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**Identification of Some Distinctive Values of Acehnese  
Malee (Shyness) for Character Education**

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## IDENTIFICATION OF SOME DISTINCTIVE VALUES OF ACEHNESE MALEE (SHYNESS) FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of this research is to identify some values of malee as a part of character education. This research used qualitative approach. The sampel of this research are principals, senior teachers, the Chairman of Aceh Adat Council (MAA) and students in MTsN Kota Banda Aceh. Data were collected by in-depth interview technique, documentation, and corroborated by focus group discussion. The data analysis was held on three stages: data reduction, data display, and data verification and conclusion. The research results showed that there are several malee values that can be used to shape students character in the school, namely: Malee hana shalat (shyness for not doing a prayer), Malee hana puasa (shyness for not doing fasting) Malee Meurukok and mabok (shyness for smoking and getting drunk, Malee kriet (shyness for being stingy), Malee meusulet (shyness for telling a lie) Malee peukaru ngon (shyness for disrupting friend), Malee dendam (shyness for taking a revenge), Malee kuto (shyness for dirty), Malee keuguree (shyness to the reacher/respecting teacher). Malee meucewek (shyness for dating). Malee value has a strong foundation in character building, because it pertains to their daily faith and worship. And, it has social and religious sanctions for those who violate it.*

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom; Malee; Character Education.



## A. Introduction

Character education has been perceived increasingly significant for many people involved in educational sector. A number of efforts have been devoted to explore the suitable content and method in developing students characters. One of the efforts to form students character in education through the religious and local wisdom values. It is based on Aceh cultural, there are some values existed in a society and one of those is namely “*malee*” (Abidin at al, 1997: 7). *Malee* is used by the older generation to shape the moral character of the young generation, especially the children. *Malee* is somehow also considered as part of the religious values or faith, and is identical with common social values embraced by diverse Muslim societies in different places.

The Aceh law No. 7, 2000, in Chapter VII Article 23 mandated that knowledge of the laws and customs of Aceh should be included in the curriculum of primary and secondary education to form a noble moral, dignified and cultured. The concept of *malee* identified through this research could be developed further to be inserted in the curriculum, and teach to the students accordingly, through both concept/ideals and practices. This effort is supported by the Islamic local bylaws in Article 5, paragraph 9 (2) the implementation of Islamic Shariah also includes education, and Islamic mission (*da'wah Islamiyah*), it means that the practices of education in Aceh is integrated with the Islamic cultural context. Cultivating values to the students has been among the aspect that education should concern on, through either the transformation and internalization process (Usman, 2011: 29), and the process of education itself is aimed at building character, which is closely related one to another (Huda, 2015: 279).

Putting a high priority for a mere academic achievement, will impact on the inability of the students in developing their characters accordingly. As a consequent, several social misbehavior cases were reported to happen among the students. This misbehavior is commonly understood as ‘deviant’ from the

religious and cultural values embraced by the society. (Serambi Indonesia, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 and Serambi Indonesia, March 7<sup>th</sup> 2017), North Aceh is recorded as the largest area/district with free sex cases in Aceh, and also around 70% of the students in area is prone to the taboo behavior, followed then by Banda Aceh Students in the second rank. (Kompas, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2013). If we put this within the above *malee* discourse, then people will claim who conducted those misbehaviors are those who has been "*putoh urat malee*" (lose of the shyness feeling).

Looking at the facts among the students, there has been a strong endorsement that education should not be separated from the It also should absorb the existing values among the society and the needs of the society. Good education is rooted from the society, the education would be problematic it destroy or even 'challenge' the existing norms or values of the society. As has been mentioned before, one of the distinctive of values among Aceh society, and actually has been almost forgotten is *malee*. It is quite common in the society that people used *malee* in their daily reference to particular character or behavior. The term "*hana malee*" is often heard in a conversation between parent and children, and within a family or a social group of Acehese people. It means that the community considered this value as something significant to be introduced to the children. Therefore this research is focusing to look at what kind of *malee* values identified to exist in Acehese society , and how it relate to the teaching of Islamic and the local wisdom, especially from the *hadih maja*.

## **B. Method**

This research used qualitative approach. The sample of this research are 4 principals, 8 senior teachers, 1 the Chairman of Aceh Adat Council (MAA) and 8 students in MTsN in Banda Aceh. The primary data were obtained by in-depth interviews; the interview provides the possibility to investigate every detail with flexibility and to examine it by using probing when necessary. Data validity was assured by triangulation



technique. To avoid data loss, tape recorder and logbook were used. Whereas, the secondary data were obtained through documentation studies from various sources related to the objectives of this study. The collected data were sharpened again with *Focus Group Discussion*. The data analysis was held on three stages: data reduction, data display, and data verification and conclusion (Sugiono, 2015: 338).

