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THE RITUAL CALENDAR OF SOUTH ACEH, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research explores the relations between the so-called normative Islam-as laid down in the canonical texts of the Qur'an and hadith-and the ways in which these normative ideas, perceptions and values are expressed in rituals in the society concerned. It pays particular attention to the ways in which the latter forms of ritual expression entail a culturally specific adaptation and valorization of the trans-cultural representations laid down in these Islamic text corpora and to the ways in which-according to local understanding and exegesis-these ritual actions generate a reproduction of the social relationships and their moral foundation in the society concerned. In-depth discussions had been conducted with the participants about the symbols, meanings and values, which they attach to these actions as to their effectiveness in achieving particular social, religious, political and moral aims besides a systematic survey of relevant published sources has complemented this field research. The meticulous examination of the village ritual calendar shows that three different perspectives on this social and moral order prevail: a traditional adat perspective, the historical Islamic perspective, and the modernist Islamic perspective. This attributes to Aneuk Jamee a complex dynamic socio-religious identity within the field of Indonesian cultures.¹

Keywords: *Ritual, Aneuk Jamee, Ritual Calendar of South Aceh*

¹ This article is the summary of my PhD dissertation.

A. Introduction

Islam can be divided into two forms: normative Islam and historic Islam. Normative Islam is what is described in the Qur'ān (the revelation of Allāh), the *hadīth* or *sunnah*, the '*ulamā'* interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Historic Islam is what has been practiced by Muslims at ritual and social levels in various societies (Denny 1985: 77; Rahman 1985: 189; Nur 1996:3). Different terms are employed to indicate this distinction. Eickelman (1976) used the term "formal" for normative Islam and "informal" for historic Islam. Waardenburg (1979) employed the term "official" for normative Islam and "popular Islam" for historic Islam. Normative Islam may also be called "universal" or orthodox Islam, while "local" or "heterodox" Islam are terms which refer to historic Islam.

In general, "formal Islam" is understood to include beliefs and practices which are validated in Islamic law and which refer to the "reflective" or "explicit" ideology of the educated as articulated by religious scholars. Beliefs and practices which deviate from Islamic law are labelled "informal Islam" and refer to "unreflective" or "implicit" ideologies of the mostly uneducated masses (Butelaar 1993; Nur 1996). The two manifestations of Islam can be explained by the fact that Islamic scholars are concerned with the Qur'ān, the *sunnah* and their interpretation at the expense of everyday religious understanding and practices. The main topic of discussion for them is the question of how to understand the texts of religious tradition properly: the Qur'ān, the *hadīth* and the commentaries on each (Nur 1996: 3).

Unlike Islamic scholars, anthropologists who study Islam focus on locally distinctive traditions and less on the religiously shared traditions. The anthropologists who are concerned with local forms of culture study what is quintessentially characteristic of a particular people or region, such as the rites, myths and the representations (Bowen 1993:5). The anthropologists refer to the way of life of people, in all its variations, as their culture; they translate cultures and their premises to make them understandable in terms anthropologists' ideas (Rosman & Rubel 2004: 1).

They generally show a preference for the uniqueness in Islamic cultures, paying particular attention to religious practices and views which

deviate from doctrinal prescriptions (Denny 1985). They also attempt to juxtapose the particular cultures in order to show the variability and mutability of religious ideas across the Muslim world, as in Geertz's (1968) comparison of very different forms taken by Islamic mysticism in Java and Morocco. He has placed in the forefront the features of cultural life that distinguish between these cultures and their religion. Ritual activities such as acts of prayer, sacrifice, fasting etc are by and large left to those specialists interested in the "high culture" of Islam. "The point of departure for many anthropologists has been the social life of religious discourse: how written texts and oral traditions are produced, read and reread to close the gap between the decontextualized reading of normative texts, on the one hand, and an ethnographic approach that paid close attention to the social life of texts, on the other" (Bowen 1993:7).

Rituals (Jamee [Jam] *kanduri*; Acèhnese [Ach] *khanduri*),² religious ceremonies consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order, are the core of the social identity of all communities. Every society will vary in its view of what is ritual and what is not. Ritual is defined with the emphasis on the ceremonial aspect, with attention to emotional meaning, with regard to repetitions (Rappaport 1999), or formalized activities without words while words without action are myths (Parkin 1994:18). Rituals are about the expression of a wish or a fact in symbolic form. In other words, "they refer to another reality behind the directly observable one". "Rituals are a form of communication about deeper values, norms and relationships. Rituals bring society together as they manifest with each individual the feeling of the dependence and strength gained from membership and participation in the social group" (Durkheim 1915).

