding from an early age; if they do not have the time, it will be handed over to religious teachers who are considered to have the ability to help their children understand the *Quran* and Islamic teachings. Furthermore, religious education is no longer viewed as an option to regular education, but rather as a must. This situation also encourages the proliferation of Islamic religious education institutions in Aceh, such as *dayah* (Islamic boarding schools). Before *dayah* became the preferred method of education, *meunasah* was the primary site for religious education.

The coming of Ramadan month has also become a momentum for strengthening Islamic religious education in Aceh. Ramadhan is the most awaited month of the year for Acehese people, in addition to being the most sacred month. Certain customs, like *meudaroeh*, are only observed during this month. After the *Tarawih* prayer, practically all mosques and *meunasah* in Aceh hold the traditions of reading the holy book of the *Quran* in groups in the evening. This tradition will last until the end of Ramadan. In general, they employ loudspeakers, which cause the sound to reverberate extensively and imply that they are echoing at each other between the mosque and the *meunasah*. Nonetheless, when the *fatwa* on restricting loudspeakers was given by various ulama in Aceh, there was a time restriction for using microphones, which also impacted the *meudaroeh* tradition, because it may disrupt the tranquility of the people who were resting. Previously, it was done until Sahur, but today it is only finished in the middle of the night at 00.00 WIB.

The *beut darôh* tradition, which has been practiced in Aceh for a long time, is a means of reciting the holy *Quran* in a group setting. This tradition is carried out by men, particularly those of a decent age (*baligh*) in Islam. In Islam, this age is considered to be able to bear the burden of living independently and is obligated to obey Islamic law. In one of the *meunasah* in a rural area of Banda Aceh City, several youths were seen sitting with the elderly in the same circle taking turns reciting verses from the *Quran*. Abdullah, one of the participants, is 60 years old. Abdullah stated that he has followed the *beut darôh* tradition since he was a child at the time of Indonesia's independence. According to him, this local tradition is still carried out when the month of Ramadan comes.

There are social demands in the *beut darôh* tradition in the form of collective care, in which the community will take turns donating food to *beut darôh* participants who are willing to stay up all night at *meunasah* and mosques. This concern is expressed as a form of religious support to enliven the Ramadan nights by reading the *Quran* in *meunasah* and mosques. Every night, one of the owners of a coffee shop in Banda Aceh City claimed that he was requested with delivering coffee and cakes to the *beut darôh* participants. He explained that the bundle was a local community order. Thus, *beut darôh* is held with communal values and donations from the community, including the urban community of Banda Aceh City.

Not all participants who attended the mosque and *meunasah* during the implementation of *beut darôh* read the holy *Quran*. Some of the young people who

participated in this tradition simply enjoyed spending time with their friends and gathered together on the night of Ramadan. For example, if twenty teenagers attended the *meunasah* every night, only half were actively involved in *beut darôh* activity. The rest were merely a complement and preferred to lie down in the *meunasah* and mosque. This scene was unusual, but it was considered normal by *Beut Darôh* participants. The presence of their friends who did not read the holy *Quran* could enliven up the atmosphere and prevent boredom among *beut darôh* participants.

Asnawi Zainun (57), Chair of the Aceh Traditional Council of Aceh Besar District, described the implementation of *beut darôh* based on his teenage experiences. According to him, the word *meudaroeh* comes from the Arabic word *tadarus*, which means "to study." As a result, people gathered in the *meunasah* and the mosque at the time aiming to study the *Quran*. In practice, however, this tradition has become a unique local tradition in addition to studying the *Quran*. For example, in the past, the *meudaroeh* tradition was meant to put a newlywed who had just moved to his wife's village to test his ability to read the *Quran*. So the village youngsters would then pick up the bride and groom and took them to the *meunasah* and mosque, where they would be tested to read the *Quran*. If they could not, they would be punished by the satirical expressions (full of metaphors), which were frequently used by people in which they would be considered socially and religiously not good. In Aceh, using metaphor as a form of social punishment has become a tradition (Jarjani Usman & Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf, 2020).

According to Asnawi Zainun, *beut darôh* is only held during Ramadan. Outside of Ramadan, it is simply known as *meudaroeh*, rather than *beut darôh*. As a result, the phrase *beut darôh* is very specific in several places because it follows the presence of Ramadan in Aceh in the context of reading the *Quran*, which is done only at night in the *meunasah* and the mosque until dawn. If it is viewed in-depth, *beut darôh* can also be referred to as religious moderation that can adapt as a strategy to strengthen Islamic values (Muhammad Candra Syahputra & Idrus Ruslan, 2021).

