

HISTORY, AUTHORITY AND POWER A Case of Religious Violence in Aceh

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Abstract: This article discusses the way Islam transformed into an ideology that potentially used as justification for violence. By analysing the case of the murder of Teungku Ayub, leader of a small circle for basic religious learning (*pengajian*) in Bireun, Aceh, in 2012, the study reveals to the role of Islam as an ideology of mass movement to cleanse deviant tenet (*aliran sesat*) among the Acehnese. This is because of two reasons. First, the term of the veranda of Mecca (*serambi Mekkah*) remains considered as “holy word” in the Acehnese society today, which supports any Islamic agenda of purifying Aceh from *aliran sesat*. Secondly, the adoption of Islam into a formal body of state (Aceh province) represented by the implementation of Islamic law (*shari’ah*). Both reasons above strengthen ulama in Aceh to facilitate the mass movement in the name of religion as well as the rationale background of the murder of Teungku Ayub.

Keywords: ulama (*teungku*), Dien al Syariah, religious violence.

Introduction

This article attempts to shed light on the incident that took place in Biruen, a small town in Aceh, at 16 November 2012. It is located

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around 150 miles east of Banda Aceh. Three people were killed and eleven people injured in the accident. Actually, the main target was Teungku (Tgk.) Ayub, a teacher of a small circle for Islamic learning (*pengajian*). He was accused of doing propagation of deviant religious tenet (*aliran sesat*).

Besides the case of Darul Islam rebellion in 1950s, the “separatist” movement during the New Order, and Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM), this incident is also one of the examples that portrays the picture of violence in Acehnese society and history that is closely related to the condition in which religion (Islam) is adopted into a formal body of state (Aceh province), as is embodied in Dinas Syariah—the special section in regional government which is responsible for the implementation of Islamic law (*shari’ah*) in Acehnese society. Dinas Syariah together with Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU, Ulama Consultative Council of Aceh) appears as the guardian of Islamic faith with the tasks, among others, to protect the Acehnese from deviant Islamic ideas and practices.

The Biruen case under this study reveals the way the task of Dinas Syariah held such a major contributory factor behind the tragic event of 2012. The task of Dinas Syariah is congruent with, and hence is supported by, the belief system of the Acehnese on the Islamic status of the area as the veranda of Mecca (*serambi Mekkah*) which has strong background in the courses of its history. Preserved and disseminated by the ulama (*teungku*) in Islamic learning institution (*dayah*), this believed remains alive in the memory of the Acehnese today and makes them very assertive to any Islamic agendas and aspirations. This belief that then is transformed, with the political support of Dinas Syariah, into ideology of movement against *aliran sesat*.

To make the result of this study comprehensively, interviews held with religious people, especially in Bireuen and Banda Aceh. They include the head and staff of Dinas Syariah in Bireuen, members of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU, Ulama Consultative Council of Aceh) in Bireuen and Banda Aceh, local Kantor Kementerian Agama (Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs) in Bireuen, and government officials in the Bireuen, including officers of the Bireuen Police Officer who were directly involved in the appeasement of the crime scene.

The interview also involved the people from Desa Jambo Dalam, especially the village chief (*keucik*) and the village secretary. In order to

gain more information about Tgk. Aiyub, interview is conducted with people who live close to Tgk. Aiyub's house while other villagers were present. In the coffee shop not far from Tgk. Aiyub's house, some extra issues were revealed about the local people's perspective on Tgk. Aiyub that enriched the data gathered from the religious elites in government circles both in Bireuen and in Banda Aceh. I should emphasise that the village elite were involved in the earliest stages in the affair that ended in the death of Tgk. Aiyub.

Chronology of Event

I will start with the chorology of event. Before sunset, around 5 pm, people started to gather in the village of Jambo Dalam.² Unlike on ordinary days, that evening the coffee shops around the village were overcrowded. The people were not from Jambo Dalam but from surrounding villages. The situation remained as it was for some hours but as evening proceeded, more and more people gathered in the coffee shops. After much deliberation, the people decided to pay a visit to Tgk. Aiyub.

Around 9 pm, the crowd, which had grown quite large, arrived at the village where Aiyub lived. Supplied with information that went round that he had disseminated deviant religious tenets, the crowd wanted to find out what was really going on in his house. Others, who already knew Tgk. Aiyub tried to get near to his house in order to 'reIslamise' him. Others simply came along as friends or family members had invited them to join and they only wanted to see what would happen.

At 22 pm, the crowd had grown even bigger. The people who up to then had stayed in the coffee shops also went to Aiyub's house. According to the statements released by the Bireuen police office, the Chief of the Social and Political Staff of the Peulimbang Police Force had sent troops but only in very small numbers. Many more officers were deployed only later after assistance had arrived from the police office in Bireuen and that of Lhok Seumawe. However, their numbers were no match for the crowd that ran into well over one thousand

² The event took place in Gampong Jambo Dalam, Kecamatan Peulimbang, Bireuen, Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, the village where Tgk. Aiyub lived. The village is about 20 kilometres away from the City of Bireuen seen from the direction of Banda Aceh.

people.³ As a result, the police had a difficult time to contain the situation as it unfolded in front of them. Moreover, the crowd ignored the police who tried to prevent the crowd from committing violence.

At 24 pm, a clash between the crowd and the followers of Tgk. Aiyub could no longer be avoided. It happened when, after 23 pm, a man had been stabbed to death by one of Aiyub's followers who had been ready to face the mob. After this, the people's amok could no longer be contained. They surrounded Tgk. Aiyub's place and demanded that he came out of his house. After a while, around two hours, they forced Tgk. Aiyub out his house and he was punished right in front of it. Besides being hit with sharp objects—even his ears were cut—he was burned alive right in front of the enraged crowd.⁴

After having succeeded in murdering Tgk. Aiyub, the crowd slowly dispersed and the police was able to contain the situation by evacuating the victims, including Tgk. Aiyub corpse. The next day, Aiyub's wife collected his body and he was buried in the Sare area, where his wife came from.

The incident raised many questions, among others, how was it possible that the crowd's punishment—burning the victim alive—could have taken place? Who is responsible for this tragedy? What were the underlying socio-historical and religious circumstances? This article tries to answer some of these questions.

Who was Tgk. Aiyub?