### C. Character's Education: Religious Teaching and Local Influences

The religious/Islamic education from time to time shows to have a strong emphasize on character's education. This started from the childhood, and go along the life of cycle of the people. One of the critical moments of this character education is for adolescence. Within the Islamic education reference, strong emphasized on noble character or moral education could be found easily. Beyond this, the society is also having a specific set of values that also signify their emphasis on morality on behaviors. This local perspective of values can be observed or found from the traditional *hadih maja*, that is an oral wisdom perspectives transferred from generation to generation.

Aceh as an area that place culture and moral behavior among the high values has a set of concepts of moralities derived from religion and culture. Obviously *malee* is among standard of morality based on the teaching of Islam and the perspective taken from the religious teachings. The concept and the practice of *malee* could be used to influence students' characters and behavior in various educational institutions or school educational setting. The concept is not widely understood and applied among the younger generations or students, although the local bylaws have recommended the inclusion of local wisdom to the curriculum or education in general (Hadi 2017: 190).

From published academic works, there have been some researches on the Acehneses' characters or personality, such as those of (Hasjim, 1959, Harun, at al. 2009, and Hoesin, 1970). Earlier scholars like Snouck

Hurgronje, James T. Siegel although noticed the strong association of the Acehese society to Islam as religion and culture which referred as *adat*. The research that specially examined the particular value like *malee* has been rarely found, although some works of researching adolescent behavior (UNDP 2012, Abubakar and Anwar, 2010 and Abidin et al., 1997), might have some relevance, but still it is not touching the religious and cultural aspects accordingly.

As the result of the educational process that has not dealt with the society's cultural value, the deviated behaviours worrying the society, such as free sex and drugs and emerges (Ajad, 2013). Nowadays, the taboo behaviour (*malee*) has experienced a significant shifting value, particularly among teenagers in terms of free sex and drugs (Lewis and Ponzio 2016: 139) state that 70% of Acehese teenagers is considered to be prone to get involved in bad behaviors (Kompas.com, 2013). In addition, Aceh is considered to have the most suicide cases, about 6 to 7 people monthly (Serambinews.com, 2016), and online prostitution also occurs among young generation in Aceh, (Surry: 2018). Furthermore, the result from the survey about the deviated behaviours in Aceh proved that 2,46% of the second grade students in senior high schools have done free sex (Abubakar and Anwar 2010 : 52). The value of local wisdom as the identity for a nation or certain group should be applied in education (Djuned, 2011: 11). Since the specific identity shows the dignity of a nation or particular groups in society, the inheritance and integration of the values is considered important in all activities (Komalasari and Saripudin, 2018: 396). The inheritance of the values of local wisdom does not happen naturally, but it needs a special effort continuously, and need supports from many different parties. The process should also be planned and programmed well, in order to make every young generation learn, understand and adapt the values into their behaviours. The cultural value of *malee* is Acehese identity. As a result, if the value is disappeared, it will also affect the development of the values held by the society. In this regards, the values of *malee* should be



emphasized and possible introduced in school by integrating those to the material of character education.

#### **D. Aceh's Malee Values: Religious and Cultural Influences**

From all of the data collected, the research identified several *malee* values from the perspective of teachers, students, or schools in general, which is also combined with the data from the relevant experts. Those values, mostly derived from the Islamic teaching and local tradition or local wisdom. Below are some values emerged from the data analysis.

##### **1. Malee Hana shalat (shyness for do not praying)**

Praying is the most important worship for Muslims after the *syahadah*. *Shalat* is one of the most emphasized rituals in Islam, that introduced by the parents or family in Aceh ones' childhood. Those who are not praying *shalat* is considered as someone who ignored the religion as *shalat* in Islamic teaching is considered as the main pillars of religion itself.

As a society that referred quite a lot to religious values and teaching, people in Aceh in general will normally feel embarrassed if they do not pray. There two critical times that people will not especially feel comfortable to go out during during praying they are *Jum'at* (at noon time every Friday) and *Magrib* prayer time. During the *Jum'at* prayer, most public offices are closed, and the street is also quiet, only few women who might be still in their activities as they are not obliged to do the *Jum'at* prayer. There is also a strong value in the society that for very children going out from for either education or other social purposes, they should be at home before *Magrib* time. This is becoming a value that the society concern on, and is derived or inspired from religious values.

