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A Profile Of The *'Ulamā'* In Acehnese Society

Yusny Saby

ملخص

فى هذا البحث يعرض الكاتب موضوع "علماء أشيه" خصائصهم العامة وشخصياتهم ومراحل تعاليمهم ومنهج حياتهم، وحياتهم اليومية فى مجتمعهم. ويمكن تقسيم علماء أشيه إلى عدد من النوعيات منها ما يعرف بالعلماء التقليدين والعلماء المجددين.

يركز الكاتب فى هذا البحث على شخصية العلماء التقليدين باعتبارهم علماء مازالوا يحافظون على ذا تيتهم بالمقارنة مع العلماء المجددين الذين تتنوع شخصياتهم.

وقد عرض الكاتب بالدقة نماذج تعليمهم والتى تنطبق فى المؤسسات التعليمية الدينية معروفة باسم "داياه" بما فى ذلك انماط الحياة فيها من عناصر مختلفة ومن ولايات متعددة وقد يؤثر نظام تعليم "داياه" المحدود على نظرة العلماء للحياة لأنهم تتربوا فى ظل ذلك النظام المتميز، وعلى سبيل المثال ابتعادهم عن استخدام الطريقة العقلانية فى فهم نصوص القرآن والسنة.

ومن مميزات علماء أشيه أنهم أصحاب القدوة الحسنة فى سلوكهم الأمر الذى يجعلهم موضوع القبول والاحترام لدى المجتمع الذى يعيشون فيه .

Abstrak

Melalui artikel ini penulis memaparkan profil, yakni karakteristik umum, potret, pendidikan, pandangan hidup serta gaya hidup keseharian ulama dalam masyarakat Aceh. Sebenarnya ulama Aceh dapat dipilah ke dalam beberapa tipe dan kategori, diantaranya ulama tradisional dan ulama pembaharu, dan artikel berikut lebih berkonsentrasi pada profil ulama tradisional yang dalam beberapa hal masih bersifat monolitik, dibandingkan dengan ulama pembaharu yang lebih variatif.

Dengan teliti dan menarik penulis menjelaskan model-model pendidikan ulama tradisional yang dilangsungkan di lembaga pendidikan agama yang disebut dayah. Tercakup di sini adalah corak-corak kehidupan dalam dayah dari masa ke masa dan dari satu wilayah ke wilayah yang lain.

Pandangan hidup para ulama tradisional, karena dikutuk oleh model pendidikan di dayah yang sangat terbatas, juga menjadi spesifik, misalnya, menghindari penggunaan akal dalam memahami teks agama (Qur'an & hadits). Namun, karena kesalehannya, para ulama tradisional mendapat penghormatan yang tinggi dari masyarakat sekitar.

1. Opening remarks

The *'ulama'* of Acehnese society are of many types. In thought, Acehnese *'ulama'* are divided between the traditional *'ulama'* and the reformist *'ulama'*. In education, the traditional *'ulama'* are still monolithic — all of them experience the traditional religious schools called *dayah*. The reformist *'ulama'* are more varied. They may have come from *dayah*, but most are from *madrasah* [religious schools], whether run by the state or by private religious institutions, such as the Muhammadiyah. What is meant by profile here is an overview of a general range of characteristics, from nature, image and education to world view and life style, to the affiliations and functions of the *'ulama'* within the community.

The term *'ulama'* as employed in this discussion is limited to those relatively few "elite" who work in the field of religious activities, have the background of a (traditional) religious education, and in their profession, serve the community, whether directly or indirectly. Since religious education may vary in both form and methodology, the emphasis is laid upon

those persons who participate in the traditional religious education and/or actively take part in the religious functions within the community. The discussion is also sometimes extended to those who work in religious fields regardless of their formal educational background. Religious education, nevertheless, will always prove to be the main basis for a person being an *'ālim* in Acehnese society.

2. The education of the *'ulama'*

For centuries the *'ulama'* of Aceh have been obtaining their knowledge of religion from the traditional religious schools, from *meunasah, rangkang, bale* and *dayah*.[1] The education in these institutions is concentrated mainly on the "religious" disciplines. In cases in which a few other subjects were taught and extra activities were conducted, they were simply added on an optional basis. They certainly never belonged to the core of the standard curriculum.

The most formal of all the institutions for religious training is the *dayah*, and this discussion will focus mainly on this institution. There are at least six components for the establishment of a standard *dayah*: the *Teungku Chik* [Grand Teacher], the *murīd* [the students], the study rooms, the prayer halls, the boarding facilities, and the *kitab*s [text books] used for the core curriculum.[2]

The center of a *dayah* education is always the *Teungku Chik*, who is the highest authority in the *dayah* "kingdom." And the *Teungku Chik* must be from within the *dayah* community. The *Teungku Chik* should be known long before he establishes a particular *dayah*. The genealogy and the education of the *Teungku Chik* can be traced down to its roots. The *Teungku Chik* represents a link in the long chain of teachers transmitting religious wisdom. He cannot be replaced by any person unless this person has also gone through the normal procedures. It is as if the *Teungku Chik* represents the Prophet and the great Im_ms in regard to the dissemination of religious knowledge and the example of a decent character. Thus, the *Teungku Chik* is irreplaceable by any means, whether by professors, books, recordings, videos, tapes, or speeches.

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[1] *Meunasah* and *dayah* have been wellknown. *Rangkang* literally means a small hut. In this context, it is the name for a small hall built in a *meunasah* compound for teaching purposes. "*Bale*" is one built in the mosque compound for the same purpose.

[2] Oftentimes the books are called *kitab kuning* [yellow text books). The term "yellow" is used because most of the books are printed on yellow paper, or, if they were printed on white paper, they have now turned yellow with age.

A well-known tradition held by the *dayah* community, denoting the absolute significance of the teacher in transmitting religious knowledge, says: "If one does not have a teacher, Satan will be his teacher."[3] So a real *Teungku* should have learned from other great *Teungku* too. A person can never be a *Teungku Chik* by mere self-study. The *Teungku Chik* will always be respected, even after his death, so that respect will be extended even to his tomb, his widow, and, to a certain degree, to his children, even if they do not possess the quality of their father.[4]

The main curriculum of the *dayah* in Aceh follows that of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, specifically the Shāfi' school of thought in *fiqh* [jurisprudence], and the Ash'arī in *'aqīdah* [creed]. Among the subjects taught are Arabic grammar [*nawu* and *arf*], theology [*tawḥīd*], prophetic traditions [*adīth*] and Qur'ānic exegesis [*tafsīr*]. To meet the requirements of the curriculum in *fiqh*, the most important books used are *Matn Taqrīb*, *Minhaj al-Ṭalibīn*, *I'ānat al-Ṭālibin*, and *Maḥalli*. The completion of these books is considered the standard course of study in the *dayah*. The study of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* are approached from the *fiqh* side. Subjects like *naḥwu* and *ṣarf* [Arabic grammar], *uṣūl fiqh* [the roots of fundamentals of *fiqh*], *tārīkh* [Islamic history], *muṣṭala ḥadīth* [technical knowledge of *ḥadīth*], *manṭiq* [logic], *ma'ānī*, and *bayān* [rhetoric] are also taught, but they are considered the tools of knowledge [*'ilm ālah*]. The *Iḥya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazz_l is taught in the highest class of the *dayah*.

The methodology of imparting knowledge in the *dayah* is still traditional and unique in all the Muslim world. In many *dayah*s students and teachers sit on the floor, and each of them has the text book, or a chapter of it. Reading the text is the most important part of the class meetings. A specific part of the text is read and the teacher will then raise questions based on the texts read. The students may or may not be able to answer, and if not, the teacher will immediately explain the problems. Often the explanation will provoke discussion. The teacher will not move on until a general understanding of the case being discussed is achieved. That is why, oftentimes,

[3]The tradition says: "*Man lā shaikha lahu fa al-shayṭānu shaykhuhu.*" This tradition is not found in the Six Major Collections of the *ḥadīth*.

[4]The aged *Teungku Chik* Ibrahim Taib always pays a yearly visit to the tomb of his late teacher, Tgk. Hasan Kreung Kalee, who died more than twenty years ago. For his visit he takes some of his followers with him. They stay the night at the site and intone special prayers together. The widow of the late teacher is also visited on this occasion. (Interview with Tgk. Ibrahim Taib, Lhoksukon, September 27, 1992).

certain part of the texts have actually been memorized by the students.