There is not much to tell about Tgk. Aiyub's life. He spent his childhood in Desa Jambo Dalam, he was skilled in martial self-defence art (*seni bela diri*) because of which his peers respected him. His father was called Syahkubat,

There is no information when and to whom he learned Islamic religion to the extent that he deserved to have title *teungku* according to the Acehese tradition and culture. A neighbour and friend of Aiyub's even categorically stated that Bang Aiyub—as he called avoided the use of the honorific *teungku*— as he had never spent time as a student

³ The Bireum Police Station estimated that as many as 1500 people had gathered. Interview with W. Eko Sulisty, Deputy Chief of the Bireuen Police, Bireuen, Aceh, 17 December 2012.

⁴ Interview with Yusmandin Idris, senior journalist with *Serambi Indonesia*, in Bireuen, Aceh, 17 December 2012.

(*santri*) in an Islamic boarding school (*dayah*). He had left his Jambo Dalam for a long time to find work in another city in Aceh.

Tgk. Aiyub started to draw the attention of his fellow villagers when he initiated to establish the *pengajian* in his house in 2010. He did not have many followers, around 20 persons only. Yet, the way he managed the *pengajian* was exclusive and closed to the villagers, leading the people to start wondering about his teaching activities and then being suspicious as they witnessed the visitors of *pengajian* came from outside the village—it was rumoured that they came in expensive cars.⁵ These feelings among the villagers were reinforced by the fact that Tgk. Aiyub and his followers refused to socialise in daily lives of the village, so that they assumed that Tgk. Ayub and his *pengajian* kept themselves far removed from the people around them. The story went round that Tgk. Aiyub and his family never participated in any social activity, not even when one of their neighbours died. Based on this condition the villagers strongly assumed that he was propagating deviated tenet (*ajaran sesat*).

This condition continued until it drew the attention of the local village elites. On 15 March 2011, a meeting was held in Jambo Dalam, in Meunasah Gampong to be precise to discuss the rising issue of Tgk. Aiyub's *pengajian*. The outcome of the meeting is the form of a statement (*pernyataan*) which has been signed by the village chief, Tgk. Imum Gampong, and the religious [Mosque] leader of the village, Imam Chiek Mesjid, and it was issued on 16 March 2011. The statement are: (1) he and his followers should discontinue all of their activities; (2) he was not allowed to receive visitors, especially from outside the village except when he reported them in advance to the village authorities; (3) he was ordered to participate in all village activities; (5) when he disregarded the points mentioned above, the

⁵ There are many analyses about this. One of them says that the reason that rich people came to visit Tgk. Aiyub was to purchase prohibited drugs. However, others say that their intension was to obtain certain "*jimat*" (charms) which they could use to accelerate their businesses. This is related to the news that one of Tgk. Aiyub's followers, Tgk. Mukti, was an Acehnese who lived in Malaysia. Interview with Saifullah, Head of the Dinas Syariah Office of Bireuen, Bireuen, Aceh, 18 December 2012 and Amiruddin, MPU Secretary of the Bireuen Region, Bireuen, Aceh, 18 December 2012.

village authorities and the villagers would impose sanctions or take other necessary actions.⁶

The statement was handed out to all civil servants in the District of Peulimbang, that is, the District Head, the Chief of the Social and Political Staff, the Military District Commander, and the MPU Chairman.⁷ It also was reported to the regional authorities of Bireuen Regency, in particular the office of Dinas Syariah, urging them to investigate the activities in Tgk. Aiyub's *pengajian*. And, as the local elites and people had expected, the Dinas Syariah found that the religious instruction Tgk. Aiyub offered in his *pengajian* was potentially of becoming deviating. Therefore, Tgk. Aiyub was summoned via the Regent of Bireuen to meet with Dinas Syariah Office and the MPU. However, Tgk. Aiyub failed to appear. He only sent one of his followers.⁸

Since then the news that Tgk. Aiyub was teaching the tenets of a deviant sect to his followers circulated ever more widely. This was not only among the village community where Tgk. Aiyub lived, but it became common knowledge among the socio-religious elite in the Bireuen Regency. The issue had reached even wider levels and had come to the knowledge of the leaders of Islamic boarding schools (*dayab*) who were closely connected to the Dinas Syariah.⁹ All this subsequently coagulated into a force in the midst of Acehnese society, especially in Bireuen, that even more reinforced the labelling of Tgk. Aiyub with his *pengajian* as being deviate.

Guarding the Faith: The Dinas Syariah Office and the MPU

Based on the previous points seem that Dinas Syariah was uncertain with the legal status of religious teachings Tgk. Aiyub aspired

⁶ Interview with Fadli Ismail, Village Chief of Desa Jambo Dalam, Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 20 December 2012.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ I should emphasise that the office of Dinas Syariah has a very strong network indeed with the *dayab* leaders. This is based on various arguments, one among them that many employees of the Dinas Syariah have a strong affiliation with a *dayab* even though there are insufficient statistic data that support this. Apart from that, the regional authorities themselves cultivate the *dayabs* and they are thus are very close to the Dinas Syariah. Therefore, the *dayabs* naturally feel they need to have a connection with, and be part of the network of the regional authorities and the Dinas Syariah This is also related to the financial support the regional authorities extent to the *dayabs*.

to. However, due to the increasingly labelling ‘deviant’ to Tgk. Aiyub’s teaching among the Muslims, Dinas Syariah felt the need to launch an exhaustive investigation. The Dinas Syariah had a number of reasons for doing so and the most important one was to guard the faith of the community (*Ablussunah wal-jama’ah*) against the possible influence of teachings that did not accord with the *shari’ah*. It should be stressed that the office of Dinas Syariah was indeed set up for this purpose. It is an inherent part in the effort to implement Islamic law in the whole of Aceh. In reference to the Regional Regulation No. 33/2001, the Dinas Syariah is tasked with the planning and the implementation of *shari’ah* in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD), especially in connection with making preparations for the formulation of bylaw (*qanun*) for the implementation of *shari’ah*, the formation of a *shari’ah* supreme court, manpower and facilities preparation, assistance and organisation of the provision of means of religious worship, monitoring of the enactment of *shari’ah*, and the provision of guidance and counselling.¹⁰

The establishment of Dinas Syariah confirms the fact that Aceh is a region in Indonesia which strongly aspires to enact Islamic law. Apart from historical and sociological reasons,¹¹ this aspiration is also based on the validation of Law No. 44/1999 on the Provision of Special Status for the province of Aceh and Law No. 18/2001 on Special Autonomy for the Special Province of Aceh as the Province Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. Hence, on this bases, a string of regional bylaws were issued like Regional Bylaw No. 5/2000 on the implementation of *shari’ah*, which was made into law on 25 August 2000, and Regional Bylaw No. 6/2000 on the provision of education.¹²

¹⁰ Al Yasa Abubakar, “Pelaksanaan Syariat Islam di Aceh, Sejarah dan Prospek,” in Fairus M. Nur Ibr, *Syariat di Wilayah Syariat: Pernik-Pernik Islam di Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam* (Banda Aceh: Dinas Syariat Islam Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2002), p. 44.