##### **2. Malee hana puasa (shyness for do not doing fasting in Ramadan)**

Fasting has both religious and cultural values. People in Aceh do fasting every Ramadan month, and few of them also do some sunnah fasting



weekly such as on Monday and Thursday. Since their childhood, some families has already introduced fasting to their children, and will train them for being shamed if they are not fasting especially over the age of tens. This *malee* value was inspired from the Islamic teaching both from the Quranic verses (al-Baqarah: 185), and the sunnah. The sunnah is based on *hadith* of Abu Hurairah *radi 'anhu*, its mean "Every deeds of Adam descendant would be multiplied his reward, one good thing will be doubled to 10 kindness to 700 times. Allah ta'ala says: 'Except for fasting, then I will repay those who run it because he had left his lustful desires and food because of Me.'" HR. Muslim (Fu'ad 2013).

For *Acehnese* society, fasting is one of the most awaited worship and quiet pleased ones. People in Aceh celebrated the coming of Ramadan with joyful. There is a special day prior to Ramadan, namely "*uro mak meugang* or *uro meugang*". The happiness of *uro meugang* is derived from *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad SAW, it mean "Who ever glad to welcome the holy month of Ramadhan (fasting month) it is forbidden for his body to be touched by hellfire" HR. Muslim. (Fu'ad 2013). *Malee hana puasa*, appeared in their ability to control themselves, not to eat or drink in a public while others are fasting.

### **3. *Malee Mabok and Meurokok* (shyness for getting drunk and smoking).**

Smoking, drug and drunk are forbidden to students in Aceh. Nevertheless, some students are also found smoke in the school, and few of them also used drugs. This is sometime as part of their adolescent development, showing 'masculinity' to their friends or social groups. From the interview, we found that smoking is the most common, compared to others of drug abuse, etc. However, there is a strong tendency among the student to not smoke in front of their teachers or parents.

The school usually has a strong rule that prohibit students to smoke in the school, although some of the teachers are indeed smokers. Whereas for other like drugs, the tone is even stronger, because it is also considered being against the Islamic teaching. The Surah Al-Baqarah 168:



“Ooo mankind, eat lawful and good from what is contained in the earth, and do not follow steps of Satan; because Satan is the real enemy for you (Sura An-Nisa: 29), means: "Ooo ye who believe, do not eat each other neighbor's property by way of vanity, except by way of commerce that goes with love each other between you. And do not kill yourselves; surely Allah is Merciful to you". Drugs for Acehnese is called *madat* (Snouck Hurgronje 1906: 46).

Offenders feel embarrassed and sometimes being alienated from society, therefore in general they society is quite careful about the food. One of Aceh local values as *hadith maja* or *narit maja* about this is “*bek ta Jak ho nyang troh, bek ta pajoh peu nyang hawa*”, (mean do not go anywhere and do not eat what we just like).

#### 4. *Malee Kriet dan Tamak* (shyness for being stingy and greedy).

Stingy and greedy for Acehnese society is considered as among bad character. Siegel (1969) in his work of *The Rope of God* also mentioned that a stingy person was not preferable in a community he observed for his research. Sometimes, stingy is also often connected to the greedy the common a value held by the society is that they do not like the stingy people that who do not want to help others. The society has a stereotype of a particular area referred to stingy, namely Pidie, through the phrase “*lagee pidie*”, (like the Pidie people) it means that someone is stingy. Further study might be needed to explore why and when such the connection between Pidie and stingy character appeared.

Besides, local people also has the analogy to describe a stingy character such as in theh *hadis maja* : “*kriet juit panah, ureung kriet bagah keumah*, means that the stingy is strong like a jackfruit tree or *kriet juit padee, kriet juit padee oreung krit bagah matee*) means a stingy person is like paddy (not easily break even has a lot of seed). With those social and cultural stereotypes, many people will not happy to be referred as stingy, and instead they will be shameful for being referred as stingy.

**5. Malee Meusulet** (shyness for telling a lie).

Generally for the people, telling a lie is considered as dishonest or deceitful behavior. Honest is the most noble moral or values. Referring to the Islamic teaching, being honest is among the noble character attached to the prophet Muhammad. It is strongly emphasized in Islamic character education, and is the message in the Quran. "O ye who believe, fear Allah and say the correct words". (Surah Al-Ahzab: 70).