To the question of why only the teaching of the Shāfi'ī school is taught, most of the *'ulama'* gave a simple answer — it is both convenient and moderate. Further, the books in the Shāfi'ī school are readily available and cover every traditional subject.[5] As well, it is felt that the fact that Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (known as Imām al-Shāfi'ī, d.820 CE), the founder of the Shāfi'ī school, was from Quraysh provides another advantage, since he thoroughly understood both the Qur'ān and the *adth*, because both were written in his native Arabic. In addition, the *`ulama'* felt that the Quraysh had been given two extra abilities in this world, namely, *nablu al-`aqli* [intellectual ability] and *hādi* [guidance]. This is based on the tradition that says *"La tasubbu qurayshan* [Do not curse the Quraysh]," because "there will be *`ulama'* from the Quraysh who will spread the knowledge (of Islam) all over the globe." Moreover, other Imāms, historically speaking, also recognized the advantages of Imām al-Shāfi`ī.[6] This explanation is interesting, since the *dayah 'ulama'* clearly never consider the historical context of the development of Islam in Aceh when giving reasons for their preference. The fact that Islam in the archipelago was brought in by the Shāfi`ī *'ulama'* during its early propagation, is not taken into consideration at all. Ignorance of this factor has resulted in their general view that the practices of other *madhhab*s are considered alien to the standard practice of Islam.

Students who are admitted to the *dayah* are varied, and almost without any specific qualifications. However, it has been a tradition in Aceh that the students who begin *dayah* education have been trained for the basic Qur'ānic recitation at their village *teungku*s [*teungku seumubeut*] or *meunasah*s. Thus the role of the local *teungku*s is very important, in that they become the cornerstone of religious education in Acehnese society. Although the local *teungku*s do not necessarily have advanced formal religious training, they ought to have the "quality" of being a *teungku*. This "quality" is shown more from his or her pious life, devotion, and manners than from his or her intellectual specialization, beyond his or her basic knowledge of Qur'ānic recita-

[5]Literally he said: *"Lengkap kitabnya, banyak alimnya, dan berada di tengah."* Interview with *Tgk.* Daud Ahmady, in his *dayah*, September 29, 1992.

[6]Except *Imām* Abū Ḥanīfah, the founder of the Ḥanafi school (d.767 CE), who lived before Imām al-Shāfi', they are *Imām*s Abū 'Abd Allāh Mālik ibn Anas (d.795 CE), the founder of the Māliki school, and Amad ibn anbal (d.855 CE), the founder of the anbali school.

tion and of *fiqh*.[7] A few Acehnese children are also trained by their own parents at home, if they are able to do so.

In some *dayah*s, boys and girls are placed in different compounds. In the *dayahs* for girls, many female teachers are also available. *Dayah* "Babussalam," North Aceh, under the leadership of *Teungku* Muhammad Amin Mahmud [known as "Tu Min"], is one such. If boys and girls are located at the same compound, the buildings for each are distinctively separated. The girls are housed close to the *Teungku* and his family, in order to have closer supervision; while the boys are placed surrounding it. There is a clear understanding that the "border" between the boys' and girls' houses should not be crossed. Only a "wild" person will transgress this rule, and such an action would readily be made known.

Where classes are prepared for both boys and girls, a partition separates the two, which has a small open door in the front. A curtain is hung over the door.[8] The male teacher who sits before the class on the boys' side can communicate easily, since his voice is heard clearly by both sides. Upon entering a classroom, through the separate boys' door, the male students will begin with the greeting *"assalāmu`alaykum* [peace be with you]" and immediately shake and kiss the hand of the *Teungku*. They will do the same when the class is over. The female students will also take part in the discussion, although in a limited way. The teacher is satisfied when both sides express their agreement on the explication. Since the teaching is regarded as the transmitting of the sacred knowledge, the discussion always ends in general acceptance and understanding of the point from the traditional perspective.

The relationship between the teacher and the students is close and one of great respect. In their encounters, students will immediately shake the

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[7] In recent years the number of *teungku seumubeut* [village Qur'ānic recitation teachers] are decreasing in number. In the village Bugak Krueng Matee (North Aceh) alone, there were about eight houses conducting this basic religious education; some were female *teungku*s, with more than twenty students each. Now only three houses are left, with about five to ten students each. The village *teungku*s teach basic rules of Qur'ānic recitation, starting from the alphabet, until the students are able to finish the reading of the Qur'ān by themselves. Many do not finish the course and usually quit and go to the *meunasah* [village prayer hall] where there is a more professional *teungku* teaching. Here the *tajwīd* and *makhraj* [rules of pronunciation] are improved, and lessons on *tawḥīd* and *fiqh* are also imparted.

[8] *Dayah* Darul Huda, Lueng Angen, North Aceh, under the leadership of *Tgk.* Daud Ahmady, is managed by this model.

right hand of the teacher while kissing it, usually on the back of the hand, but sometimes on the palm as well, and the teacher will readily yield his or her hand for this solemn purpose. If they do not kiss it, they will put the teacher's hand on their forehead while bowing low. In cases where the females want to shake hands, a male *teungku* will usually put a light-weight cloth over his hand. This is done in order to preserve the "*wuḍū'*" [ablution] of the *Teungku*. Respect is maintained through a code which mandates a norm of mutual reverence.[9]

This normative esteem is also directed at other *dayah* members, as part of the *dayah* tradition. This tends to produce a major impact on the community at large, as all students are socialized to display respect for peers and elders. However, this also sometimes provoke jealousy in other non-*dayah* elders and dignitaries, since they never enjoy the high degree of respect accorded to the *Teungku*.

The *Teungku*s will also show their respect to the students by calling each of them "*Teungku*" starting from the day of admission. This title is then followed by the name of the student's place of origin. Thus, for example, if a student comes from Bugak, he will be called "*Teungku* di Bugak," meaning "the respected one who comes from Bugak area," without using his or her surname (father's name) at all. This is because the use of the surname in this context is considered less respectful and "appreciative."[10] The use of a person's surname is considered impolite.

Despite the fact that some students come from outside Aceh,[11] the language used in most *dayah*s is *Bahasa* Aceh.[12] Teachers teach in *Bahasa* Aceh

[9]This way of respect and appreciation is not only enjoined in the *dayah* compound but also in everyday life. The feelings of solidarity, sisterhood and brotherhood are also maintained after students leave the *dayah*. When they meet, they usually greet each other by saying "*assalāmu`alaykum*," and then shake hands. The polite manner in shaking hands is that after the shaking, both of one's hand should be put on one's chest. The hug greeting is not yet familiar among the Acehnese. The "hugging" style was recently introduced into the urban elite and is still considered an "imported" tradition.

[10]The term "family name" is not known in Acehnese society. The most common style is that a person's name is followed by his or her father's name. The use of a person's father's name alone is considered an insult in Acehnese society.

[11]In recent years, students joining the *dayah*s come from as far as Southern Sumatra, Java and Malaysia.

[12]This is so when the *dayah*s are located in areas where *Bahasa* Aceh is spoken. *Bahasa* Aceh is the main local language used in Aceh province, although there are some other minor languages spoken in some areas in Aceh. *Bahasa* Gayo is spoken in part of Central Aceh, *Bahasa* Alas in part of Southeast Aceh, *Bahasa* Tamiang in part of East

and students communicate with each other in it, as well. The use of only *Bahasa* Aceh in the *dayah* system has recently begun to result in a bit of setback for *dayah* education, since the lack of an opportunity to use *Bahasa* Indonesia, the language of the nation, in the *dayah*, is considered a weak point. Many knowledgeable *'ulamā'* in Aceh have difficulty communicating with larger audiences because of their limited proficiency in *Bahasa* Indonesia.[13]

The fact that most of the books are written in either *Bahasa* Jāwī[14] or in Arabic creates another problem. Only classical Arabic is studied, and study is limited to grammar and reading classical texts only. Consequently, contemporary Arabic texts are not included. Thus, although the *dayah* seniors may be able to read some classical Arabic books, the knowledge of written and spoken modern Arabic is entirely lacking. Very recently, concerns about language-education have been voiced by some senior students, especially those who have had the opportunity to witness the development of modern *pesantrens* [*dayah*-like religious boarding schools] outside Aceh. These students are convinced that knowledge of contemporary Arabic is necessary, at least for practical purposes. For many *dayah*s, however, this matter is not yet taken seriously, although concern seems to be rising.[15]

Aceh, *Bahasa* Jamee in part of West and South Aceh and *Bahasa* Kluet in part of South Aceh. In those areas the local language is also used.

[13]The use of only *Bahasa* Aceh in the education system in the *dayah* has raised concern even among some in the *dayah* community. *Abuya Teungku* Darmis bin Muar, presently the head of Pondok Pendidikan Islam [*dayah*] Darul Ulum Palarik, Air Pacah, Padang (West Sumatra) in a paper has stated that, "since there are now many non-Acehnese students coming to study in *dayah*s in Aceh, we suggest [*menyarankan*] that the *dayah* should use *Bahasa* Indonesia in its educational system, except in cases where all participants are Acehnese-speaking students." (See his paper, "Ulama dan Dayah Aceh serta Prospeknya dalam Memajukan Pembangunan Nasional" 12-13, presented at a seminar at *dayah* Darul Ulum Tanoh Mirah, October 18, 1992). Darmis bin Umar is originally from Minangkabau, West Sumatra and graduated from *dayah* Darul Ulum, Tanoh Mirah, North Aceh, some years ago. The same concern was also expressed by *Tgk.* M. Taib from *dayah* Janthoi, and by Badruzzaman, from the Council of *'Ulamā'* of Aceh, in the "Dialog" between scholars, administration, and the *Dayah*s of Aceh, held in Banda Aceh, September 7-8, 1992.