¹¹ It is important to emphasise that Aceh has a local saying (*badih Madja*) “*Adat ngön syariat lagee dzat ngön sijent*” (Adat and Shariah are like Essence and its characteristics) or “*Hukum ngo Adat lagee Zat ngo Sipeuet*” (Law and Adat are like object and its characteristics, inseparable); Islam is identical with Acehnese society in the same vein. See Ismuha, “Ulama Aceh dalam Perspektif Sejarah,” Taufik Abdullah (ed.), *Agama dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Rajawali-Yayasan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial, 1983), p. 7.

¹² For information pertaining to these bylaws, see Dinas Informasi dan Komunikasi Daerah Istimewa Aceh, *Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Dinas Informasi dan Komunikasi Daerah Istimewa Aceh, 2001), as quoted by Taufik

Besides Dinas Syariah, there is also the MPU (Ulama Consultative Council), an 'ulama institution that was founded in 1966 and confirmed with Regional Bylaw No. 1/1966. MPU is an institution set up in preparation of the implementation of *shari'ah*. It is said that MPU has inspired the establishment of the MUI at the national level in 1975.¹³ During the New Order, the people in Aceh knew the organisation as 'MUI' and only after Reformation, on 25-27 July 2001, the term MPU adopted in Aceh after the All Acehese Ulama Meeting agreed to change the name back from MUI Aceh to MPU. Following the legal mandate that required the formation of new and independent 'ulama institutions, hierarchical relations no longer exist between the MPU as a new institution and the central MUI as was the case during the New Order.¹⁴

The MPU, which consists of 'ulama and intellectuals, had a key role in the implementation process of Islamic *shari'ah* in Aceh. This key-role comprised its involvement in the legalisation process of the Qanun, both in formulating its draft and in discussions with executive and legal bodies. It obtained this position because its legal status was better legally defined in the Law and in the Qanun.¹⁵ The MPU is independent institution and its task is to offer advice in a number of government policy fields, development, social and society issues, and even those pertaining to Islamic economy. In order to be able to execute its task, the MPU issues legal fatwas and advices, on request or on its own accord, on policy issues of the regional government.¹⁶

Another institution is established to support the agenda of implementing the *shari'ah* in Aceh is Mahkamah Syar'iyah. It was established to act as a religious court and it was founded based on Presidential Decree No. 11/2003 and Law NAD No. 18/2002. By

Adnan Amal and Rizal Panggabean, *Politik Syariah Islam: Dari Indonesia hingga Nigeria* (Jakarta: Alvabet, 2004), p. 26.

¹³ For the discussion on MUI, see M. Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwa of the Council of Indonesian Ulama: a Study of Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia 1975-1988* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993).

¹⁴ Abidin Nurdin, "Ulama dan Proses Legislasi: Mengkaji Legitimasi Lembaga Ulama Aceh," in Arskal Salim and Adlin Sila (eds), *Serambi Mekkah yang Berubah, Views from Within* (Jakarta: Pustaka Alvabet, 2010), p. 98.

¹⁵ Arskal Salim, *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Laws in Modern Indonesia*, (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2008), p. 156.

¹⁶ Nurdin, "Ulama dan Proses Legislasi, p. 99.

March 2003, 20 courts had been officially established.¹⁷ For this reason, the *shari'ah* jurisdiction was executed by the Mahkamah Syar'iyah. This refers to article 25, paragraph (2) of Law No.18/2001. Article 128 Paragraph (4) of Law No.11/2006 that regulates the competence of the Mahkamah Syar'iyah which includes the aspects of faith, religious obligations, *mu'amalah* and morality that all are based on *shari'ah* in the National Legal System as further regulated in the Qanun of the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. This means that all aspects of *shari'ah* fall under the competency of the Mahkamah Syar'iyah including penal law (*jinayah*). This shows that Law No. 18/2001 (Law No. 1/2006) states that the *shari'ah* is enacted as positive law in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Dinas Syariah and Tgk. Aiyub

The incident on 23 March 2011 rised the sentiment of rejecting Tgk. Aiyub with his *pengajian*. The label of '*sesat*' continued to grow and become even more widespread among the people and the elite. This condition led Dinas Syariah and MPU of Biruen to set up an open court to decide whether Tgk. Aiyub's Islamic thoughts were deviant or not.¹⁸ The court convened on 5-6 April 2011 and was attended by various witnesses who mostly were *dayah* leaders in Bireuen. The open court issued MPU Decision which in essence demanded Tgk. Aiyub to stop all his teaching activities based on three reasons: (1) Tgk. Aiyub did not have the scholarly capacities to offer religious instruction or to teach in a *pengajian*; (2) his activities lead to deviation because they do not accord with the *fatwas* and practices of the 'ulama in Aceh which had developed in Acehnese society in general and especially in the local community; and (3) his activities lead to unrest and slander in society which might ultimately lead to anarchism.¹⁹

If the MPU decision looked and analised closely, it would seem that it in essence tended to be a compromise. This was because the MPU was unable to find deviating teachings with Tgk. Aiyub and his group as suspected by the village elite and the Dinas Syariah. None of

¹⁷ *Suara Indonesia Baru*, 5 March 2003, as quoted by Adnan and Panggabean, *Politik Syariat Islam*, p. 28.

¹⁸ Interview with Tgk. H. Hanafiah Hamzah, BA, Chairman of the MPU in Kabupaten Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 19 December 2012.

¹⁹ MPU Decision of Kabupaten Bireuen No. 451.5/002/2011 on the Activities of Tgk. Aiyub Syahkubat.

the aspects that the MPU of Aceh Province had stipulated in order for a teaching to be ranked in the category of deviant was found in the teachings at Tgk. Aiyub's *pengajian*. Whilst, the MU did not firmly negotiate with all parties involved who wanted Tgk. Aiyub's teachings condemned as being deviant. The MPU thus concluded that Tgk. Aiyub's teachings were exclusive and therefore potentially leading to deviation. This was called—and acknowledged by the leader MPU of Bireuen himself—as a “compromise” it had to make about Tgk. Aiyub's teachings. Seems that it was made as middle way to respond the rising sentiment of anti-deviant sect among the Acehnese in Bireun, as was stated mainly the leader of Dinas Syariah and the ‘ulama of *dayah*.