To broadly summarise the theory on ritual, the scholars note rituals as communicating [ritual says something to its participants] and clarifying social reality, as well as actually establishing it.

² The Acèhnese sometimes say *kenduri*, *kanduri*, *kawuri*, *kauri*, *kenuri* and *kanuri* instead of the word *khanduri*. *Khanduri* (Indonesian [Indon] *kenduri*) is a popular Islamic term in Southeast Asia, indicating a ritual meal given for a number of occasions. Islamic prayers and blessings are often part of the *khanduri* and include Islamic elements to the ritual meal in order to make it essentially an Islamic festivity (Federspiel 1995: 125).

Any ritual can be placed in one of two major categories: calendrical rites and life-crisis rites (Alland 1980: 468). The calendrical rites follow a fixed schedule, whereas life-crisis rites simply occur when the need arises. Based on the ideal that “the study of ritual is the study of actual behaviour as it is the mastery of ideal form” (Denny 1985: 77; Nur 1996: 4), I attempt in this ethnographic research to convey the ideas and values expressed by the Aneuk Jamee Muslims in performing Islamic calendrical rituals in South Acèh. I observe that these rituals were more rigorously performed after the tsunami had struck Acèh on December 26th, 2004. I argue that the close observation and comparative analysis of these rituals enable us to interpret the ways in which the Aneuk Jamee society in West Labuhan Haji district react upon and valorize the historical and contemporary events that occur amongst them.

B. Method

The field researches were conducted by means of participant observation as the principal method of this empirical study. Participant observation method means that the researcher is involved directly with the community in order to observe and document people’s activities. Besides a meticulous observation of the ritual actions and the library research mentioned earlier, I also used in-depth interviews, discussions, recording and audio-visual registrations with the main protagonists of the ritual performance as an instrument to gather information. All interviews were conducted in the Acèhese language (my mother tongue), Indonesian (my national language), and the Jamee language (local language).

For interviews conducted in Jamee language-spoken by some members of the population the assistance of a local interpreter had to be solicited. The interviews and discussions enabled me to communicate with a large number of people in West Labuhan Haji district, and to explore the meanings, symbols, and values people attach to these calendrical rituals, the ways in which their ritual practices are embedded in the local world view.

C. Research Finding

The calendrical rituals on which this research focuses are the following:

1) The ritual of *‘āsīyūrā*, lasting for one to three days, and taking place at the

beginning of the Islamic New Year, Muharram. 2) The ritual of *tulak bala* lasting one day in the month of Safar. 3) The ritual of *mò lôt*, one to seven days in the month of Rabiul Awwal or Rabiul Akhir or Jumadil Awwal. 4) The ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèë*, performed for one to three days in the month of Jumadil Akhir. 5) The ritual of *khanduri apam* on the night of the *israk mikrāj* celebration, conducted for one to seven days in the month of Rajab. 6) The ritual of *khanduri bu* performed during the month of Sya'ban, including *khanduri beureu'at*, *peuglèh meunasah*, *meugang* and *pajoeh-pajoeh*. 7) The ritual of Ramadhan in the whole month of Ramadhan. 8) The ritual of *uroe raya puasa*, lasting one to three days in the beginning of Syawwal. In addition, the ritual of *teumuntuak* is also discussed in this context, and finally 9) The ritual of *uroe raya haji* performed for one to three days in the month of Zulhijjah, the last month of the Islamic year (see figure 1).