Hamli Yunus (55 years old) has been practicing *beut darôh* for many years in Banda Aceh's urban community. Hamli is also a well-known reciter in Aceh and has performed at an international level. The holy book of the *Quran* has special features for Hamli. People, especially Acehnese, are not offended if *Quran* verses are read late at night. He, however, agrees to follow the fatwa of ulama in Aceh, which prohibits using loudspeakers until *sahur*. It is also essential to respect the rights of other people who wish to rest and are not disturbed by the sound of the microphone. Compliance with not using loudspeakers generally applies only in Banda Aceh's urban community, while it can continue until *sahur* in rural areas.

Faizal Ardiansyah (58), a religious teacher in Banda Aceh's urban community, explained that the *Quran* has unique features. As a result, it can be quickly accepted by the Muslim population; additionally, the messages are so touching because it contains theological messages and spiritual strengthening for the readers, while also functioning as a medium of education, including in the cultural space (Asep Supriatna et al., 2022; Basyar et al., 2020b). Faizal Ardiansyah believed that *beut darôh* participants frequently feel psychologically comfortable. The participants interpreted this condition as a miracle possessed by the *Quran*. This holy book has also maintained its originality since its revelation, with no changes. As a result, it is common in Aceh, a Muslim-majority society, to prioritize the *Quran* in the *Beut Darôh* tradition.

The *beut darôh* tradition frequently transforms. According to several Acehnese social researchers, the long-running conflict in Aceh has resulted in radical changes for the Acehnese people, including the waning of the *meunasah* function, which is the

main basis for the implementation of *beut darôh* (Mujib et al., 2014). *Meunasah* becomes a center for religious and social activities for all Acehnese people, including the continuation of the centuries-old *beut darôh* tradition, as well as *dayah*, the foundation of Islamic education in Aceh “a unique traditional Islamic boarding school in Aceh” (Usman et al., 2021). Since the political conflict in Aceh, the *beut darôh* tradition has lain dormant and has not functioned as it does now. This condition has lasted nearly three decades.

This tense political situation had a wide-ranging impact on the implementation of Aceh's local traditions, including *beut darôh*. One of the impacts, as previously stated, was the passiveness of the *meunasah* which used to be a very useful place for the cadre of Aceh's young generation to understand Islamic religious education, including learning to read the Quran. According to some Acehnese traditional leaders, *meunasah* was a place for the development of Islamic education in Aceh. The word *meunasah* refers to the Arabic word - *madrrasah* (a place of learning), which has been used by the Acehnese since ancient times as a place for the development of education, including the development of the holy book of the *Quran* through the *beut darôh* tradition.

2. Discussion

The Transformation of the *Meudaroeh* Tradition in Aceh's Urban Society

The time was 23:05 WIB, midnight. The sound of reading the holy verses of the *Quran* could be clearly heard from the courtyard of the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, the pride of the Acehnese people. It echoed throughout Aceh as if it was spreading. Several selected reciters (male *Quran* readers) appeared to finish their recitation of the holy book of the *Quran* inside the Dutch mosque. Their activities were documented in a photograph. During their break, they mentioned how the *beut darôh* tradition was implemented differently in Aceh's cities and villages.

The leader of the *beut darôh* group, Hamli Yunus (50), explained that there are differences in the implementation of this local tradition in Aceh's cities and villages. According to Hamli Yunus, there are significant differences. *beut darôh* is carried out with care in a city, an urban community base, beginning with the selection of the reciters, so that the *Quran* is read correctly based on the prevailing *Tajwid* rules. In the village, *beut darôh* is interpreted as simply reviving Ramadan's night. Some disregard the rules of *Tajwid* and read the *Quran* without rhythm; even some of the younger generations were assumed to be incapable of reading the *Quran* properly and correctly. In the city, *al-Quran* learning groups are growing rapidly, particularly in Banda Aceh. This condition heightens the excitement of *beut darôh* night. The participants can read the *Quran* extremely well. According to Hamli Yunus, who frequently travels around Aceh to fulfill an invitation to read the *Quran*, the *Quranic* recitation by people in the village are still found many mistakes in terms of pronunciation and *tajwid*.

Hamli Yunus is a reciter who has long served to foster the art of reading the *Quran* at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque (MRB), particularly in urban communities such as Banda Aceh. He admitted that *beut darôh* is an Acehnese religious tradition that incorporates the *Quran* and Ramadan as a holy month. Nonetheless, according to his observations, the *Beut Darôh* tradition in Aceh, particularly in the urban community of Banda Aceh, has undergone a series of transformations following the pace of social change in urban society. The presence of loudspeakers is one of the significant components that distinguishes Banda Aceh's urban community from the village. Amid urban society, the use of loudspeakers is restricted until midnight. Furthermore, *beut darôh* participants are selected groups and individuals who can read the holy book.

They must obtain authorization to perform *beut darôh* in mosques, particularly in urban mosques such as those in Banda Aceh City.