[14]*Bahasa* Jāwī is originally an old Pasai language written in Arabic script. The old Pasai language could have been either the origin or the sister of the classical *Bahasa* Melayu. Present *Bahasa* Indonesia and *Bahasa* Malaysia are modifications of the classical *Bahasa* Melayu. "*Jāwī*" is an Arabic term for Javanese, which in this context means "the Melayu of the archipelago." The people of Pasai now speak *Bahasa* Aceh, which is somewhat different from the old Pasai language.

[15]A senior student (who must be an assistant teacher) in one *dayah* admitted, "I am

There are about four hundred *dayah* spread out all over Aceh. In North Aceh alone, there are now one hundred and forty-eight *dayah*s, with a total of more than thirty thousand students. The Office of *Bupati* has classified forty-two as major *dayah*s, which have met the standard requirements to be a *dayah*, and some of which cater to more than one thousand students.[16] In many *dayah*s, female students outnumber the male ones.

Although for many years the *dayah*s have been marginalized in part, because of the parochial religious education they provided, the present trend of *dayah* growth is obvious. It has been a tradition that a *dayah* is built when a *Teungku Chik* is available and students are prepared to join him. The financial support for the establishment comes from those in the society who want to see the *dayah* grow. If the *Teungku Chik* is rich, the burden of the cost of the *dayah* budget is shared with the community. In most cases a *dayah* is built piece-meal, room by room, building by building, according to the growing need of the students and the availability of resources. Since the *dayah* is a private and independent institution, a *dayah* is never built by the state or a company. Hence "state *dayah*" is a contradiction in terms. At most, what the state or the private company can do is to provide unconditional financial support to a particular *dayah*. In some cases, even this "unconditional" support is accepted with suspicion.[17] This suspicion results from decades of experience, during which there were occasions when the support given was

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really ashamed of myself when there is any foreign guest coming. Whether he speaks English or Arabic, I have to shun him. I can speak neither Arabic nor English." (Interview with *Tgk.* Muniruddin, of the *dayah* Babussalam, Blang Bladeh, October 1, 1992). This view is also shared by others, such as *Tgk.* Muhammad Nasir Blang Jruen, a senior student of Dayah Lueng Angen, who even wants to study modern Arabic. The *dayah* Darussa`adah of Lipah Rayeuk, led by a moderate *`Ālim*, is now trying to get teachers to fill this need. Unfortunately, until recently, little help has been available. (Interview with Ali Ishak, head of the Office of Religious Affairs of North Aceh, Lhokseumawe, August 7, 1992).

[16]This is based on the lists provided in December, 1991, by *Camat*s [sub-district heads] of the twenty-six *kecamatan*s [sub-districts] sent to the Office of *Bupati* of North Aceh.

[17]There was a case in which, after many attempts to persuade the *dayah* to accept financial support from the state, the *Teungku Chik* finally decided to take the money but not permit it to be used for the major needs of the *dayah*. The fund was spent to built toilets. (Interview with *Tgk.* Abdullah Tanoh Mirah, May 5, 1988, and M.A. Jangka, August 10 1992). In the *dayah*s, the toilets are considered the least-respected spots, and in many cases they are almost neglected.

politically motivated, particularly when the support was offered just prior to the general elections.

Since a *dayah* is built without any advance planning, the physical appearance is often almost pitiful. Most *dayah*s are physically poorly organized. Many of the facilities, such as prayer halls, study rooms, boarding rooms, kitchens, wells, drains and bath rooms are not well-placed or adequately maintained. Sanitary conditions have often been neglected almost completely. It almost seems as if the view is that the *dayah* should look messy and cheap, and thrown-together. There are dayahs which still use rivers as toilet and bath facilities.

Despite its pitiful physical appearance, most students find *dayah* life warm and fulfilling. This is more true in the *dayah*s in rural areas, or those far from the public transportation. The atmosphere in these *dayah*s is generally solemn and quiet. Rural *dayah* populations tend to show more humility and appreciation among themselves, and to visitors. Some *dayah*s even do not allow the use of radios, let alone televisions and videos.[18] The flow of information from magazine and newspapers is almost completely blocked out from *dayah* life. What the students do in their leisure times is either to sleep or spend their break hours in the coffee shops around the *dayah*. The only time when students have outing are when they are invited (usually with their *Teungku*) to join a *khanduri*, to *tall*, or to perform *janāzah* [the dead body: ie, funeral] prayers or other religious-related services in the surrounding community. Students are permitted a break for two or three days a month to get provisions from their parents or guardians, or to earn money. If they have to support themselves, some take a longer time away from their studies. A few will stay out for about a year before returning to the *dayah*.

In the urban *dayah*, the situation is somewhat different. Some casual

[18]"The reason behind this prohibition," says *Tgk*. Daud Lueng Angen, "is that the main aim of the coming of the students to the *dayah* is to study. Anything which distracts the students from their main focus will be prohibited. And radio is designed for distraction. The prohibition is based on this reason alone, and not because the use of the radio is *ḥarām* [legally prohibited]." (Interview with *Tgk*. Daud Ahmady, Lueng Angen, September 29, 1992). In fact there are now radios and TV's for many *teungku*s' residents in the *dayah* compound. Students in the *dayah* of Blang Bladeh are allowed to use the radios during the break times. Recently a satellite dish was installed in one of the major *dayah*s in the Pidie area. The *Teungku Chik* said that the disc was a "gift" from the military commander of the area. All of these lavish electronics are definitely not meant for students. (Interview with *Tgk*. Nur Hasballah, Ulee Glee, September 18, 1992).

current traditions have been adopted on a limited basis. Students can enjoy the radio and visit coffee shops, and read the newspapers more freely. The students in the urban *dayah* seem a little skeptical about, or even indifferent to, visitors.[19]

It is from this type of religious education that all of the traditional *'ulama'* have graduated. Graduation does not necessarily mean that all the steps of *dayah* education have been completed.[20] Presently many senior *dayah* leaders in Aceh were graduated either from a *dayah* in Labuhan Haji, South Aceh, studying under the late *Teungku* Haji Muda Waly al-Khalidy, or from a *dayah* in Samalanga, North Aceh, under the leadership of the late (Abon) *Teungku* Haji Abdul Aziz. These two *dayah*s were considered the leading *dayah*s in Aceh when both the *Teungku Chik*s were still alive.

What do the graduates do after their graduation? This is crucial since there is no specific practical professional training for the *dayah* students. When asked, they would always respond that the study in the *dayah* is for the sake of God. No "worldly" expectation is ever formulated or discussed. To aim to make a living as result of study in the *dayah* would reduce the student's sincerity and devalue the study itself. In the understanding of the *dayah* community, "Knowledge belongs to God," and to seek knowledge is to follow the path of God. If a person were to aim at getting worldly benefit from study, he would achieve "unblessed" knowledge.[21] Indeed, it is a source of pride among the *dayah* that the *dayah* education is an asset to the state and the country, since none of the graduates ever goes "begging" for jobs in any government office. "This is not like those graduates from the schools and *madrasah*s who, holding their certificate in their armpits, knock at any office door asking for jobs."[22]

One thing is apparent, however, and that is that most formal religious

[19]In fact, the urban *dayah*s border on suspicion in response to "strange" visitors. Besides my own field observations, this view is also shared by Ridwan Hasan, one of the staff members of the *Bupati* Office of North Aceh, who recently has been responsible for communicating with the *dayah*s in the North Aceh regency.

[20]The usual classification is from the introductory Level One to Level Seven at the highest. No strict limit time is mandated for a particular level (class). It depends on the ability of the student to understand the *kitāb*s assigned to that level. It is also not unheard of that a person could spend five years studying in five different *dayah*s.

[21]The exact expression is "*hana beureukat* [not blessed, will not last, of lesser value]."