Figure 1. The ritual calendar of South Acèh

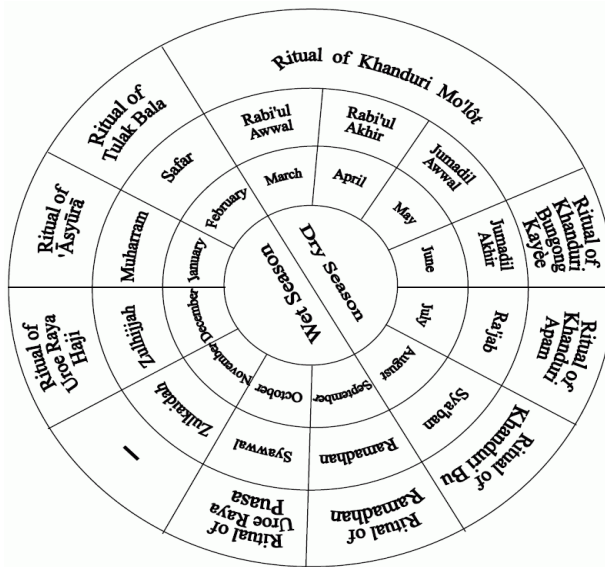


Figure 1 shows a concordance between the lunar and the solar calendar due to the fact that in the years 2007-2008 they coincided. These rituals constitute in their totality the annual ritual cycle and are the foundation of the socio-religious order of the society of South Acèh. Although Muslims in all Islamic societies recognise these rituals, to some

extent, the meaning of such rituals varies from one society to another, and this variation, of course, is related to the socio-cultural background of each society.

D. Discussion

The society of the Aneuk Jamee is composed of people who mostly originate from Minangkabau, West Sumatra. During their settlement in the southern and western coast of Acèh over the last hundred years, some of them have mingled with other migrants who, for the most part, were descendants of inhabitants from the region of Acèh. During this long period of separation from their native Minangkabau area and due to geographic circumscription, they found that certain dimensions of their inherited culture were changing. In addition, the joining of two different traditions in that area – the Acèhnese *adat* and the Minangkabau *adat* – has resulted in a mutual giving and receiving of aspects of each respective *adat*. Aspects of the Acèhnese's *adat* were incorporated into that of the Aneuk Jamee since the southern and western coast of Acèh has always been a part of Acèh's sphere of influence. These factors cannot be ignored in understanding the changes taking place within the Aneuk Jamee society.

In chapter 2, the Aneuk Jamee cosmology revealed that there are categories of cosmological beings interacting with the living. The Aneuk Jamee believes that the universe consists of two interconnected parts: the visible and the invisible. Human beings live on the visible level, while God and spiritual beings, such as *malaikat* (angels), *iblis* (devils), *syètan* (Satan) and *jinn* (genies), exist on the invisible level. Both levels are interrelated and they interact through the belief and rules given by God. The Aneuk Jamee idea of God derives entirely from Islam.

However, *malaikat* are believed to act as intermediaries between the divine world and the human world working at the command of Allāh. Belief in *malaikat* is closely connected to the belief in other spiritual beings such as *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* and *makhluk halus*. The two realms are opposed but complementary so that each makes the other understandable and acceptable. *Malaikat*, *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* have their roots in the Qur'ān but *makhluk halus* do not. Although the Aneuk Jamee believe and maintain that *makhluk halus* are part of the spirits

that have their original roots in the Qur'ān, it may be argued that these beliefs are maintained and derived from a pre-Islamic Aneuk Jamee socio-cosmological view of the universe that has been integrated into the local Muslim belief system. As detailed information about these spiritual beings is incomplete and speculative, their nature, essence and actions are described differently by different people.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the Aneuk Jamee system of kinship is expressed and enacted during life-cycle rituals such as weddings, circumcisions, and funerals. In addition, *hari rayo idul fitri*, the celebration at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan and *hari rayo haji*, the celebration of the "feast of sacrifice" are the media through which kinship connections are acknowledged. The recognition of consanguineal kinship is limited to three descending and three ascending generations. Beyond these boundaries, kin are not terminologically acknowledged. In addition, the recognition of kinship is "horizontal" rather than "vertical", in that an apical ancestor is not the point of orientation rather it is siblingship. Relatives are commonly distinguished as close or distant, but seldom with precision. The descendants of a single grandparent usually regard one another as close, but the descendants of siblings of grandparents are distant and can be forgotten. The farthest back the kinship reckoning goes is to say that "our ancestors (*muyang/moyang*) are siblings", rather than identifying the relationship between persons as descendants of a linking ancestor. In other words, the Aneuk Jamee tends to say that, "We descend from siblings".