Banda Aceh City's implementation of *beut darôh* differs from other districts in Aceh, particularly in certain mosques. Mosque administrators deliberately choose those who can recite the *Quran* at night during Ramadan (*beut darôh*). Many great mosques in the Banda Aceh community, such as the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque and the Harun Geuchik Leumiek Mosque, are very consistent in implementing *Beut Darôh*. These two mosques are icons of Banda Aceh. Baiturrahman Grand Mosque is a historic mosque that has become a source of pride for the Acehnese people as well as a witness to the battle with Dutch colonials. The Harun Geuchik Leumiek Mosque, which has drawn the attention of the Acehnese public in the last two years due to its appearance, is also a new mosque built by an Acehnese gold businessman. The structure is very elegant, reminiscent of the magnificent mosques of the Middle East. Nevertheless, this mosque has now become a new religious destination. Many couples want to marry in this mosque because it is considered as the most desirable place to begin a new life. *Al-Quran* recitation is a popular pastime at the Harun Geuchik Leumiek Mosque. The activity is not only *beut darôh*, but also massive recitations (*Haflah*) with national reciters are frequently held here.

Participants in the *beut darôh* at these two mosques, which are icons of Banda Aceh's urban mosque, are carefully chosen by the mosque management. According to one of the HGL Mosque's administrators, the selection is extremely competitive. In contrast to the *beut darôh* tradition in the villages, those who perform *beut darôh* in Banda Aceh City's urban mosque are also compensated by the mosque management. As a result, there is a radical transformation of this tradition amid urban society, where *beut darôh* is no longer defined as a local tradition of voluntarily reading the *Quran*, as it still occurs in rural Aceh. *Beut darôh* can be viewed as a later profession for a small group of al-*Quran* readers who have mastered the art of reading the *Quran* (recitations). However, reading the *Quran* is a privileged profession in Aceh because their services are frequently used in many activities that require reading the *Quran* at the beginning of activities and events.

In essence, the same thing applies to the *kenduri khataman* at the Banda Aceh urban mosque, where the tradition appears to be different. For example, at the Harun Geuchik Leumiek Mosque, the committee arrange a *Quran* memorizing activity by inviting several reciters from outside Aceh to liven up the night of *khataman*. On the last night of *khataman*, they will perform by reading the holy verses of the *Quran* along with the rhyme of recitations. This event is entirely free and open to the public. Those interested in seeing the performance are welcome to visit the mosque. In the context of Aceh's urban community, the form of *khataman* with *haflah* (commemoration) is a transformation in the *Beut Darôh* tradition. This had never happened before in the *khataman* tradition, especially in the village. The *meudaroeh* tradition is only closed with the implementation of the *kenduri khataman* which is followed by a fasting break together and attended by the surrounding village community.

However, the *kenduri khatam* is still implemented based on voluntary values and principles in rural area, with community support, such as providing donations and food for those who break their fast together. Even though it is located alongside Banda Aceh as an urban area, one of Banda Aceh's villages, Lampermai, still adheres to traditional principles. At *meunasah*, some *beut darôh* participants are performing the traditional *kenduri khataman*. The *kenduri khatam* organizing committee acknowledges that this activity is voluntary and applies to all sites that celebrate *khataman*.

The cultural circumstance of the local community, which differs from the people in the village, influences the transformation of the *beut darôh* tradition in Aceh's urban society. Although there is a structural role that has contributed to the emergence of transformation through the fatwa of one Acehnese religious leader (Ulama) who issued the standpoint that it is forbidden to carry out the *beut darôh* tradition using loudspeakers until before dawn because it is considered to be disturbing the community's comfort, the influence of this fatwa only applies to urban communities. Many *beut darôh* participants in non-urban areas disregard this fatwa. Some people keep the tradition going until *Sahur*. Some people use loudspeakers, while others do not. According to several *Beut Darôh* participants, the meaning of the time limit was simply a matter of setting the loudspeaker, rather than the tradition of reading the *Quran* with a time limit. As a result, the *beut darôh* tradition cannot be limited or hindered by fiqh reasons, because it has become a community tradition.

Interpreting the Meaning of *Beut Darôh* and *Kenduri Khatam* Traditions in Aceh's Urban Community.

The *beut darôh* tradition, which is held during the night of Ramadan and closed with the *kenduri khataman*, is a local tradition that has been structured in Acehnese society. This custom is carried out in almost every *meunasah* and mosque in Aceh. The implementation of the *Beut Darôh* tradition will reach its peak at the celebration of the *kenduri khatam Quran*. The community deliberately cuts a cow or buffalo cooked in a large pot (Aceh; *beulangoeng* sauce), which is served as the culinary identity of the community in every great cultural ritual.