Based on the religious teaching, the honesty is known as *Ash-Shidqun*. This concept of *shidqun* It can be classified into five types, namely: a. Honest in intention (*Shidq Al-qalbi*). b. Honest in saying (*Shidq Al-Hadith*) c. Honest in deed (*Shidq Al-'amal*). d. Honest in agreement (*Shidq Al-Wa'd*) e. Honest in reality (*Shidq Al-Haal*).

As other *malee* value that has a strong reference in the Islamic teaching, this is also similar to honesty. The local people have a *hadih maja* that described that emphasize honestly a lot. *teupat keu pangkai, akai keu laba* (honest can be used as asset, while mind can be an advantage). *Pale'h ureung tuha geuboh tungkat, paleh ureung malem geuboh ayat, paleh otoh geuboh seunipat, paleh ureung meukat geuboeh keurira*. (It means: Bad old man throw his stick or prop, bad mufti throw verses of Al-Quran and Hadist, bad workers at work do not use measuring tools, bad traders do not use scales). *So nyang khianat, wo laknat ateuh droe*, (it means who is treacherous or dishonest will be back to themselves). *Teupat seulamet sulet, sulet meupalet, teupat juet keu ubat, sulet jeut keu peuyaket*. (it means: honest would save, lie would be bound, honest would be a medicine, lie would be a disease). There is another strong expression of the society against the cheating and lying character as "*Akai meu kurok parek*", (it mean, their mind is like a canal digger), and something is dishonor to be attributed to.

**6. Malee peukaru ngon** (shyness for disrupting friend).

Disrupting friends is among the values that closely related to the social interaction of people including children both in a social setting like



a school. Each school has a regulation to ensure that everyone in the school could learn or study comfortably, and the teachers could also do so in their activities. In a number of school settings, one of the disciplines emphasized is to respect others (friends) and not disturb them. Within a school setting, this is considered as one of the students' disciplinary principles (Mette Sandoff and Gill Widell: 460).

There is no specific reference to the Islamic teaching could be placed here to support this value accordingly, nevertheless, there is a number of cultural principles that emphasize ones to respect others, and to do not put difficulties or problem to others. This is a reflection of an understating, and sensitivity showed towards others needs or situation. In local hadith *maja*, it is said as "*Tajak ubee lot tapak taduek ubee lot punggong*" (it means: walk on as big as your steps and sit down as big as your bottom).

#### 7. *Malee Deundam* (shyness for taking a revenge).

Acehnese societies are consistent, fanatic, and ethnocentric on religious values. Besides, they are strongly maintained the *marwah* (dignity) of their family, groups). According to Harun, Acehnese people have a reputation of preserving self-esteem of themselves and their family. Acehnese have a reactive character, militant, optimistic as well as loyal (Harun, 2009: 23).

Acehnese community is quite easily to accept new things such as information, technology and entertainments, even though Acehnese society do not have grudge character, despite they are militant in attitude. For example, when conflict occurred in Aceh was determined as DOM (military operation district). The case caused to happen more victims of severity. The central military figures at that time were Prabowo and Susilo B. Yudoyono. Those figures were very hated by Aceh people. This hatred accrued because they are assumed as persons who are most responsible for the case of military operation. Nevertheless, the general election result in Aceh showed that the Acehnese have already forgotten and forgiven the case. This is also embedded in the teaching of Islam, and the

encouragement found from their social groups. Therefore after MOU between the Indonesian Central Government and GAM, Acehness people do not hate again, and consolidated peacefully. Most Aceh people gave support to both figures (Suadi Zainal 2016: 85). Acehness self- sacrificing, loyal to sacrifice their wealth even bodies and soul.

8. *Malee kuto* (shyness for dirty).

Islam obliges people to be clean, and also to cleanse the non-material part of themselves (*bathiniya*) such as clean in heart, mind, feeling, and clean in *lahiriyah* such as clean in body, clothes, food and environment. Cleanliness is preferable (Surah Al-Baqarah: 222). Many local values of *hadith maja* emphasize this matter that explains the importance of cleanliness. A local *hadith maja* as a recommendation to avoid dirty is "*beek lagee kameeng landok*" it means "do not resemble billy goat" "*beek lagee mei pajoh aneuk*" it means do not resemble a cat which eats his child., "*Beek lagee itek wo lampaya*" it means: "do not resemble a duck which just return from the swamp" (Herlina and Abubakar 2015: 15).. Those examples aimed to denote people whose bodies are dirty. The people who were given the label of physically dirty would feel embarrassed.