Organising (again) the *Pengajian*

After the open court, Tgk. Aiyub discontinued his teaching activities for almost one year. He abided to each point, and he signed an agreement, that resulted from the MPU meeting pertaining to himself and his circle.

However, in early 2012 the community of the village witnessed that he had resumed his teaching activities. Again beside his Acehnese followers, his *pengajian* was also visited by many guests from outside the village—of whom it never became clear who they were or where they came from with the exception of Tgk. Mukti, an Acehnese who lived in Malaysia. The sessions were also now conducted even more close than they had before. Apart from members and followers, nobody joined the *pengajian* or, in the parlance of the local secretary, was invited to Tgk. Aiyub's teaching sessions in his house. The exclusiveness was moreover not limited to the *pengajian* activities, but also to his social lives. Tgk. Aiyub and his family and group were no longer at all involved in the social issues in the surroundings where he lived.

This condition again invited reactions, especially from the local elite—the village chief and religious leaders. They saw that Tgk. Aiyub no longer abided to the agreement that was made after the MPU meeting stating that he was to halt all teaching activities in his house. Therefore, on 24 September 2012, the village leadership sent a letter to the district chief of Peulimbang to complain about the Tgk. Aiyub issue. The district chief of Peulimbang directed the complaint to the Regional authorities and subsequently to the Dinas Syariah of Bireuen. Based on the letter of Geuchiek Gampong Jambo Dalam Kecamatan

Peulimbang on 24 September 2012 about the teachings of the Tgk. Aiyub's pengajian, which had resumed its activities, the Peulimbang district chief requested the regent to quickly ban Tgk. Aiyub group's activities.²⁰ And, as before, the Regent of Bireuen requested the Dinas Syariah and the MPU to handle the issue which, in its view was causing unrest among the people.

. As a result, the Dinas Syariah invited Tgk. Aiyub's group to return to the singular belief of the *Ablussunah wal-Jama'ah* in accordance with the *fatwa* of the MPU in Aceh, which had been in force in the entire Aceh region. It is important to note that in 2007, the MPU of Aceh had already issued *fatwa* on the guidelines for the detection of deviant sects. And, among the thirteen criteria to be used to detect whether a sect is deviant or not was having a conviction or following a belief that did not accord with the *Ablussunah wal-Jama'ah*.

Keeping the *fatwa* as its guideline—and of course its accompanying authorities such as the state institutions (Bireuen Regional Government)—the Dinas Syariah officially summoned Tgk. Aiyub for a dialogue and consultation with the regional authorities concerning the complain of the community that had launched against him because he no longer abided to the agreement made during the meeting with the MPU of Bireuen. As stated by the Head of the Dinas Syariah of Bireuen, this summons was a persuasive step he had taken in order to settle the issue and to prevent it from getting out of control. He emphasised his right to do so and said that Acehnese society, especially that in Bireuen, is easily enticed to act upon issues of deviant sects.²¹

However, Tgk. Aiyub and his group reputed the invitation of Dinas Syariah and hence he failed to show up to the regional authorities. As a result, the occasion which was supposed to be the

²⁰ This information could be filtered from the contents of the district chief of Peulimbang's letter No. 450/353 of 28 September 2012 that was sent to the Regent of Bireuen about the request for follow-up on the issue of Tgk. Aiyub's school. This information was confirmed by an interview with Saifullah, the Head of the Islamic Syariat Office of Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 18 December 2012.

²¹ Interview with Saifullah, Head of the Dinas Syariah Office in Bireuen, Bireuen, Aceh, 18 December 2012. The condition was confirmed by the police in Bireuen because they rather often have to deal with problems in society that have their roots in deviant sects, apart from persons who practice black magic. And not infrequently, society acts swiftly en masse (in their own way) to punish people believed to be followers of deviant sects. Interview with W. Eko Sulisty, Deputy Head of Police in Bireuen, Bireuen, Aceh, 17 December 2012.

forum for communication and clarification between Tgk. Aiyub and Dinas Syariah did not happen. Tgk. Aiyub had not used this opportunity to explain and clarify what actually happened in his *pengajian* sessions, and thus the label of being deviant was not removed. Tgk. Aiyub and his followers continued with their closed *pengajian* as before while the office of Dinas Syariah increasingly held on the deviant label.

Teungku versus Teungku

To understand about the role of the religious elite (*teungku*) in the tragedy of 16 November 2012, it is necessary to explain this Acehnese religious elite in some more detail.

The 'ulama in Aceh are known under various names: *abu*, *teungku*, and *abon*. The highest rank of 'ulama is that of *abu* (Arab: father). As in West Sumatra and Java, in Aceh this name is often connected with the name of the village or town where they live and lead their Islamic boarding school (*dayah*), such as Abu Tanoh Mirah, Abu Awe Geutah, and Abu Tanah Abe. These village-related names imply that they are in control of many aspects of the religious life of the people.²²

Apart from *abu*, religious leaders in Aceh are also often called *teungku*. This is a religious title given to religious students (*santri*) or teachers who are versed in religious books (*kitab*). The title can be given to men as well as to women. People who teach the basics of the Qur'an are also often given the title *teungku* as well as people who have performed the *hajj*. In general, the title *teungku* is given to those people who possess higher knowledge about religious issues than the Muslims in general.

In some parts of society, the title *teungku chik* is used usually for those who lead a *dayah*. Simply said, a *dayah* is a traditional Islamic teaching institution that may be found all over Aceh, especially in rural areas. *Dayah* are considered to be the places *par excellence* for the dissemination of Islamic teachings, especially to students (*ureung meudagang*) who are enrolled in the *dayah*. The task of a *teungku chik* is to decide on the curriculum and the methodology used in his *dayah* in the

²² Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi* (Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2012), p. 239.

education it offers.²³ The position of *teungku chik* is similar to that of *kyai* in *pesantrens* in Java. However, apart from being used for *dayah* leaders, the title *teungku chik* is also used for spiritual leaders in society. The people feel they have to respect the *teungku chik* because they have a higher level of knowledge and because of their higher and nobler character. It is thus impolite and may even be considered a damnable act if members of society, especially laymen have the impertinence to use the title *teungku chik* disrespectfully. There are even Acehnese who are convinced that doing so is a sin (*dosa*).²⁴

Apart from *teungku chik*, the *dayah* world also has people who stand below them called *teungku bale*. In modern *dayah*, these *teungku* are on the same level as religious teacher (*ustaz*) which hold an assistant role to the *kyai*. *Santri* study with *teungku bale* in the pavilions of the *dayah*. Apart from that, *teungku bale* may also represent *teungku chik* during religious events in society. They lead prayers, deliver sermons and say prayers during festive meals (*kenduri*) similar to *slametans* in Javanese culture.