[22]Interview with *Tgk.* Daud Zamzamy, Banda Aceh, July 1, 1992. This idea is explicitly expressed by the *dayah* leaders in many of their speeches and seminars.

offices do not employ *dayah* graduates. The offices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its branches have closed their doors to them. There are a few state-run religious schools which recruit a few *dayah* graduates — with special selective admission — for the purpose of continuing higher education. The Islamic Institute "Ar-Raniry" of Banda Aceh is one of these schools. Usually graduates of the *dayah*s who complete their education in this Institute will gain more status in the eyes of the authorities and society. There are also a few graduates from the *dayah*s completing their education at the Institute of "Ar-Raniry," and some of these are employed in offices under the domain of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Due to their *dayah* experience, they are well received by both urban and rural population. Those double-graduates can be expected to communicate better with both urban and rural dwellers.[23] Beginning in the 1930's, after the wave of reformism came to Aceh, a new type of religious education was introduced. These schools are called *madrasah*s, from the Arabic meaning "school," particularly religious school. The early founders of these *madrasahs* also originally came from the *dayah* institutions. After independence, the *madrasah*s were incorporated into the national system, under the administration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. They are now known as *Sekolah Rendah Islam* [Islamic Elementary School], *Sekolah Menengah Islam* [Islamic Junior High School], and *Sekolah Menengah Islam Atas* [Islamic Senior High School].[24] In the 1950's, a college-level institution was established in Jakarta. This institution later developed into the present *Institut Agama Islam Negeri* [State Islamic Studies Institute],

[23]The cases of Idris Mahmudy of Lhokseumawe and Ismail Yakub of Banda Aceh are conspicuous. Idris Mahmudy graduated from a number of *dayah*s, completed his study at *IAIN*, and is now the head of "*Pengadilan Agama*" [Islamic Court] of Lhokseumawe, the head of Majelis Ulama of North Aceh, and other social institutions. Ismail Yakub graduated from a *dayah* as well, and then completed his study at the Department of Uṣūluddīn of the Ar-Raniry Institute. He then became a lecturer at the same institute, then the chairman of the Department of Uṣūluddin [theology], and recently Vice-Rector of Financial Affairs of the Institute. He has been asked to accompany the Governor of Aceh on his trips around the country, particularly when visiting the traditional *'ulama'* and their *dayah*s.

[24]Starting in the 1970's, the names were changed back to Arabic style. The schools start from the *MIN* (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri*, elementary level, six years), *MTsN* (*Madrasah Thanawiyah Negeri*, junior high level, three years), and *MAN* (*Madrasah 'Aliyah Negeri*, senior high level, three years). *Negeri* means "state" or "public." If the schools were run by private institutions, the ending name would be *swasta* [private], instead of *negeri* [public]. There are now many private schools in Aceh.

abbreviated *IAIN*, of which fourteen may now be found throughout Indonesia. In Aceh, the Institute "Ar-Raniry" was established in the early sixties, the third in Indonesia after the ones established in Jakarta and Yogyakarta. The graduates of these *madrasah*-like institutions are expected to serve as civil servants, particularly in the fields of Islamic education, family affairs, and other religious services. That is why most of them are employed in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its branches, and few in other institutions. Since these *madrasah*-type institutions were established to compensate for the deficiencies of *dayah* education, the *madrasah* is seen as a threat to the survival of the *dayah*.

Thinking that the *dayah* and the *madrasah*-type *'ulama'* are not yet able to meet the need of an ever-changing society, the *IAIN* is now geared toward producing the "*'ulama' plus*". "Plus" means that the *'ulama'* have been equipped with the ability to interpret religion adequately in an age of science and technology. This effort has achieved some success, but it is limited to certain urban populations. The problem is how much "plus" a person has in addition to his being an *'ālim*. In many cases the "plus" is more obvious than the "*'ulama'*." These "*'ulama'* plus" are not yet able to reach people at the grassroot levels of society.

3. The world view of the *'Ulama'*

Education primarily contributes to the shaping of the world- view of the *'ulama'*. Traditional religious education not only teaches the contents of the books but also the sacred tradition, manners, attitudes, rights and responsibilities. The society and the local customs where one is being educated also shape the world-view of the *'ulama'*. There are three aspects to the world- view of the *'ulama'*: the supernatural; the societal; and the self-image. The view of the *'ulama'* in regard to the supernatural is definitely religious, based on the belief in the ultimate oneness of God [*tawḥīd*]. Everything in the universe is under the One Supreme God, who does not have a partner in any sense. This view necessitates certain actions in upholding it, and consequent reactions against anything contrary to it. The *'ulama'* will never tolerate any belief or interpretations which would endanger the *tawḥīd* formulation according to their understanding of it. This understanding has been formulated in books and teachings handed down through chains of authority, generation after generation. This rejection of any different understanding is basically a manifestation of the fear of falling into any falsification of the teachings of God and His messenger, both of which are considered sacred and

eternal, as formulated in the Qur'ān and the books of *ḥadīth*. The *tawḥīdī* view has inspired in the *'ulama'* a constant fear of the world around them, particularly regarding the spread of other religions and traditions. However, since their education does not provide them any tools for dealing with these issues, their fear surfaces more often through emotional, rather then rational, expression.

The fear of contradicting the law of God is so serious that the *'ulama'* would even reject any so-called "rational" interpretation of the sacred law. To them, what has been interpreted is already enough. No one has any greater talent, professionalism, sincerity, or ability to interpret the *shari'ah* than the four venerable *'ulama'*, particularly Imām al-Shāfi'ī. The *'ulama'* will reject any "wisdom" if it is not found in the "sacred" teaching of their preference. The supernatural here has been extended, not only to God and the Prophet, but also to the Shāfi'ī teaching, which is the only valid means through which the sacred texts should be understood. Those *'ulama'* were pious, sincere, and endowed with "perfect" knowledge of the sacred text. Their piety and sincerity so enriched their knowledge that no one can ever surpass them, and thus their interpretations are also "sanctified."

These traditional *'ulama'* view the society dichotomously. The distinctions are *muslim/kafir*;[25] *ta`at/ma`siyat*; *malem/bansat*; male/female [*agam/inong*]; and adult/child [*ureung chik/aneuk miet*]. The *muslim/kafir* dichotomy is a very clear-cut one. To the Acehnese *`ulama'*, all Acehnese are Muslims. This view is still firmly held. No *`ulama'* would ever believe that any Acehnese would ever profess any religion other than Islam. The Acehnese are identified solely as Muslims, whether they are *ṭa`at* [religious] or *ma`ṣiyat* [sinners].

The *ta'at/ma'siyat* dichotomy is also seen as religious and non-religious. The *ta'at* people are those who live out a religious life. It is not that they are necessarily knowledgeable in Islamic teaching. The *ta'at* people are particularly measured by their observance of the five daily prayers, whether in pri-

[25] There is a well-known saying related to this dichotomy: "*Aceh teungku, Meulayu abang, Cina toke, Kaphe tuan.*" [Acehnese should be called "*teungku*," while Meulayu (non-Acehnese Malay) should be called "*abang*" [older brother]; for the Chinese the title is "*toke*" [business master]; and the *Kaphe* [Unbelievers, European Colonials] should be called "Sir." The proverb here distinguishes every element within Acehnese society, and each of them has the right to exist with its own explicit identity. However, it is certain that Acehnese are all Muslims and supposed to be "religious", as the title *teungku* indicates.

vate or in the congregation. Once a week they will attend the *Jum'ah* prayer in the mosque. Every day, or at least occasionally, they will attend the daily congregational prayer in the village *meunasah*. They will also fast during the month of Ramadan and pay the *zakāt al-fiṭr* when it is due. Going on the pilgrimage gives a person a special quality, and he is then seen as a "real" religious person. Such a person should be called *Teungku Haji* before his surname, even if he has only a little knowledge of religion. The *ma'siyat* people are seen as those who live life without observing — or even worse, actually contradicting — the *shari'ah*.

The *malem/bansat* dichotomy is the difference between the knowledgeable and the ignorant person pertaining to religion. A *malem* [from Arabic *'ālim*] is one who can be considered a source of religious knowledge in a particular society, regardless of what level of knowledge he has. He may function as a teacher or the leader of religious services. The *bansat* is one who does not have the religious knowledge appropriate even for his own daily life. He may observe certain praxis but he does so simply by aping what others do, not because he understands what he is doing. The *bansat* are vulnerable to involvement in *ma'siyat*. What concerns the *'ulama'* much is how to educate these *bansat* people to become *ta'at*.

A person known not to be practicing daily prayers can be put in the *bansat* category. Openly not observing the fast of Ramaan will add to the degree of *bansat* attributed to a person. The committing of any forbidden acts, such as gambling, drinking, fornicating, and the like, will be seen as more than *bansat*. This is a *ma'siyat*. When the *'ulama'* labels a person a *ma'siyat*, he must have committed a serious deed prohibited by the religion. In dealing with *bansat* or *ma'siyat* persons the *'ulama'* will have a strategy and, ultimately, a punishment. The initial strategy involves consultation, advice and admonition, whether privately or in public. If this strategy does not work, excommunication will be employed as a form of punishment. The excommunication will result in the urging of mass shunning of the person, whether in times of happiness or in times of grief. If this should happen, the person may feel overwhelming shame and eventually repent. It also happens sometimes that the person will emigrate to another village because of shame. *Ma'siyat* and *bansat* qualities are found more frequently in relation to men and less commonly in women.