The order of birth is an important principle for the relationships between siblings and the orientation in time is a main principle for ordering the relations among siblings. The children's absolute order of birth is not subordinated to the order of birth of their respective parents. Therefore, this principle cannot be spoken of as an "inherited" one. The children do not take on their respective parents' birth order and are not subordinated under their parents' age but depend on the order of their own respective moment of birth. Absolute age, therefore, can be identified as a main structuring principle for the relationships among parents' siblings' children. The children designate their parents' siblings according to their relative age and respect the order of birth of

their parents' generation. Hence the orientation in time is a main characteristic of their relationship. Not only is the relative age important to this relationship, but also a gender specific distinction is made clear.

The ritual of marriage described in chapter 4 demonstrates that the authority in conducting a marriage relationship does not derive from the patrilineal relatives (*wali hukum*) but from the matrilineal ones (*niniak mamak*). Patrilineal relatives do not seem to play a significant role in the establishment of affinity. Most parts of the ritual are performed by *niniak mamak* of both the bride and groom. Never are a bride and groom represented by *wali hukum*. *Niniak mamak* are responsible for the marriage; most ritual transactions are performed by them. The siblings of the bride and groom are not given any formal roles in the wedding ceremony.

The Aneuk Jamee wedding is accompanied by an elaborate series of gift exchanges between the groom's parents and the bride's. Apart from the transfer of money and jewelry, the gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's called *hantaran* are goods such as cloth, cosmetic products, fruit, toilet articles, trinkets, etc. These gifts are reciprocated by the bride's side to the groom's. These are not distinguished by special terms but consist of cooked food which is prepared by women in the kitchen. The notion of marriage for the Aneuk Jamee is, therefore, significant in understanding the domestic life of the Aneuk Jamee society. The wife provides the home as well the cooked food for the husband. This exchange is conceptualized as a relation between the host (wife) and the guest (husband).

Chapter 5 discusses the ritual of *khanduri 'asyūrā* performed on the tenth day of the first lunar month, Muḥarram (i.e. January). The people associate the events of Muḥarram and *'āsyūrā* with different mythical contexts. Some stress the myth of Husén, others stress the myth of Moses and Pharaoh and some others stress the myth of Noah's ark. The myth of Noah, in particular, is important because it was deemed to be the occasion when the first porridge was cooked. The Blangporoh villagers cook the porridge and celebrate having been saved from the deluge by Allāh. This ritual consists of four activities: 1) Preparing the *'āsyūrā* porridge commemorating the first meal consumed after the ark ran aground; 2) Observing the *tasu'a* (fasting on the ninth day) and the *'āsyūrā* (fasting on the tenth day) of the Muḥarram month; 3) Caressing the orphans' head and; 4) Performing

the *'āsyūrā* prayer. The interpretations of the meaning and the value of distributing *'āsyūrā* porridge in the ritual of *'āsyūrā* are twofold. Firstly, the ritual has a social meaning and value, in that it strengthens the community ties by cooking the *'āsyūrā* porridge and by sharing it.

The villagers offer the *'āsyūrā* porridge to be distributed to neighbors, next-of-kin and people who pass through the community on that day. Secondly there is the religious meaning and value, that is the merit that one receives from Allāh when one performs the ritual of *'āsyūrā*. One does it for one's fellow people, for one's community and because Allāh saved Noah and his followers and Moses and his followers. The religious merit received from performing this ritual is meant to be transferred to Hasan and Husén, the martyred grandchildren of the Prophet Muḥammad, while begging Allāh to forgive their sins and allow them a "wide grave", that is, to release them from torment.

Chapter 6 shows how the ritual of *tulak bala* ("warding off calamity") is celebrated annually on the last Wednesday of the second lunar month of Safar (February). During this period there is an interdiction on house building, on performing marriage rituals etc. Accidents, epidemics and disasters are believed to occur during this month and particularly on the last Wednesday which is considered inauspicious. Such catastrophic events are attributed to Satan and other evil supernatural beings attacking human beings and cattle.

The ritual of *tulak bala* performed during this Safar month is therefore considered crucially important to ward off all kinds of evil and misfortune by strengthening the social relations among the people. On this day young men and women as well as the elderly hold a social gathering at the seashore or at a river bank. They bring various kinds of food with them and entertain themselves by singing to the accompaniment of guitar music. On the actual day of the ritual, some young men play football, and then take a bath in the river or in the sea called *manoe sapha*. This ritual bath may have been originally a secular bathing festivity providing an opportunity for the nubile young men and women to see and to get to know each other. It would also seem possible that such a festivity might well have been part of Jamee traditions before it was endowed with an Islamic significance.