The next in line are the *teungku rangkang*. They are chosen from *santris* who act as assistants to *teungku bale*. They only study with a *teungku rangkang* or directly from a *teungku chik* once week. In this case, the *santris* study *kitab kuning* (yellow-leaved books) in Arabic language. In principle, these *teungku* do not have any authority in the *dayah* apart from assisting the *teungku bale*. Nevertheless, some *teungku rangkang* will take the position of *teungku bale* in line with their study progress and their level of loyalty to the system of education.²⁵

The next level is the *teungku meunasah*. Their job is not in a *dayah* but in the village (*gampong*). A *meunasah* is a place where children study basic Islam and perform their communal prayers. At this level, the children learn how to read and write Arabic script, to read the Qur'an and they study morals, Islamic history and faith-related subjects. Especially during Ramadhan, *meunasah* are used for nightly *tarawih* prayers and to read the Qur'an. The Maulud *kenduri* are also held in a

²³ About this, see Muhammad Abdurrahman, *Proses Akulturasi Nilai Persaudaraan Islam di Dua Dayah Terpilih di Aceh* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 2009).

²⁴ Baihaqi A.K., "Ulama dalam Masyarakat Aceh", p.141.

²⁵ Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi*, p. 242.

meunasah while the place is also used for slaughtering animals during the festive day of Idul Adha in the month of the *haji*.²⁶

Teungku meunasah also act as spiritual leader (*sheikh*) for the villagers. *Teungku meunasah* may assist the people at any moment but specifically in religious matters such as during religious events and wedding parties. Part of their job is to “settle issues” when conflicts occur in the society. In these matters, *teungku meunasah* cooperate with *keuchik* (village heads); both act as village guardians. While the *keuchik* are more concerned with customs and government issues, the *teungku meunasah* act as legal advisors or they decide on religious matters for the *keuchik*, apart from their tasks as religious teachers, child educators and organisers of rituals and religious philanthropy.²⁷

It is thus clear that Aceh society offers much room for those who excel in Islamic knowledge in order to gain a higher social status. They form an elite group based on their mastering of Islamic doctrines. The terms *teungku rangkang*, *teungku bale*, *teungku abu*, *teungku chik* and others denote and explain the respective levels of their knowledge. The person who is called ‘*abu*’ is considered to have the the highest level of Islamic sciences and the most respected in society.

In Aceh, and in other places in Indonesia, religious elite groups have progressed to consciously define their status to differentiate themselves from other groups.²⁸ Teacher-student relations are very intimate and also because of intermarriages, ‘*ulama* networks are tight and they form distinct groups. A tradition has developed where a chosen *teungku bale* is married off to a family member of a *teungku chik* and this may be seen as a token that he will succeed him to lead the *dayah* when the *teungku chik* dies. Or, when he is considered sufficiently devout, the *teungku bale* is asked to establish his own *dayah* or to live in the *dayah* for the rest of his life.

Moreover, because of their important position in society, this religious elite also has a central role in the socio-political processes in Aceh. During colonial times in the 19th century, for instance, the

²⁶ Ismuha, “Ulama Aceh dalam Perspektif Sejarah” p. 7.

²⁷ Baihaqi A.K., “Ulama dalam Masyarakat”, p.157.

²⁸ In the context of Java, this issue can be found in the work of Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1987); see also Jajat Burhanudin, “Islamic Knowledge, Authority and Political Power: The ‘Ulama in Colonial Indonesia” (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 2007), chapter six.

teungku group formed a social force that offered the religious justification for the war against the Dutch. They formulated the resistance movement in religious terms as a war in the way of Allah (*jihad fi sabil Allah*). In similar vein, they had a role in the conflicts between the Indonesian Army and the Aceh Free Movement. Especially the *teungku chik* group often acted as mediators between both disputing parties. And at present, various *teungku chik* are active in local Acehnese politics.²⁹

Return to the issue of Tgk. Aiyub. The issue was clearly related to the presence of the *teungku* which became an important element in the 16 November 2012 tragedy. It is said that Tgk. Aiyub opposed the very authoritative religious authority of *teungku*. It has to be emphasized that basically Tgk. Aiyub did not have the qualification to be *teungku*, to teach Islam to society—his short biography does not reveal that he had ever studied Islam in a *dayah* as *teungkus* in general. It was also stated during the MPU session that he indeed was unable to read Arabic *kitab kuning*.³⁰ Therefore this become one of the points in its decision stated that Tgk. Aiyub does not have the capacity to conduct *pengajian*. Tgk. Aiyub did not meet the requirements to be acknowledged as a *teungku*.

However, his followers convinced that Tgk. Aiyub was more than qualified. His Islamic knowledge was gained directly through divine revelation (*laduni*) and therefore he did not need to study in a *dayah*; he received his knowledge directly from Allah without the intervention of 'ulama.³¹ According to his followers, Tgk. Aiyub occupied a position higher than that of the *teungku* in Aceh. It was said that his prayers were more likely to be honoured than those of the *teungku* of *dayah* in Aceh. He moreover had uttered various statements that were unacceptable to various prominent *dayah teungku (Abu)* in Bireuen. For instance, Tgk. Aiyub referred to Abu Tumin—one of the most respected 'ulama in Bireuen—as “si Simin”.³² In other words, in Tgk. Aiyub's case there was opposition against the Acehnese religious elite

²⁹ Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi*, p. 240.

³⁰ Interview with Tgk. H. Hanafiah Hamzah, BA, Chairman of the MPU in Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 19 December 2012.

³¹ Interview with Syarifuddin, Secretary of the Desa Jambo Dalam village, Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 19 December 2012.

³² Interview with Fadli Ismail, Chief of Desa Jambo Dalam, Bireuen, in Bireuen, Aceh, 20 December 2012.

of the *teungku* who represent mainstream Islam as endorsed by the Dinas Syariah.