The Sexual dichotomy between men and women is taken very seriously by the *'ulama'*. Their view on this is based on their understanding of the religious teachings. For the *'ulama'*, men are regarded as "higher" than

women in most respects.[26] For this reason, in many events, communications are usually directed to men only. Even in marriage, the contract is concluded only between the groom and the male representative of the bride. On the surface, then, it would seem as if women are treated as "secondary" elements in society.[27] Although Acehnese society recognizes the importance of the role of women in every aspect of life, the strong men/women dichotomy has resulted in a loss for the female side. In many cases the voices of men are heard more in the appeal if there is any case, such as a family problem, brought to the *`ulama'*. This happens particularly in cases in which the man involved is perceived as an *"`ālim"* or a *"ṭa`at"* by the society. The functioning of the *Mahkamah Shari`ah* [Religious Court][28] in recent years has provided women with a better opportunity to voice their side of the matter. However, in regard to custody of children, women always have a stronger position than their husbands.[29]

According to the *'ulama'*, there are certain rules which apply to both men and women. There are also rules which apply to men only or to women only. There will be no "mixing" between men and women except through the means prescribed by sacred law, such as marriage. The attendance of women at any congregational prayers is encouraged except on Fridays. Thus the *Jum'ah* [Friday] prayers are almost completely men's prayers. Only "clean" women are allowed to remain in prayer facilities. Many public gatherings, whether in the *masjid*s [mosques] or in the *meunasah*s, are for men only. The role of the woman is important but mainly as the facilitator without whom

[26] This is based on The Qur'ān 4:34, "Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women)." (M. M. Pickthall's translation).

[27] In fact it is not as true as it seems. In Acehnese society, women are more stable than men. Women are the "owner" of the house. It is the women who are the hosts to the men of their abode. The term "wife" in *Bahasa* Aceh is *"peurumoh"* [the one who own the house and who hosts others]. A man without a wife is seen as a "homeless" person, who should stay the night in the *meunasah*.

[28] The independent religious court was established based on *Undang-Undang*..... in which any party can bring his or her case (family, inheritance) to the court.

[29] In many instances, it was found that when a father died, the children can grow properly with the care and attention of their mother. All children are kept with the mother, even if the mother marries a new husband. However, when a mother died, the children would be dispersed, particularly in cases where the father takes another wife. It is considered normal for a widow to live alone or with her children, while widowers are usually considered incapable of doing so.

no function can be properly conducted.[30]

Another dichotomy seen by the *'ulama'* is the one between adult and child. This view is significant, since the child is seen as "not-yet-clean" in regard to physical purification. There are times, places, events, in which children are not encouraged to attend. Small children are not allowed to stay in the *meunasah*s and *masjid*s. In many rural settlements, children are not encouraged to participate in *Jum'ah* prayer. The *masjid* is a sacred place and children, particularly the boys who have not yet been circumcised, are still considered impure.[31] The *'ulama'* view is that children under age are not yet responsible for anything they do. If they pray, the reward will go to their parents. If anything happens involving them, their parents or adult guardians are held accountable. A boy is considered mature [*balgh, tamyīz*] when he first experiences sexual dreams; a girl is mature when she gets her first menstruation. This is because she would be considered a woman, capable of conceiving and rearing children.[32]

How do the *'ulama'* view themselves? The *'ulama'* regard themselves as the guardians of the society based on supra-mundane law. In light of all these dichotomies, what the *'ulama'* do is to keep harmony among all the factions in the society so that order is maintained and chaos is avoided. Order is measured by the teaching of religion, as they understand it, and its continuity from generation to generation. There are two bases for this view, the sacred and the *adat* [existing local tradition]. The sacred basis says that "the *'ulama'* are heirs to the Prophets."[33] As the heirs to the Prophets, they must uphold the teaching of the religion based on the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. So they have to acquire the proper knowledge and understand their duties and responsibilities "precisely." They have to lead the daily prayers, preside over *Jum`ah* prayers, conduct funerals, teach religion, perform marriages,[34] and

[30] They may prepare the food, decorate the podium and the stage, and serve the guests.

[31] This attitude is different from that of the urban *masjids*, where children are urged to participate in both Friday and in daily congregational prayers.

[32] The average age in which the boys are circumcised is twelve years. In the urban areas, however, it is done much earlier, mostly within their elementary school years. The girls are also "circumcised," but usually done in their six to ten months of age.

[33] The *ḥadīth* "Scholars are heirs to the Prophets" is related by Bukhārī in .....

[34] After the Marriage Law of 1974, the role of the *'ulama'* in the marriage process was limited to officiating over conclusion of the engagement, witnessing the contract, offering the sermon, reciting the *do'a'*, and consulting with the parties involved.

the like. If religious services are not maintained regularly in the society, the *'ulamā'* are deemed to have not fulfilled their duty.

The *adat* basis is that the *'ulamā'* are regarded as "the mother of the society." As the "mother," they have always to take care of the society. They should provide guidance and be the role model for others. The *'ulamā'* should always be with the society, whether in happiness or in grief. Thus, in every event — *khanduri*, marriage, dispute, contract, counsel, commencement and curing the sick — the *'ulamā'* always play a central role. The double function of the *'ulamā'* as heirs to the Prophets and the mother of the society have provided the *'ulamā'* a very powerful base in the society. Interestingly, in Acehnese families, the mother is generally very dominant.

4. The Life style of the *'ulamā'*

The notion of the supra-mundane, the society and the self are manifested in the lifestyle of the *'ulamā'*. Here "lifestyle" means the everyday impression made by the *'ulamā'*. This everyday impression can be manifested in the three functions of the religious scholar [*'ālim*] — as a human being, as the heir to the Prophets, and as the mother of the society. In order to maintain equilibrium, the life style should represent all three aspects of the *'ulamā'*, or chaos would ensue. As human beings, they have to survive; as the heirs of the prophets, they must be the role models, be dignified, uphold the laws and pass on the religious teachings; and as the mother of the society they should always be attentive, and live with the society. To maintain this balance they have to fulfil certain conditions.

As human beings, the *'ulamā'* have to survive. They need to live normal lives and to earn their living. They need food to eat, clothes to wear, families to live with, houses to dwell in. They need, therefore, rice fields, plantations, television sets, radios, transportation vehicles and other necessities. Worldly needs are boundless. If the *'ulamā'* are simply human beings, they certainly have the desire to possess all these worldly goods. However, since the *'ulamā'* are also functioning as heirs to the Prophets and the mother of the society, these desires must be controlled. The "true" *'ulamā'* will never indulge themselves by seeking constantly to acquire wealth. If the wealth comes, they will accept it saying, "*Alḥamdu lillāh*" [Praise be to Allah].[35]

In order to maintain their dignity, the *'ulamā'* also do not want to earn

[35]This phrase is evoked instead of "thank you," since the phrase meaning "thank you" is not known in *Bahasa* Aceh.

their living under the patronage of a person, a company, or even a government. This type of employment will prevent the *'ulama'* from being role models and leaders of the society. Hence it will block them from their full freedom to proclaim the "word" of God, and it will suppress their dignity. The real *'ulama'* will never get employment from any authority or company. To them, the regularly paid *'ālim* is not an *'ālim* at all.[36] A salary is considered taboo in the world of the *'ulama'*.[37]

This being the case, there are two sources of income for the *'ulama'*: self effort and generous support from the people. Like most Acehnese, the *'ulama'* usually start earning their living by being farmers. Their community and the students will help them in their work, particularly during plowing, planting, and harvesting. In case the *'ulama'* do not have land of their own, the community will provide sufficient for them. There are also *'ulama'* who grow coconut trees or cloves, or who become small businessmen. The other earnings of the *'ulama'* are from charitable gifts, endowments, *ṣadaqah* and *zakāt*. Gifts can also be in the form of material or financial help. If one of the *'ulama'* wants to have a big *khanduri* [generous party], people will bring him rice, beef, goats, fish, vegetables, etc. Any time a person wants to see the *'ālim*, he usually brings something as *ṣadaqah* [charitable gift] for him. Any special service rendered by the *'ulama'* entails giving of *ṣadaqah* to the *'ālim* involved. Some *'ulama'* are also known to be good orators, and for any speech given, *ṣadaqah* is presented. The endowment [*waqf*] is usually in the form of land, for the purpose of supporting the *dayah*s, *masjid*s and *meunasah*s. This tradition was not set up by the *'ulama'*, but by the community itself, which recognized that for the *'ulama'* to do their job, the community must take care of their well-being and support their causes. By these means, some *'ulama'* become rich and are accorded high prestige.

As human beings and the heirs of the Prophet, the *'ulama'* must always appear humble. Humility, a low profile, modesty and contentment with their lot [*qana'ah*] are their proper attributes. For instance, an *'ālim* will al-

[36]Their phrase is "*nyang teurimong gaji keon ulama*" [The one who receives a salary is not an *`ālim'*]. Thus, it is still difficult for professors in Islamic institutes to gain the title *`ulama'*. A senior *`ālim* said, "be always careful when giving a salary to the *'ulama'*. Because giving a salary to them will challenge their sincerity." This "warning" was stated by Daud Zamzamy in a seminar on "Dayah Dialogue," in Banda Aceh, September, 1992.