If *beut darôh* is held at night, the *khatam al-Quran* is celebrated during the day while waiting for *iftar*. *Kenduri Khatam* is typically held at the end of Ramadan. It is usually closed by breaking the fast together and inviting people from other villages. The implementation of *beut darôh* and *beut darôh* is very lively in Aceh Besar, an urban suburb of Banda Aceh, because this tradition becomes part of the local community's identity. The committee usually distributes a portion of curry sauce coupons to the community in order to regulate the distribution of curry sauce that is cooked together.

Each family will use the coupon to obtain a curry prepared by the committee at the *meunasah* or mosque. The committee will usually announce over loudspeakers that the villagers need to bring the food container for the curry. So, after the *dhuhur* prayer, people come to the *meunasah* and mosque, carrying coupons and containers for the curry sauce. The containers are then arranged in a row near the large cauldron in which the curry is cooked. The committee will fill the container with curry sauce, then the community will take it home.

After the afternoon, those who decided to donate *iftar* snacks will return to the *meunasah* and mosque with an *iftar* package that includes Acehnese dishes. Invitations usually come from other villages to enliven the *meunasah* in the village that undertakes the *kenduri khataman*. This *kenduri* tradition is carried out lively in every village in Aceh. During the celebration of *kenduri khataman*, newlyweds who live in one of the villages will be required to bring special and separate dishes to the *meunasah* and mosque.

Acehnese people perceive *Beut Darôh* and *Kenduri khataman* as sacred religious identities. This cultural event is more than just a celebration of local heritage traditions; it is also a symbol of social integration. The relationship between the holy book of the *Quran* and the *kenduri khataman* is shown here, as the two most sacred elements in Acehnese society, and is held during Ramadan. In Aceh, the *khataman* tradition is always passed down from generation to generation. This tradition is revered because it

incorporates three sacred elements (the holy book, *kenduri*, and the month of Ramadan). However, as described in this study, there are shifts and differences in *Beut Darôh* and *kenduri khatam* implementation among people in rural and urban Aceh communities.

D. Conclusion

Beut darôh is a local tradition that combines Islamic teaching with local norms. This tradition is deeply ingrained in Acehnese society and has influenced Aceh's urban communities. *Beut darôh*, like other major traditions in Aceh, must be closed with a *kenduri khataman* to show respect and to implement rituals directly related to the revelation of the holy book *Al-Quran* in the month of Ramadan. This tradition began in the villages and then spread to Aceh's urban communities, particularly Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar, which were the study's locations. The *kenduri khataman* is celebrated at the end of Ramadan in every village in the two areas occupied by this urban group.

Beut darôh is more than just a symbol of Muslims honoring the *Quran* as their holy book during Ramadan. In this tradition, respect for the *Qur'an* and the month of Ramadan as a historical tradition for the people of Aceh is emphasized. The *beut darôh* tradition is interpreted by urban Acehnese who lives in Banda Aceh as one of the places for the development of religious education, particularly in the education of the holy book of the *Quran*. *Beut darôh* is also an important space for reciters in Banda Aceh. This ritual tends to be masculine, because it is hegemonized by men. The *beut darôh* tradition shows the existence of men in the *meunasah* room as a place for their growth and development from a long time ago. *Beut darôh* was originally interpreted as a place to test the religious eligibility of an Acehnese man who had chosen to become a village resident from the marriage process, particularly the ability to read the *Quran*.

Beut darôh, as a tradition, undergoes transformation in its application, particularly in the context of urban society. One of the changes is the prohibition of using loudspeakers at midnight, which is thought to disrupt other people's sleep. The ulama pays serious attention to *beut darôh* because its implementation in some places could disrupt other communities, such as the fatwa prohibiting the use of loudspeakers by traditional ulama in Aceh.

Meanwhile, in the urban community of Banda Aceh City, the implementation of *beut darôh* is shifting, such as selecting participants based on their artistic ability to read the *Quran* (recitations), awarding fees to participants, and limiting the time for using loudspeakers. This situation differs from the village's implementation of *beut darôh*, which adheres to the old tradition (pattern). Anyone, regardless of ability to read the *Quran* or rhythm skills, can attend and participate in the *beut darôh* event. Besides, their consumptions are supported collectively by the community. Finally, a transformation that exists in the *beut darôh* tradition, particularly during the celebration of the *khataman Quran*, is that several mosques in the urban community of Banda Aceh, in order to close the *meudaroeh* tradition, not only carry out the *kenduri*, but also invite reciters from outside to carry out *haflah* that can be seen by the general public.

E. Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, which funded the completion of this research. A million thanks are also extended to all participants who provided data and assisted in the successful completion of this research.

F. Author Contributions Statement

This study was carried out by a collaborative team, with MA contributing to the idea of conducting research and writing the background and research methods, MI assisting in collecting field data and writing initial research reports, and DA assisting in writing some literature reviews. At the end of the study, MA, MI, and DA assisted each other in analyzing the data and drawing adequate conclusions.

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