It is, however, worth mentioning that most performances of the *tulak bala* ritual in Blangporoh have changed as culture in the coastal area is more open to foreign influences. This change is also caused by the rigorous criticism from the local modernists and 'ulamā', claiming that constructing a banana raft with offerings placed on it and then releasing it to the sea or river on the day of *tulak bala* is a pre-Islamic act. Therefore, at present, the recreational aspect is stressed more than the ritual aspect.

The ritual of *khanduri mo'lot* "the ritual celebrating the Prophet's Muḥammad birthday" described in chapter 7 held either in the *mò'lot* month (on or after the 12th day of Rabī' al-Awwal - the third month of the year (March) or in one of the two following months (April and May). It is performed in light of generating happiness manifested in the society as a whole that participate in all aspects of the *khanduri* so that the more abundant the *khanduri* [food] is, the more happiness that is felt and displayed. The recitation of the *diké mò'lot* consists of appeals to Allāh to give the highest dignity to the Prophet, his ancestors and descendants and to give merit to his companions, his followers, participants and to all Muslims. The *diké mò'lot* is recited because people believe that the 'spirit' (Indon *roh*) of the Prophet and his companions are present with them. Reciting the *diké mò'lot* is considered the same as praying for the Prophet's well-being in order to get 'help' (*syafā'ah*) from him in the hereafter in return. For these reasons, many villagers are willing to go into serious debt in order to be able to join in the communal meal and at the same time to celebrate the Prophet's birth, for the social commensality is always embedded in the wider cosmological frame. Nonetheless, the orthodox 'ulamā' find the inclusion of any food on this occasion to be dangerous, misleading people into seeing religious events as self-interested spiritual transactions, when in fact they should be primarily an act of obedience to Allāh.

In performing this ritual, the performers various intentions may have different valorizations. The *khanduri mò'lot* at the family and village level are not just perceived as a commemorative celebration but also as a part of several exchange relationships and the villagers have different

interpretations of the various parts of the ritual. These interpretations range from understanding their actions as prayers to Allāh, to generating merit for the 'soul' (*roh*) of deceased family members by bringing offerings to the mosque, to allowing angels to enjoy a meal offered on this occasion. The 'ulamā', however, object to these interpretations as they also object to the interpretation of *mò'lot* as a *khanduri*, and during didactic lectures they may express a disdain for including the distribution and the consumption of food in the ritual. In their view, Muslim holidays are primarily about remembering and celebrating events in Islamic history, conforming to the historical example set by the Prophet and demonstrating obedience to Allāh through worship, fast, and sacrifice.

Chapter 8 is devoted to the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèè* "the ritual for flowering trees". It is performed especially for fruit bearing trees such as *nephelium*, *lansium*, mango, and so forth in Jumadil Akhir (June) to protect the fruition of the trees from the southern wind and from flashes of lightning. It aims at ensuring that Allāh will take care that the trees will bear fruit, the blossoms will not fade and fall onto the ground prematurely and that the trees will not be attacked by diseases but will benefit human beings. The ritual is closely connected with the idea that the winds cause the trees to blossom. Such winds are classified into four kinds: the northern wind, regarded as "cold", the southern wind regarded as "hot"; the eastern wind regarded as "patient"; and the western wind as "strong". Each wind has its own function for the trees. The eastern wind functions as fertilizer for the tree; the northern wind strengthens the tree roots; the western wind will make the tree bear blossoms; while the southern wind can make the tree blossoms fade and fall to the ground. If the wind does not shake the trees, the trees will not bear blossom. When the western wind blows, the tree trunks shake and their branches rub each other. As a result the hollow spaces in the tree trunks are opened and the wind penetrates the tree trunks causing the trees to bloom. Therefore, the villagers say that the western wind is the "husband of the tree", just like the "husband of the turtle is the southern wind" because "if the southern wind blows the female turtles lay eggs".

Even when performing the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèè*, it may still happen that the trees do not blossom, that is, that the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees has not been safeguarded. For there are several further requirements for the fertility of the fruit bearing trees: it is dependent upon collective ritual action, the “mercy” of Allāh, the actions of jinn, fair political leadership, and respecting the *adat* rules particularly concerning exogamy and incest which is the most serious crime in *adat* law.