[37]There is an effort to provide a monthly basic "salary" for the *Teungku Imum*s for their services in the *meunasah*s or mosques, but this has been criticized by senior *`ulama'*.

ways say "*Insha Allah*" [If God wills] in referring to whatever act he intends to perform. Not to say it means to ignore the omnipotence of God, and cause him to feel as if he had committed a sin. If such a feeling does arise, the *'alim* would evoke "*Astaghfir Allah*" [I ask forgiveness from God]. When somebody dies, he will say "*Inna lillah wa inna ilayhi raji'un*" [Surely we belong to Allah and we all return to Him]. Other exclamations, such as "*Na'uzu billah*" [I seek refuge in God], "*Masha Allah*" [What God wills], and "*Subhanallah*" [Glory be to God], are common among the *'ulama'*. These expressions have now become generally fashionable among the Acehnese. In expressing such the phrases, sometimes even the *'ulama'* have to struggle with their tongues in order to get them around the Arabic words, which are difficult for them to pronounce properly. Arabic mode of expressions are important, since Arabic is considered sacred, as the language of the Qur'an and of Paradise. Expressions of words or phrases in any other foreign language is seen as spoiling the integrity of the *'ulama'*, especially Dutch and English, the "*Bahasa Kaphe*" [Languages of the Unbelievers].[38] The language of the *`ulama'* is basically *Bahasa* Aceh enriched with *Bahasa* Melayu and Arabic, reflecting the media used in the *dayah* world.

At the root of the lifestyle that informs the personality of the *'ulama'* is their names. All of the names of the *'ulama'* have either Qur'anic or Arabic roots. That is, all names can be traced back to their origin whether in the Qur'an or in the Prophetic tradition. So far no *'alim* has ever been given a name like John, Jack, or George, etc.[39] From this it is apparent that these *'ulama'* come from the most traditional and, probably, religious families, where the names adopted are all religiously motivated. Unlike Middle Easterners, the names of the *'ulama'* of Aceh are like those of common Acehnese, without inserting "*bin*" [son of] as the middle name. The name "Usman Maqam," for example, means that his personal name is "Usman," while "Maqam" is his father's name.[40]

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[38] Although most of the Chinese living in Aceh are non Muslims, their language is never called as "*Bahasa Kaphe*."

[39] Lately a few urban-oriented Acehnese families have taken to naming their sons John, Johnny, Bob and the like, which are taken neither from Arabic nor from Acehnese roots.

[40] In the Middle East the name will be written "Usman bin Maqam," meaning "Usman the son of Maqam." The Melayu people of Malaysia still adopt the middle name "*bin*" [son of] or "*binti*" [daughter of], between the person's surname and his or her father's name.

However, these conventional names are not used to refer to the *'ulama'* of Aceh. Instead of conventional names, other names - actually titles - are used, which reflect their position in the hierarchy, their dignity and the distance between the person/s and the *'ulama'*. In the hierarchy there are names like *Teungku Chik, Teungku di Bale, Teungku di Rangkang, Teungku Meuseujid* [*Imum Meuseujid*], *Teungku Meunasah* [*Imum Meunasah*], *Teungku Seumubeut* and *Teungku Leube*. "*Teungku*" denotes the general title of an *'ālim*, or any traditional religious official of Aceh, while "*Chik*" means "grand." The term "*di bale*" means "in the senior class" (that is a teacher) while "*di rangkang*" means "in the junior class". In this regard no more proper names appear; the ranking of the *teungku*s is by the level of their knowledge, as shown by their level of formal teaching activities and functions. *Imum meuseujid* is the religious leader and teacher assigned to a particular mosque. *Teungku Meunasah* represents the village level *'ulama'* who preside over the village prayer hall. *Teungku Seumubeut* is the one who teaches the reading of the Qur'ān at homes, while *Teungku Leube* is simply a distinctively "pious" person who does not hold any formal position in the hierarchy.

The element of respect for the names is indicated by the fact that the proper names of the *'ulama'* disappear; instead the title *Teungku* is attached to a certain place related to the *'ulama'*. For example, "*Teungku Haji* Muhammad Amin" is not called this any more, but rather "*Teungku* di Bugak." "Bugak" is the place where the *Teungku* first lived and taught, although he later moved to another place for the rest of his life. Another example is *Teungku* Ibrahim who was no longer called by this name, because he was called "*Teungku* di Bireuen" after he became an *'ālim*." Bireuen here denotes the place where Teungku Ibrahim happened to study religion in his youth. "*Teungku* Lueng Angen" is so known because he is currently teaching in the *dayah* located in Lueng Angen; his personal name is Daud and his father's name is Ahmady. The attachment of a place name to a particular *'ālim* indicates that he has gained respect in the community.

As guardians and the "mother" of society, the *'ulama'* are addressed with intimate titles. The title most often used is from the Arabic roots "*Ābb*" [father] and its conjugations, and "*Wālid*" [father]; "*Tu*" [daddy, father]," which is Acehnese, will also be used. Titles like "*Abu*," "*Abi*," "*Abah*," "*Abon*," "*Walid*" are very common among the community of the *'ulama'*. *Teungku Haji* Muhammad Daud Beureueh is called *Abu* Beureueh, or sometime he is simply "*Abu*," especially in conversation with or about him. *Teungku Haji* Abdullah Hanafi Tanoh Mirah is called "*Abon*" (of Tanoh Mirah) by his stu-

dents. The "parental" titles used are indications of the closeness of the people to the *`ulama'* mentioned. It is considered impolite for a person to ask for the surname of the *Teungku*.

The title "*Buya*," originally from the Arabic "*abuīya'*" [dear father], is rarely used. So far, the only *teungku* called by that title is the late *Teungku Haji* Muda Waly al-Khalidy of South Aceh, who is known as "*Buya* Muda Waly." This title may be influenced by the Minangkabau tradition.[41] The present *'alim* called "*Tu*" is *Teungku Haji* Muhammad Amin Mahmud of Blang Bladeh, North Aceh, who is known as "*Tu* Min".[42]

Those names and titles apply to the highly respected traditional *'ulama'* only. For the average *'alim*, the title is limited to *Teungku* only, such as *Teungku Meunasah, Teungku Imum, Teungku Seumubeut*, etc.

For the reformist *'ulama'*, the titles are different. They used to be called "*ustaz*" [teacher, in Arabic] and "*ayah*" [father, in *Bahasa* Indonesia]. Although some of them are still called *Teungku*, these two titles demark him as a reformist *'alim* and connect him to the *madrasah*, not the *dayah*. Very lately, the title "*bapak*" [father, in *Bahasa* Indonesia] for the *'ulama'* has started to be used.[43]

The use of the title "*Teungku Haji*" for those who have already per-

[41] In Minangkabau, West Sumatra, the title for the *'ulama'* is "*buya*," like "*kiyai*" in Java. Muda Waly used to study and lived in Minangkabau before he established himself as a reputable *'alim* in South Aceh. The unpopularity of the title "*buya*" for the *'ulama'* in Aceh may be caused by the meaning and connotation of the word. "*Buya*" in *Bahasa* Aceh means crocodile, which signifies extreme greed. Only in a very derogatory situation is person usually called a "*buya*."

[42] There are three *Bahasa* Aceh words used by children for their father: *Tu, Ku*, and *Du*. Over time these words have been rarely used and considered awkward. Instead children are now inclined to use Arabic origin terms, such as "*Walid*," "*Abu*," "*Abi*," "*Abon*," and "*Abah*," or the *Bahasa* Indonesia "*ayah*" and "*bapak*." The last two words are more popular and usually to be called "*yah*" and "*pak*" for brevity.

[43] This was heard in a seminar on "*Dayah* Dialogue" in Banda Aceh, September 7-8, 1992, held by the *Majelis Pendidikan Daerah* [Council for the Education of Aceh]. The seminar was attended by all major *`ulama'* of Aceh, scholars, and other formal leaders, including the Governor of Aceh. In each speech the *`ulama'* were called "*bapak*," which, in the bureaucracy, means "master." It sounds feudalistic and is used to mean "superior" or "boss." The other meanings of "*bapak*" are "mister," "sir" and "father." The reason given by the chair of the seminar, who himself is the son of an *`alim*, was that such title was for the sake of equality. "It was not fair if some of the participants were called *Teungku* and the others were *Bapak*. Instead of calling all participants *Teungku* it was better to call all of them *Bapak*." (Interview with Athaillah Abu Lam U, Banda Aceh, Sept. 13, 1992). It seems that to him, the title "*Teungku*" does not have the prestige that the title "*Bapak*" has.

formed *ḥajj* is simply another aspect of respect, except that the title *haji* can apply to anybody regardless of his or her knowledge of religion. The person deserves that title simply because he or she happened to perform the pilgrimage rite in Makkah during the month of Dhu al-Ḥijjah, the twelfth month of the Hijr calendar.