The 'Ulama and the *Dayah*: an Historical Overview

From the early history of Aceh, Ulama have important roles.³³ This can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Aceh emerged as an Islamic kingdom in the archipelago. During that period, the 'ulama constituted part of the ruling elites in the palace. They held the position of *Qadi Malikeul Adil* and *Syaikbul Islam*, which put them in the centre of elite circles in the kingdom with the main task was among others to offer social and political advice to the ruler.³⁴

The existence of 'ulama continued to develop in post-kingdom period of Acehnese history. Following the decline of the kingdom, the centres of Islamic learning shifted from the palace to the institutions the 'ulama established, which were scattered throughout rural areas. This development created conditions favorable for the 'ulama to engage in community affairs. Different from their roles in the royal courts where their main duties revolved around providing political advice to the rulers, the institution led the 'ulama to mostly concentrate on providing religious education for the communities.³⁵

Under such conditions, *dayah* became an inherent part of, and contributed to, the making of Muslims' religious lives in Aceh. The 'ulama, the *dayah* leaders, emerged as highly respected religious leaders who were devoted to giving the community religious instruction and ensuring the correct performance of religious duties.³⁶ With this, the *dayah* experienced a firm consolidation as the 'ulama-led institutions to the extent that it presented, like *pesantren* in Java, a distinct religious community with a specific mode of thought and lifestyle.

³³ Alfian, "The ulama in Acehnese society," in Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique & Yasmin Hussain (eds), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), pp. 82-86; Burhanudin, "Islamic Knowledge", chapter 3; see also Ibrahim Alfian, *Perung di Jalan Allah* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1987).

³⁴ See for instances Azyumardi Azra, *The Origin of Islamic reformis in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Australia & Honolulu: Allen & Unwin and University of Hawaii Press 2004); also Denys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh Zaman Sultan Iskandar Muda: 1607-1636* (Jakarta: KPG, 2005).

³⁵ See Burhanudin, "Islamic Knowledge", p. 48-50.

³⁶ See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, transl. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan with an index by R.J. Wilkinson, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1906), p. 71.

Since the eighteenth century, when the kingdom of Aceh began to disintegrate, it was in the *dayah* where Islamic intellectual life took place, replacing the kingdom of the previous century. Likewise, it was to the 'ulama of *dayah* that the community now turned for Islamic knowledge. The role of *dayah* became increasingly important in the nineteenth century, in terms of both religion and politics. This role culminated in the leading role of the *dayah* in the Acehnese-Dutch war which began in 1872. The fall of the kingdom of Aceh and the ideological split of *uleebalang* paved the way for the 'ulama of *dayah* to emerge in the Acehnese political landscape. They became the formulators of ideology, who signified the Acehnese-Dutch war in Islamic terms as *prang sabi* (religious war).³⁷ Teungku Chik di Tiro (d. 1891) is an example of 'ulama who stood in the front lines in order to lead the people in their struggle against the Dutch.³⁸

At the end of the colonial period, the 'ulama started to emerge as an organisation through the founding of PUSA (Persatuan Ulama-ulama Seluruh Aceh, All-Aceh Ulama Organisation) on 5 May 1939 by Teungku Daud Beureuh.³⁹ PUSA's emergence in its turn gave a new impetus for optimism for the Acehnese 'ulama and also for the majority of the Acehnese population which overwhelmingly welcomed it because PUSA controlled the Islamic education institutions (*madrasah* and *dayah*). Acehnese society views PUSA as a "true Acehnese product" unlike the Muhammadiyah or Taman Siswa which are seen as "Minang" or "Javanese" organisations.⁴⁰ James Siegel connects Acehnese enthusiasm for this to the economic conditions in Aceh in the 1930s with widespread unemployment caused by the economic recession and the disease that struck the pepper plantations which were the Acehnese main sources of income as the Dutch prohibited

³⁷ See Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah*, p. 151.

³⁸ On this, see Alfian, "Aceh and the Holy War (Prang Sabil)", in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), pp. 109-120.

³⁹ Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *Pemberontakan Kaum Republik: Kasus Darul Islam Aceh* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1990). See also M. Nur El Ibrahirny, *Peranan Tgk M. Daud Beureuh Dalam Pergolakan Aceh* (Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 2001), p. 8.

⁴⁰ Anthony Reid, *Perjuangan Rakyat, Revolusi, dan Hancurnya Kerajaan di Sumatera* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1987), p. 54.

them from working in other plantations such as those for areca nuts and copra.⁴¹

In its development, PUSA, although founded in a spirit of the advancement of education in Aceh, started to voice innovations in Islam so that it inevitably started to touch on politics. In its general meetings, its members urged for Islamic reformation which they tied to innovations in the history of Acehnese society. Therefore, they always attacked traditional religious practices that sometimes contained syncretism elements such as mysticism and the veneration of holy people. In their view, many practices of Islamic observance had been mixed with pre-Islamic rituals including gambling and drinking of liquor as done by the *uleebalang* which they considered deviating from Islamic teachings.⁴²

Also in the resistance against newly independent Indonesia, the 'ulama also came to the fore as its driving forces. We need only to mention the case of the DI/TII (Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia) in the early 1950s that was instigated by a group of 'ulama from *dayah* from all over Aceh. This, of course, without forgetting that one of the factors that caused the advent of the DI/TII resurrection in 1953 were the differences and the tensions between Acehnese leaders and religious figures with the Jakarta central government at the time the Acehnese people expected their region to be given special treatment as a province. In this case, Teungku Daud Beureuh turned into its main actor. On 21 September 1953, he decided to fight the Indonesian Government. Like the majority of PUSA 'ulama he declared to join S.M. Kartosuwiryo's movement under the DI/TII banner and which had proclaimed the Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia) in West Java on 17 August 1949.⁴³

By taking this position it was clear that the 'ulama occupied important positions in Acehnese society. Apart from acting as *mufti* for

⁴¹ James Siegel, *The Rope of God* (California: University of California, 1969), pp. 90-97.

⁴² Eric Morris, "Aceh Revolusi Sosial dan Pandangan Islam" in Audrey R. Kahin, *Pergolakan Daerah Pasca Awal Kemerdekaan* (Jakarta: PT Pustaka Utama Grafiti Press, 1985), pp. 58-59.