Chapter 9 describes the ritual of *khanduri apam* performed in the seventh lunar month, Ra’jab (July). It is commemorated by baking *apam* cakes in every house and distributing them at the mosques or prayer houses as special food in the interest of ancestors and recently deceased relatives. The ritual is celebrated on two different occasions: for the deceased of a house and collectively, for all deceased that have become ancestors. The collective *khanduri apam* can only be celebrated after the individual *khanduri apam* has been performed for each deceased person. Thus, first the relation between the living and ancestors of a particular house is established, and only then the relation between the living as a whole and the ancestors of the society as a whole are expressed. This is indeed the way of mediation between the living and ancestors. The ritual has various dimensions. The first dimension is that it takes care of the dead, on both occasions they are nourished with the spiritual essence of the rice. To that end, rice cakes are cooked, the smell of which attracts the deceased and whose fragrance is intended as nourishment for the deceased. The second dimension is that performing the *khanduri apam* generates merit that is transferred to the deceased in order to protect his or her in the grave from the interrogating angels. It is redeemed by linking the offering of the rice cakes with the recitation of the *shamadiyah*. They generate the gift from Allāh to those performers. This third dimension is denied by modernists who reject the possibility of the living aiding the dead through the *shamadiyah* recitation. They argue that “the person can only help him or herself directly in relation to Allāh”. The modernists also deny that one can send food to the souls but they do value the food’s natural qualities.

Chapter 10 is devoted to the ritual of *khanduri bu*, performed in the eighth lunar month, Sya'ban (August). This is aimed at thanking the ancestors (*ureueng chi'*) who have already transferred well-being to the living. This is regarded as an important obligation to the ancestors. The ritual entails visits to the ancestral tombs and feeding the 'souls' (*roh*) of the ancestors by distributing rice and other food dishes to the poor and orphans to commemorate the services of the ancestors who have accumulated and generated wealth in the past. The Aneuk Jamee state that there are villagers who used to be rich but who gradually lost their wealth as their ancestors condemned them for not commemorating them. In such a case one's wealth would no longer be 'blessed' (*beureukat*) as their descendants no longer expressed their gratitude to their ancestors but neglected them instead. Thus, the food given to the poor and orphans is regarded to be a social demonstration of the sincere devotion to Allāh in order to "prevent calamities". It testifies to the fact that the givers' "heart is not hardened" and that he has not forgotten the ancestral origin of his well-being. His gifts, given in acknowledgement of these debts, are a means of "cleansing his soul/mind". Many villagers are now rich because they have received the benefits and the prosperity as ancestral gifts called "the deceased's property. Such ancestral gifts of prosperity to the living remain "the deceased's property". This prosperity would diminish and eventually be lost altogether if the living did not perform the *khanduri bu* ritual in acknowledgement of these ancestral gifts.

The ritual of Ramadhan analysed chapter 11 is performed in the ninth lunar month (September), consisting of *fasting*, *tarawèh prayer*, *tadarus*, *nuzul Qur'an* and *zakat fitrah*. It is regarded as a "liminal time" in the Islamic calendrical rituals. The Aneuk Jamee do not only understand Ramadhan on the normative level but have specific interpretations on the practical level. There are three notions which give meaning to the performance of Ramadhan rituals. The first notion is Ramadhan as a month of purification in which to purify the heart, the "controller of the mind" and source of all actions. The second notion is Ramadhan as a month of religious worship to get the best spiritual training. During

Ramadhan, people become more aware of performing religious worship. The belief is that each good deed performed during Ramadhan brings the performer one step closer to Paradise. Thus, during Ramadhan worship is intensified and religious practice and moral values are strengthened. The third notion is Ramadhan as a month of joy. This can be seen in the joy experienced by families reuniting and associated with the many *khanduri* held during Ramadhan. The greatest happiness of Ramadhan is, of course, the celebration at the end of Ramadhan. It is interesting that all these joyous activities do not contradict Islamic teaching but rather are acknowledged as part of religious service. These three notions are interrelated and as a result, to some extent, it is difficult to make a distinction between them. Ramadhan is, thus, a moment for the Aneuk Jamee and the *suluk* followers in Blangporoh to return to their basic identity as an Islamic and social community. Through experiencing a special life during Ramadhan, they endeavor to proclaim to themselves and to other people that their basic identity as Muslims and as the Aneuk Jamee has not changed.