The main duty of the *'ulama'* is to provide services for the community, particularly leading them in religiously-related services.[44] In this category are all rituals from daily prayers to the yearly *'Īd* prayer ceremonies, and all rites of passage in the society, from birth to death. In addition, there is another unique service provided by the *'ulama'*. This service is believed to provide "supernatural" aid for those who need it. If a person gets sick, he will come to or ask for help from the *'ulama'* for treatment. If a person loses something he will ask for its the possible recovery. When a businessman wants bid for a business contract, he will ask the *'ulama'* "to pray" for his success. These kinds of services have been offered for a very long time. What the *'ulama'* do in performing this sort of service is like what a psychic or a shaman does. The formula they use is mainly to chant some passages of the Qur'ān, give special advice, use fresh water for medication, rub the sick, blow air into the sick person, and to convince the person not to worry about the ordeal and to ask for God's help. "This is a test from God, endure it! If you pass it the *hikmah* [wisdom; or something, unpredictably, better than what is happening] will come later."[45] Although there are physicians and health centers available, the people will still seek the help from a certain *`ālim*. Not all of the *`ulama'* are regarded as having this special talent, since the art of healing has nothing to do with the knowledge of the said *`ālim*. The people's impression of his "curing ability" is more important than his proficiency in religious knowledge. If a certain *`ālim* is regarded as having special healing powers, he would never reject such requests. There are times when the "prayer" is believed to have been "answered" and, in fact, there are times

[44]Since the Acehnese still feel resentful about the bad treatment they suffered from the *umara'*, starting in the Dutch era, and later from the *uleebalang*s, and even today from certain government administrators and soldiers, the *'ulama'* also have to provide some leadership functions to compensate for the lack of formal leaders.

[45]This *ikmah* [optimistic, peaceful] belief may be taken from the Qur'ān 94:5-6, *"Fa inna ma`a al-`usri yusran, inna ma`a al-`usri yusran"* [So truly with hardship comes ease, truly with hardship comes ease]. (A.J. Arberry's translation).

when it is not.[46] Having such supernatural talent, however, gives an *'ālim* special status in the sight of the people.

Dress is among the essential attributes through which an *'a lim* garners extra respect. Those *'ulama'* who do not care about their dress will be less highly valued. The tradition of proper dress for the *'ulama'* has been an enduring one in Acehnese history. A well-known Acehnese proverb says: "*Geu takot keu angkatan, geu malee keu pakaian*" [A person will be obeyed because of his might and will be respected because of his dress].[47] As the example of the Prophet, the *'ulama'* have to dress in a way befitting their dignity. They are not simply to follow the disorderly way the lay people dress. The main components of their dress is the *sarung* [a round cloth tied around the waist in lieu of pants],[48] a long-sleeved shirt [preferably white], sandals, a black *kupiah* [cap], a shoulder cloth, and a wide belt. The turban was used in the old days, but is now very rare. Instead of the black *kupiah*, the *kupiah haji* [skull cap] is also used, particularly by those *teungku*s who have performed the *ḥajj* ritual. Starting in the 1930's, the light cotton suit was also worn with the shirt by some *'ulama'*. Arabic dress is no longer part of the Acehnese *'ulama'* tradition.

As part of their appearance, very few *'ulama'* of Aceh let their beard or mustache grow. They mostly tend to shave their faces clean.[49] This may be

[46]For this kind of service the *'ulama'* receive a certain type of compensation, usually in the form of cash, given voluntarily. The amount is never negotiated or bargained over. Everyone knows what is proper to give on such an occasion.

[47]This proverb certainly applies to everybody, but more so to the *'ulama'*, who are regarded as the heirs to the Prophets. As such, the *'ulama'* are supposed to dress better than average people, since for them, the example of "perfect" dress is set. The *'ulama'* should always be aware of this injunction, because it is also based on a Prophetic tradition which says: "*Libāsukum yukrimukum qabla julūsikum, wa 'ilmukum yukrimukum ba'dahu* [Your dress gives you respect before you are seated, while your learning gives you respect afterwards]."

[48]*Sarung*, (*lunggi*, in Urdu), may be taken from *sarunj*, the old rural Yemenese language: it is a round unsewn dress worn by a person in lieu of pants. The *sarung* is the characteristic dress of the *'ulam_'* in Aceh. Throughout Aceh the wearing of the *sarung* is still considered necessary for doing proper prayer [*ṣalāh*]. It is rather indecent if a person performs his *ṣalats* in pants, particularly if he is to lead it. Parts of southern Arabia, southern India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and other southeast Asian countries also use the *sarung*. In *Bahasa* Aceh it is called "*ija krong;*" "*ija*" means "cloth," "*krong*" means "round." *Sarung* has been part of the dress of the Bengali [present southern Bangladesh] people for a long time. (See, George Phillips, "Ma Huan Account of the Kingdom of Bengala," *JRASGB&I*, July 1985, part III), 523.

because of the negative Acehnese view of the beard. This view could have been shaped by the fact that only a very few Acehnese have a "proper" beard. Some people will call a person a *"kameng landok"* [un-castrated male goat] if he keeps a little beard under his chin. Obviously keeping a beard is not considered at all a necessary attribute of an Acehnese *`ālim'*.[50]

Having a family is an essential part of the life of the *'ulama'*. To stay single is a denigration for the *'ulama'* personality. It used to be that the *'ulama'* would be more respected if he had more than one wife. This is not caused simply by the wish of the *'ulama'* to observe polygamy but also by the desire of the community to have the "sacred seed" in their family and a religious teacher in their community. When a *teungku* marries into a family he would take care of the teaching of religion to the community in the surrounding area.

The normal human being has always had a desire for sexual pleasure. The *'ulama'* view is that sexual lust is natural [*sunnat Allāh*] and will not vanish until it has been satisfied. The proper fulfillment, according to the *shar'ah*, is considered sacred. That is why the marriage to more than one wife is sanctioned. It is necessary for the fullest realization of the sexual nature. Fulfillment of sexual needs will shield the *'ālim* from worldly temptation, permitting him to serve the society without any distraction.[51] The *'ulama'* hold strongly to the *ḥadīth*: "Marriage is part of my tradition; who does not like my tradition, he is not part of my community."[52] As such, divorce is very rare among the *`ulama'*.

Having children is part of the family life of the *'ālim*. The more the children one has, the better. It fulfills the *adth*: "Marry a woman who is capable of bearing children, full of love; because I will be proud of you if later my people are so numerous compared to others."[53] Although the *`ulāma'*

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[49]Before the 1970's it was also common for "pious" *teungkus* to shave their heads clean, as well as their faces.

[50]While the *ḥadīth* on the importance of keeping the beard by Muslim males is well-known, it is not heard from the *'ulama'* that Muslims must keep their beards in order to follow the sacred tradition or to show piety.

[51]Interview with Tgk. Dahlan Tanoh Abee, February 26, 1992, commenting on his forefathers' attitude concerning why polygamy was practiced among the *'ulama'*.

[52]The text says: *"Al-nikaḥu min sunnatī fa man raghiba `an sunnatī fa laysa minn,"* related by Ibn Mājah in his *Sunan*, chapter *Nikaḥ, ḥadīth* 1.

[53]The text says, *"Tazawwaju al-waduda al-waluda, fa innī mukāthirun bikum al-umama ...,"* related by Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan*, chapter *Nikaḥ, hadīth* 3; and Ibn Mājah in his *Sunan*, chapter *Nikaḥ, hadith* 1.

emphasize the importance of the religious education for the masses, the attitude toward the education of their children is more liberal. More and more of their children are now attending regular schools or *madrasah*. None of the children of the late Abu Beureueh are *`ulama'*. The late Abu Lam U and Abu Krueng Kalee followed the desires of their children as to which school they were to attend. Only the children of *Buya* Muda Waly were trained in the *dayah* and *madrasah*. The education of the children of the *`ulama'* has been questioned recently, because fewer and fewer children of the *`ulama'* attend the religious schools, whether traditional or modern.[54]

Social life and entertainment for the *'ulama'* takes the form of entertaining the people. Almost every day a respected *'ālim* has guests or is invited to a social function. Going to a coffee shop is considered indecent. Some of the *'ulama'* have television sets at their home, but usually only for the members of their family. They themselves may not have time to enjoy it. Few *'ulama'* read a newspaper.[55] Sport activities are not part of the *`ulama'* world. They call it *lahwu* or *laghwu* [Qur'ānic term for vain or iddle pleasure] — it is a waste of time and a show of pride. Smoking and drinking coffee, however, are common among the *`ulama'*, particularly among those in the *dayah* life.

5. The socio-political relations of the *'ulama'*

As the guardian of the society, the *'ulama'* realize the importance of their activities and their involvement with the surrounding community. Involvement may take the form of institutional or personal relationships or way of life. In either case, it can be distinguished from political, social or individual affiliations.

The most important socio-political relations is the relation between the *'ulama'* and the *umara'* [rulers]. This relation is deeply rooted in Acehnese history. From the time of the Islamic sultanates of Peureulak, Pasai, and Aceh Darussalam until the independence of the Republic, the relation between the *'ulama'* and the *umara'* has been instrumental in shaping the religiosity of the Acehnese and the spreading of Islam through the archipelago. Whenever

[54]The cases of "modern" *`ulama'*, like those of the leaders of the *Majelis Ulama*, are also questioned. None of the children of A. Hasjmy, Ismuha, or Ibrahim Husein, who were themselves presidents of the Islamic Institute, joined religious schools.