9. *Malee keuguree* (shyness in front of teachers, which also means respect to the teachers).

Teachers are the second parents for students. In Acehness culture, respecting teachers is to some extent 'obligatory'. Respecting teachers are materialized in various attitudes in various countries and subjects taught (Elaine Evanset al, 2014: 60). People's respect to teachers understood to be expressed in several attitudes. Among the responsibility of a teacher is to change knowledge (cognitive), attitude and skills (psychomotor), this effort requires certain conditions including respect to teacher (Einar M. Skaalvik and Sidsel Skaalvik, 2013: 7).

The following *hadith maja* is reflected the endorsement towards a respect to the teachers. '*Bak buet salah beutamale, Perintah guree bak get*



*tajaga, Meunyoe ka salah meu-’ah ta lakee, akhirat teuntee gata bahgia. It means: when doing mistake they must be ashamed, teachers’ orders must be done, If they make mistaken asking for an apologize soon. There is another hadih maja of taat keu ma ku takzem keuguree, Ureueng nyan ban lhee ta peumulia, meaning obeying to both mother and father, and teachers, those three figures should we glorify. Takzem keu guree meuteumee ijazah, taat keu nang mbah meuteumee hareuta. It means: if you obey to a teacher, you will get a diploma, if you obey to both mother and father, you will get heritage.*

Acehnese culture place a strong emphasize on respecting teacher and this could be also found in the lullaby, the song for little ones *Allah hai do ku doda idi (there is no meaning), Beugot budi neuk watee raya, Keu jasa gure neuk ta-ingat, Nyang peuteupat hukom agama* (Yusri Yusuf 2013: 56). It means: Allah hai do kudoda idi, be moral nobel when you grow up, you have to remember to teachers’ kindness, they have taught you the religious laws.

#### **10. Malee Meucewek** (shyness for dating).

Dating, or locally referred as *meucewek* is considered as something that is not permitted culturally, especially when dating means to be the permissive ones, that could lead to *zina* (fornication). The act of fornication is prohibited in the Islamic principles, and is mentioned clearly (Surah Al-Isra: 32), In Acehnese society, the [permissive] dating is regarded as shameful.

Dating can lose an honors and dignity, especially for the girls of Aceh, therefore having sex before marriage or having children outside the marital bound is considered a disgrace in the perspective of the Aceh society. Culturally, there is a term to name the illegitimate child, namely “*bajeung*” or *mumee aneuk hareum* (it means conceiving *bajeung* child or an illegitimate child). Sometimes, the social punishment for the parents who do not legally married quite hard such as being expelled until a certain time (Hoesin, 1970: 182).

Obviously, all the attitude of *malees* in Acehese culture is the embodiment of Islamic values, and also inspired by the existing cultural values embraced by the society. With those two ideals, the construction of *malee* would have more impacts on the students if those values could be programmed and integrated well to the existing concept of character education.

## E. Conclusion

The Acehese society has a strong jargon of *adat ngeun hukom lagee zat ngeon sifeut* (religion and culture is in-separable). This could also be indentified through the concept and practice of *malee*. Admittedly, the character of *malee*, could influence the students' or children's behavior. The inspiration of some *malee* values from Islamic teaching and local cultural values is another credit that will make these distinctive values of *malee* has a strong impact on the personality of the Muslim and Acehese people/students. Nevertheless, generally there are some obstacles of promoting these *malee* values among the students or within the school educational setting.

The results of the research showed there are several *malee* values emerged and considered as necessary and relevant to be introduced to the school or educational system: those are: *Malee hana shalat* (shyness for not praying), *Malee puasa* (shyness for not fasting), *Malee mabok and smoke* (shyness for drunk and smoke), *Malee Kriet* (shyness for being stingy), *Malee meusulet* (shyness for lying), *Malee Peukaru ngon* (shyness for disrupting friend}, *Malee deundam* (shyness for reverenging), *Malee kuto* (shyness for being dirty) *Malee and takzim keu guree* (respecting teacher) and *Malee Meucewek* (shyness for dating).

The approach of promoting *malee* values could also replace the reward of punishment model that has been more popular within the school education. Also, *malee* is not just moral and faith for Moslem, but also the preserved cultural value in the society. *Malee* values have a strong foundation in character



building, because it pertains to their daily faith and worship. And, it has social and religious sanctions for those who violate it.

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