⁴³ M. Hasbi Amiruddin, *Perjuangan Ulama Aceh di Tengah Konflik* (Yogyakarta: Cenninets Press, 2004), p. 59. See also Rasul Hamidy, Fachruddin Hasballah & Rusmin Tumanggong, *Kharisma Ulama dalam Persepsi Masyarakat Aceh: Laporan Penelitian* (Banda Aceh: Lembaga Research & Survey, IAIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, 1981/1982), as quoted by Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi*, p. 239.

the sultans, they also acted as propagators of the faith, fighters and even as innovators. Here we see how the *'ulama* managed to emerge as an elite with its own characteristics and that it formed the only group in society that was not tied to their place of origin. This was possible because their experiences crossed the boundaries of many places in Aceh starting with their journey away from their *kampung* when they started to study religion in a *dayah*. Because in general, *'ulama* have a wider outlook and have more knowledge, many ideas for innovation, especially in religion originate from them.⁴⁴

The *'ulama* in Aceh are moreover considered to support and advise *adat* leaders in the execution of their administration, especially in solving issues pertaining to law (*syariah* or Islamic law). In other words, the *'ulama* assist or advice the *sultan*, *panglima sagoe*, and *nleebalang*. In this way, they are known in the traditional administrative structure in Aceh as religious leaders or figures. Thus, apart from acting as the government leader's advisors, they also execute other related tasks. These comprise of supervising and organising children's Qur'anic teaching in *meunasabs*, settling disputes among villagers in cooperation with the *keuchik* and organising other important tasks in society such as washing the dead, opening graves, uttering prayers during burials (*talkin*), organising Pleurae matters (division of inheritances) in their regions and such.⁴⁵

Dayah Networks and the Fundamentalist Masses: Basis for the Mobilisation of Support and Movement

One important question that rises in this study is how it is possible that such a large crowd could gather and subsequently move to Tgk. Aiyub's house in Jambo Dalem? Were they mobilised? And (if yes) who was responsible for this mobilisation process? In any case, irrespective of their different intentions and goals, the masses clearly all went in the same direction: Tgk. Aiyub's residence. This mass movement will be understood if the strong social networks among Acehnese society discussed. In this case, *dayah*—were an important variable in order to understand the mass movement that was so focussed on Tgk. Aiyub's deviant movement.

⁴⁴ Sjamsuddin, *Pemberontakan Kaum Republik*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Baihaqi A.K., "Peranan Ulama", pp. 117-138.

Teungku dayah, like *kiyais* in *pesantren*, are also involved in socio-political roles and not only active in religious matters. The *teungku* thus emerge as informal leaders who are strongly rooted in society. A relative similar process occurred when Indonesia became independent, especially when Aceh suffered from military operations (1989-1998). At the time, Acehnese youngsters went to *dayah* to study and at the same time to escape ‘military duties’ to fight against Free Aceh. This situation continued when Aceh fell under the Free Aceh Movement since 1998. This process, of course, had serious implications. The people who are now the *teungku dayah*, including the leadership of the Dinas Syariah Office are *dayah* alumni of that period—and they are used to violence, view the state more like an armed force, and shy away from interaction with other worlds.

Similarly, *teungku dayah* also entertain close relations among themselves because they used to study under the same teachers and because they are bound by a shared Islamic ideology. This ideology became increasingly reinforced with the establishment of the Dinas Syariah that recruited many *dayah* graduates. The head of the Dinas Syariah Office in Bireuen at the time of the Tgk. Aiyub incident was a graduate from Dayah Samalanga, one of the largest and most respected *dayah* in the area that produced many *teungku dayah* and religious teaching centres in the rural areas.

The *dayah* network worked very effectively during the Tgk. Aiyub incident; it explains how more than one thousand people could be gathered in a short time in one village in Bireuen. The head of the Dinas Syariah of Bireuen stated the following when he was one of my informants during the research for this article: “The Dinas Syariah constantly monitored and reported on developments in deviant sects in the regency. This was done through leaflets, appeals, Friday sermons, indoctrination, radio, newspapers, meetings and training sessions.”⁴⁶

Prior to the tragic incident of 16 December, 9 and 12 December were important moments. On these dates, especially 12 December, the Dinas Syariah of Bireuen invited a number of sects it considered deviant for guidance and training. All the invitees came but Tgk. Aiyub’s group. Because of this, Tgk. Aiyub’s religious *pengajian* were considered to be even more outside Islamic teachings which ultimately

⁴⁶ Interview with Saifullah, Head of the Islamic Syariah Office in Bireuen, Bireuen, Aceh, 18 December 2012.

strongly influenced society. The meeting of 12 December was supposed to be the arena for Tgk. Aiyub to make clarification again on the issues pertinent to the Islamic teachings he offered in his *pengajian*. Yet, as in the case of early 2012 I already explained above, Tgk. Aiyub did not do it. Conversely, he had more or less threatened the village authorities (*keuchik* and the village secretary) to terminate them.

As a result, from that moment onwards the framing of being deviant worked even more effective and became even more widespread among the masses who were indeed intolerant against deviant sects. Hence, not only the efforts to build the faith (*abl al-sunah wa al-jamā'ah*) are being intensified but concurrently sentiments against deviant sects like that of Tgk. Aiyub grow intensely among elite Muslims. This situation continued until the 16 December incident as has been described above. Sixteen December was a Friday and this was most probably used in the campaign of the Muslim elite (through sermons in mosques all over Aceh) and ultimately mobilised the masses in support of actions against Tgk. Aiyub's deviant sect.

It is therefore based on the data found in the ground that it is not surprising no one in Bireuen regrets or feels guilty about the incident. They all claim that it is the consequence of efforts of the enforcement of the *shari'ah* and the Islamic faith in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Some Other Cases

In terms of *aliran sesat*, Tgk. Aiyub's group was not the only one. In a seminar on deviant sects in Aceh—organised by the Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA, Association of Dayah Ulama in Aceh) of Aceh Tamiang on 9 January 2012—the fact was disclosed, that over the last couple of years there emerged various new religious sects or understandings in Aceh that came to be considered deviant. Various explanations can be put forward to understand this phenomenon, ranging from sociological issues—that see it as the manifestation of the emerging desire for a new religiosity that is not fulfilled by conventional religious structures—up to doctrinal one that see it as the outcome of the reformulation and reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in line with the changing Muslim community.

Nevertheless, for Acehnese society this condition tend to be viewed as the result of the changing ways of thinking among people who lack a firm religious fundament causing them to easily be

influenced by deviant teachings.⁴⁷ On the basis of this view, the Acehnese—represented notably by the Dinas Syariah—launched over the last few years the campaign against *aliran sesat*. With the intention of protecting the faith of the community (*ablussunnah wal-jama'ab*), the *aliran sesat* is to be taken as the enemy that would jeopardize the Muslims religious lives.

It is also related to the view that the 'ulama council of Aceh (MPU) therefore issued a *fatwa* on the guidelines of the identification of deviant sects, listing thirteen criteria to identify deviant sects.⁴⁸ To be mentioned here as well the *Qanun* No. 11, 2002 on the enforcement of *shari'ah* in the fields of faith, religious obligations and Islamic sublimity, which stipulates forms of deviant understandings and/or sects which was subsequently decreed by a *fatwa* by the MPU of Aceh. At least some characteristics stand out in relation to deviant sects as they develop, among them: (1) the conviction of the presence of revelations after the Qur'an; (2) negation of the purity and/or trustworthiness of the Qur'an; (3) interpretation of the Qur'an not founded on the correct principles of interpretation; (4) insult and/or belittle the prophets and His Messenger; and (5) engaging in interpreting hadith not founded on the correct principles of hadith scholarship. Some groups have been proven to practice some of these convictions.