The ritual of *uroe raya puasa* "the festival of breaking fast" examined in chapter 12 is the major annual holiday of Islam and is performed on the first day of the tenth lunar month, Syawwal (October). The celebration called *uroe raya puasa* marks the end of Ramadhan. The ritual of *uroe raya puasa* cannot be separated from the religious services performed by Muslims during the Ramadhan lunar month. The relation between fasting and *uroe raya puasa* is perceived as a relation between "struggle" and "victory". Fasting is a spiritual journey to release the human body from satanic powers. This journey involves restraining basic human urges: one must stop eating, drinking, and having sexual intercourse. *Uroe raya puasa*, then is a "feast of victory" celebrating that people have been freed from satanic desire.

It is worth mentioning that *uroe raya puasa* is valued as a moment to develop communication, both with Allāh and among human beings. Communication with Allāh is attained by continuously carrying out 'Allāh-fearing' prayers (*taqwā*) during the month of fasting.

Communication with human beings is achieved through the bonds of friendship, gift-giving and forgiving each other. In addition, the purification performed during *uroe raya puasa* can be seen as a point of transition from the 'liminal time' of the sacred month back into everyday life. As people feel that they are reborn and without sin, *uroe raya puasa* is for the Aneuk Jamee not only the climax of the purification process but also the starting point for the return to everyday life.

Chapter 13 is devoted to the ritual of *uroe raya haji* ("pilgrimage holiday"), another major yearly holiday in Islam, performed on the 10th day of the twelfth lunar month, Zulhijjah (December). It is the "feast of sacrifice" which commemorates and represents the willingness of the Prophet Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son, Isma'īl in obedience to Allāh. The Aneuk Jamee couples conduct their sacrificial performances with their afterlife in mind. They aim to provide a "vehicle" to Heaven on Judgment Day for themselves, their children, and, if possible, their parents and grandparents. Parents feel a strong obligation to perform the sacrifice for a child who dies young, as do children whose parents and grandparents have no resources to make sacrifices in their own names. Like the *akikah* sacrifice, the sacrificial ram, sheep or buffalo represent a gift. On Judgment Day, the sacrificial animals will meet their sacrificers next to their cemeteries in the condition in which they have been sacrificed. Only one person can ride a goat or a sheep to the place of Judgment, but seven can ride a buffalo or a cow. The sacrifice of a buffalo or a cow thus provides the opportunity to bring together parents, children, and grandchildren on the back of the sacrificial mount. This specific image bears witness to the idea that the ritual sacrifice performed on *uroe raya haji* in the Aneuk Jamee society involves not just the sacrificial slaughter but above all it strengthens the moral bonds between those who come together to sacrifice livestock to Allāh.

E. Conclusion

1. As a result the *adat* of the Aneuk Jamee is difficult to classify either as the Minangkabau *adat* or the Acèhnese *adat*. Elements from both have

- been integrated into a distinct, coherent and particular system of *adat* that can be identified as specific for the Aneuk Jamee. Such is reflected in the ritual calendar that is the object of this study. A brief review of what the analysis has highlighted is useful to explore to what extent the society's core ideas and values reveal pre-Islamic elements as well as those central to historic Islam.
2. The essence of the Aneuk Jamee's theology is its monotheism - the belief in Allāh as the creator of all things. Nothing has happened or shall happen without His knowledge or His will. He is the only everlasting and unique reality, the eternal and absolute, to whom alone all worship is due. Central to the Aneuk Jamee ideas is the belief in the unity of God and His attributes which explains Himself and His existence. Striking is the total absence of Hindu deities.
 3. In explaining a distant link, an individual traces the connection until a sibling relationship at the third ascending generation and stops there.
 4. The Aneuk Jamee wedding is accompanied by an elaborate series of gift exchanges between the groom's parents and the bride's.
 5. The Aneuk Jamee cannot be separated from the ritual performance of these manifold *khanduri* rituals. They consider the performance of calendrical *khanduri* as the most important parts of social action. It is of vital importance for the continuity and reproduction of all social life. The Aneuk Jamee deem the ritual calendar of fundamental importance for their very existence as a society. As local *adat* elders say, "if the ritual calendar were not be performed, it would be as if there was something wrong with the village people; they would feel uneasy that there is something incomplete in their lives, for the rituals have become part of *adat* in the society".

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