[55]*Tgk.* M. Amin Mahmud reads the daily *Waspada*, and *Tgk.* Nasir Waly reads the weekly *Tempo*, while Muhammad Waly used to read *Jakarta Jakarta*, one of the "hot" magazines, before he functioned as the *Teungku Chik*.

this relation was not in operation, tragedy followed. From this relation there appeared many renowned *'ulama'*, such as amzah al-Fanṣūrī, Shams al-Dīn Pasai, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkīlī, Chik di Tiro Muhammad Saman, right up to Daud Beureueh. The *'ulama'* of Aceh believe that a harmonious relationship between the *'ulama'* and the *umara'* will permit the society to prosper. It is like a family in which the father and mother live together in harmony, providing love and care to their consequently happy children. Whenever this harmony is disrupted, calamity befalls.[56] Thus, this kind of affiliation is regarded as benefitting the *'ulama'*, the *umara'*, and the society alike. When the *umara'* need social support, they have to go through the *'ulama'*. When the *'ulama'* have a problem, the *umara'* will lend a hand. This interplay between the *'ulama'* and the *umara'* is also known as the division of duty. The duty of *'ulama'* is *tabyn* [explanation of right and wrong] and the duty of *umara'* is *tanfīdh* [implementation, execution]. To them, collaborating with the *umara'* seems obligatory, especially if it is for the religious well-being and stability of the society.[57]

The political affiliation of the Acehnese *'ulama'* took shape in three stages. Before independence, the *'ulama'* joined the *PERTI* [*Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah* = The Association for Islamic Education].[58] During the Sukarno era, the *'ulama'* were involved as political tools. Recently, although there was no official separation from the *PERTI*, the Acehnese *'ulama'* joined themselves into what they call the *Insafuddin* organization. This organization is characterized as religious, educational and independent. Since the *'ulama'* are not well-trained organizers, the Insafuddin organization is not notably well-run. In the Council of *'Ulama'* of Aceh, the organization is well-represented. Practically speaking, each of the *'ulama'* works independently, without being tied to any exclusive organization.

The era of *PUSA 'ulama'* was seen as an interregnum in the traditional

[56] The *'ulama'* - *uleebalang* clash in the forties culminated in the social revolution. Then in the fifties, when the rulers were in tension with *'ulama'*, the rebellion of 1953 took place, and lasted for almost ten years.

[57] There were times when the traditional *'ulama'* were "hidden" behind the glamour of the reformist *'ulama'* of *PUSA*, until the Acehnese rebellion of 1953.

[58] *PERTI* is an educational and religious organization established in West Sumatra during the colonial era. Prior to independence, *PERTI* joined the *MASYUMI* [*Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia*]. Then *PERTI* withdrew from *MASYUMI* and established itself as an independent political organization. By the seventies *PERTI* had joined the *PPP*. Recently it became active as a social organization again.

'ulama' role. The "glamorous" performances of the *PUSA 'ulama'* concealed the abiding significance of the traditional *'ulama'*. This era continued until 1953, when the so- called *PUSA 'ulama'* launched the rebellion against the central government. This rebellion was not supported by the traditional *'ulama'*.[59]

At the time of the rebellion, the *dayah 'ulama'* tried to take the lead in religious education, but to no avail. The period between the fifties and sixties are considered a setback to the development of Acehnese society, economically and educationally. The rebellion caused loss of life and property, and the stagnation of education. Particularly, many schools were closed, and the reformist *'ulama'*, who mostly joined the rebellion, were either detained or killed. It was after the 1970's that the popularity of the *dayah* started to flourish again. On the other hand, the direct involvement of the reformist *'ulama'* in politics had prevented them from training substantial numbers of cadres to continue their reform activities.

The communist coup in 1965, and its aftermath, also caused another setback of the development of Acehnese society. The political turmoil and the mass executions of the communist followers shattered the social and political foundations. It was during this ordeal that a Military Commander summoned some renowned *'ulama'* in Banda Aceh to participate in the suppression of communism. As a result, the Council of *'Ulama'* was established and communist ideology was prohibited, based on a *fatwa* [legal decision] issued by the Majelis Ulama. Since the Council was initiated by the government, the involvement of many elements of the *'ulama'* were needed. It is through the Council of *'Ulama'* that many of the religious concerns are channelled, despite the fact that the concerns of the traditional *'ulama'* are less acknowledged, although there are a few traditional *'ulama'* included. This is because the *Majelis Ulama* is an urban-based organization, while the traditional *'ulama'* are mostly residents of rural areas. Thus, some decisions of the *Majelis Ulama* were not well received in the rural areas. In a few cases their

[59] The traditional *'ulama'* denounced the rebellion as religiously unlawful, because it created disaster for the people and the country. It killed people, destroyed properties and left orphans. (Interview with *Tgk.* Daud Zamzamy, July 1, 1992, quoting a statement made by the late *Tgk.* Hasan Krueng Kalee, and *Buya* Muda Waly, two among the leading traditional *'ulama'*).

*fatwā*s were rejected and ridiculed.[60]

In the political arena, the *dayah 'ulama'* (traditional *'ulama'*) used to participate in the *PERTI*, a West Sumatra-based religious party. When the party was merged into the *PPP*, the *'ulama'* supported this party. When most of the *'ulama'* joined this party, the people also rallied behind them. Until recently, the ruling party, *GOLKAR* (Functional Group], was not very popular in Aceh. Systematically, the *GOLKAR* leaders set out to recruit some *'ulama'* to their side. Eventually they succeeded, but at the cost to the *'ulama'* of rejection by their community.[61] This situation is now undergoing a gradual change. Though the "too early" participation of some *`ulama'* is still regretted, if they were to join *GOLKAR* party now, the situation would be different. The gradual change in this regard can be seen in the last three General Elections. Regardless of the mechanism of the elections, this table shows the declining popularity of the *PPP* and the increasing acceptance of the *GOLKAR*.

[60]The case of the *zakat jasa* [a religious tax taken from salaries or earnings of professionals] is a serious matter. The traditional *'ulama'* rejected the *fatwā* that imposed its mandatory collection. One of the arguments for this rejection is that the Prophet never collected any *zakāt* from these salaries. "We are not supposed to innovate new laws. Was the Prophet so ignorant in the case of *zakāt*?" So their argument goes. The *fatwā* of the *Majelis Ulama* of 1972 says, that "it is not fair if we simply collect *zakat* from the farmers and traders, who, generally, are poorer than those professionals, employers and employees. Is not Islam the religion of justice?"

[61]The cases of *Tgk.* Usman Fauzi in Aceh Besar and *Tgk.* Murad Baden in North Aceh provide evidence of this. There are reasons why many of the people do not yet appreciate *'ulama'* participation in the *GOLKAR* party. First, *GOLKAR* is a political party for every citizen, not for Muslims only. Hence, the party will not pursue Muslim interests alone. Second, Golkar is seen as having been contaminated by corruption and oppression. The prevalent corruption is seen as committed by *GOLKAR* leaders in the bureaucracy and no significant step has been taken to overcome it. Also, the military forces, the backbone of the *GOLKAR* party, are seen as responsible for terrible persecutions of the people. Starting from 1953, up till today merciless and sadistic actions have been attributed to soldiers. Furthermore, *GOLKAR* is considered a rich organization, both in opportunity and funds. If an *'alim* joins the *GOLKAR* he is considered as having been promised a position, money, or both. Expecting money and position should not be the concern of the *'ulama'* at all, for then the *'ulama'* have no more time to think of the people. Joining other parties, especially *PPP*, is not considered quite as bad, because there is no money or position forthcoming.

Tabel 1: The three last general elections in Aceh[62]

Years of General Election	Seats contested	Members appointed	Members elected	*PPP*	*GOLKAR*	*PDI*
1982	40	8	32	19	12	1
1987	45	9	36	15	19	2
1992	45	9	36	13	21	2

The three last columns clearly indicate that gradually *PPP* is loosing, and that the two other contenders, particularly *GOLKAR*, are gaining.

6. Closing remarks

From the above discussion, it is clear that the traditional *'ulam_'* are those who obtained their education in the traditional religious schools, particularly the *meunasah* and *dayah*. Based on their education and functions, seven ranks, at least, can be distinguished among the *'ulama'*. In order to function properly, they have to lead the society in religious services, and teach religion regularly. They are respected because of their piety, devotion, and knowledge, manifested both through their actions and their appearance. Respect is maintained by their sincerity, impartiality and commitment to the service for which they are trained. By not taking part in political activities, particularly in the ruling party, by not accepting a regular salary, and by dressing properly, their dignity is preserved. Through their immediate followers the *'ulama'* are known, and the respect given them is extended through the larger community. Respect yields two advantages: financial support fo the *'ulama'* and stability for the community. The *'ulama'* earn their living by their own labor and from the generous support of the society. Cooperation with the authorities is always welcome, but with a great degree of caution, for fear the *'ulama'* may become mere instruments in the hands of others, rather than behaving as heirs of the Prophets and the guardian of the society.

The author is lecturer of the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Arraniri Aceh.

[62]Source: Panitia Pemilihan Daerah Tingkat I Aceh, Banda Aceh: 1992.