⁴⁷ "HUDA Laksanakan Seminar Tentang Aliran Sesat," *Aceh Tribun News*, 21 January 2012, <http://aceh.tribunnews.com/m/index.php/2012/01/21/huda-laksanakan-seminar-tentang-aliran-sesat> (Accessed 19 December 2012).

⁴⁸ "Fatwa Pedoman Identifikasi Aliran Sesat: Fatwa MPU Aceh No. 04 tahun 2007 tentang Pedoman Identifikasi Aliran Sesat" (Sekretariat Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama Aceh, 2012), pp. 5-6. The thirteen criteria are as follow: (1) renegeation of one of the six pillars of the faith; (2) renegeation of one of the five pillars of Islam; (3) conviction or following a belief that does not accord with the faith of the *Ablussunnah wal Jama'ab*; (4) conviction of there being revelations after the Qur'an; (5) renegeation of the purity and/or trustworthiness of the Qur'an; (6) interpretation of the Qur'an not founded on the correct principles of interpretation; (7) renegeation on the position of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad saw as a source for Islamic teachings; (8) engaging in interpreting hadith not founded on the correct principles of *mushtalah* hadith scholarship; (9) insult and/or belittle the prophets and His Messenger; (10) renegeation of the Prophet Muhammad as a prophet and the last Messenger; (11) insult and belittle the companions of the Prophet Muhammad saw; (12) change, augment, or reduce the main points of the faith that have been stipulated by the *shari'ah* such as pelgrimages to other places than the Baitullah, obligatory prayers outside the five obligatory prayers et cetera; and (13) pronouncing fellow Muslims as infidels without strong and valid reasons such as pronouncing Muslims as infidels because they belong to a different group.

Until the end of 2012, there are around 24 groups that have been suspected as deviant and in many cases have received threats from both the Islamic community and the Dinas Syariah in Aceh. In this part there are only some deviant sects located in Bireuen will be described. First, the Aliran Apanda Darmoga Barita Raja. This sect is thought to have its center in Pulau Batam and subsequently was spread to Bireuen in 2007 by Juli Blang Kutumba who, according to some residents, had once been the chief of the village. This sect became publicly known after Aisyah, a junior high school teacher in Bireuen, reported to the Dinas Syariah and MPU in Bireuen that her husband had entered a deviant sect. The sect thought that *zakat* and the performance of *hajj* were not obligatory, so that his wife, who had already paid part of the *hajj* costs in cancelled her departure because her husband did not allow her to go. This member of this sect could not be heard because its leader had fled and divorced his wife.

The second is Aliran Al-Fakhri in 2008. This sect developed in Paya Lipah in the sub-district of Peusangan in the regency of Bireuen and its pioneer was thought to have been Teungku Muhammad Fakhri. It was considered deviant because of the beliefs it adhered to such as: (1) women in labour for childbirth have to make up their obligatory prayers; (2) one can interpret the Qur'ān without having to conform to the rules; (3) Islamic teachings have to be executed after midnight and have to be followed up by *meurateb* with the utterances of *Anallah, Zat ku Zat Allah* (for men) and with the lafadh *Annalah, Nur ku, Nur Allah* (for women) et cetera.

The next *aliran* in the list is Al-Zaitun in 2009. According to residents, this sect was instigated by Teungku Yahya. It was suspected of having its centre in Geudong Teuneh, Bireuen, with Andri Fitra CS as its teacher. Among the deviant tenets its subscribes to are: (1) One can hold the Qur'ān without prior ritual ablution because it is printed on ordinary paper; (2) the name of the Prophet Muhammad is actually Ahmad whereas the name Muhammad is a fabrication of the 'ulama; (3) After entering this sect, the adept has to take an oath of allegiance and he is obliged to hide all the sect's secrets; (4) after having taken to oath of allegiance, the adept has to change his name according to the order of the *aliran* leader, which was called Sheikh.

The last *aliran* to mention here is Komunitas Millah Ibrahim. The name of this sect is also often abbreviated to Komar. It was regarded as to have deviate from Islamic teachings by the Decree of the MPU

of Kabupaten Bireun, dated 7 October 2010. The reason was that the sect is convinced that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad cannot be seen in isolation from and are a continuation of those of Jesus and subsequently Moses because they are all Abraham's children. According to Milata Abraham's followers, they do not wish to look for differences between the three large world religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) but they want to join them under the ism Allah, Abraham, King and ruler of the universe so that the world will be illuminated at a later time. Abraham himself is the figure that is venerated and glorified. He is the father and the ancestor of the people of Israel, the father of the prophets and the most famous person among the people of Israel. For Christians, Abraham is the father of the prophets and the ancestor of Jesus. For Muslims he is also a venerated person and the right model because he is included among the people who are sincere in their inclination to Islam.

Conclusion

The previous discussions provide some evidences on the emerging strong sentiment against deviant sects in Aceh. This sentiment has been steadily growing over the last couple of years and has become a strong base for the rise of anti-deviant-sect movements, some of which were committed to the violent action as evidenced by the Tgk. Aiyub incident. It is also found clearly that the Dinas Syariah, together with the MPU, have made significant contributions towards the growth of this sentiment and ultimately to that of the anti-deviant-sect movement.

It is important to note that the rising sentiment of anti-*aliran sesat*, is not merely the result of the contemporary development. The history of Aceh the *serambi Mekkah* (the veranda of Mecca)—that Aceh during the kingdom period had already implemented the *sharai'ab*—is of crucial role in the making of religious development in today Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. This belief was preserved, among others in *dayah* institution, and was then strengthened with the experiences of the area in conflict, in terms of socio-religion and politics. Therefore, the desire to return to the perceived golden age of the Acehnese history, the kingdom period, remains alive among the Acehnese. It is an inherent part of the efforts to enliven the special status of Aceh in Islamic terms.

The rising sentiment of anti-deviant sect is therefore viewed in part of living Islamic desire among the Acehnese. During the period under

this study, this religious sentiment strengthened as the religion (Islam) was adopted into such a formal body as Dinas Syariah. Hence, the issue of being deviant is not just a matter of religion, but has power dimension. With the support of *dayab* connection, and its influence on the Muslims, the religious sentiment could be transformed into an ideology of the mass movement. That was what happened in the incident of Tgk Aiyub in the end of 2012. []

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