



## UNDERSTANDING ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE SULTANATE PERIOD PASAI

**Diauddin**

**Ministry of Health Aceh Polytechnic, Indonesian**  
[diaudin123@gmail.com](mailto:diaudin123@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Islam in Indonesia in the Middle Ages was influenced by royal figures, most of whom were kings because in the Middle Ages in Indonesia the kingdom period lasted from 13 AD – 18 AD. One of the kingdoms that adheres to Islamic teachings is the Samudrai Pasai kingdom, not only an Islamic kingdom but Samudra Pasai was the first Islamic kingdom in Sumatra. The aim of the research is to find out the figures who most influenced the spread of Islam in medieval Indonesia. Based on the analysis, it is known that Al-Shaleh is a figure who spread Islam in the Pacific Ocean of the archipelago to Southeast Asia. Changes that occurred during his leadership in the fields of law, economics and learning studies

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### INTRODUCTION

The Sultanate of Pasai is an Islamic work, so the prevailing state ideology is Islamic ideology, which is outlined in the constitution or political aspects that form the basis of the state for the Pasai kingdom. This can be detailed as follows:

First, humanity and divinity. There are quite clear boundaries when Bukharijauhari explains the main nature of humanity and divinity, namely: If humans are safe and healthy and ni'mat and sovereign, they will be devoid of any sorrow and love, all desires and desires that originate from them and then there are also heretics, such as Fir'aun and Namrud and Shaddah and the like.

The values of Islamic knowledge, from cosmology to government practices, have been provided in a plot by Acehese writers (Syeikh Bukhari al-jauhari, and Malem Dagang). This shows that in Aceh,

the contribution of 'ulama in conveying issues of divinity and humanity did not at all adopt the values and morals of the European region at that time. Currently, these books can still be read, because they are still published in the form of philological or literary studies. However, if used as part of a study of Acehese Political Thought, it seems that this study is almost similar to Hegel's studies, especially his studies in the Philosophy of History.

Second kingship and justice. The royal system created by Acehese thinkers has supported the sultanate system. As studied by Islamic political thinkers, the direction and aim of political practice must be to create a just country. A just king is a main requirement in building a kingdom. This concept of justice can be seen for example in Aceh's currency coins, which always show an attitude of justice, with the title "Sultan al-Adil". Ibrahim Alfian gave two examples of the use of "Sultan al-Adil" on currency coins in Aceh. Firstly, for almost two centuries, on the back side of all Samudra Pasai dirhams the expression al-Sultan al-Adil is printed. Second, the Sultan of Aceh imitated the custom of the Sultans of Samudra Pasai by using the title al-Sultan al-Adil on their dirhams, as on the dirhams of the founder of the Kingdom of Aceh, Sultan 'Ali Mughayat Syah (1514-1530 AD)<sup>5</sup>

Third, people and prosperity. Before Aceh joined the Republic of Indonesia and the arrival of colonialists, this country was very prosperous. The people are regulated through laws, as explained in several of the tales above, where the rights and obligations of the people are emphasized on welfare, known as *Dār al-Salām*. A historical description, for example, can be seen in Denys Lombard's work on the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda.<sup>6</sup>

Fourth, a country's defense system. The testimonies of immigrants regarding the situation of the kingdom of Aceh show how the defense system is. Apart from that, there are also diplomatic steps taken at the international level. The character and political system that connects Aceh to the global political stage also indicates how the defense system built by the kingdom is managed. The Kingdom of Aceh was one of the five great kingdoms of the Muslim world which was highly respected. It seems that geo-political, economic and religious reasons then led to various attempts by Europeans to control the Kingdom of Aceh. The influence of the Aceh Kingdom also applied in the Melaka Strait area, where Aceh was often involved in defending this region from foreign (European) interference.

Fifth, patterns of political practice to support sovereignty and massive expansion of power can be found in the experience of the Pasai sultanate. Almost all political practices in Aceh can be found in various historical literature, especially the sagas or government systems contained in the Meukuta Alam Adat. This practice, which is based on structured rules, indicates that Aceh has had its own experience in sowing the seeds of Acehnese political thought

## **METHOD**

The approach used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach, namely a research approach that attempts to describe a symptom, event, incident that is happening now, where this research photographs events and events that occur as the focus of attention and then describes them as they really are. Sugiono (2019:98)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to Ibn Battuta's statement, the following conclusions can be drawn about the education that prevailed during the era of the Pasai kingdom:

1. The material for religious education and teaching in the field of sharia is the Fiqh of the Syafi'i school of thought
2. The education system is informal in the form of majlis ta'lim and halaqah
3. Government figures are also religious figures
4. Education costs come from the state.<sup>8</sup>

During the era of the Samudra Pasai kingdom, it reached its glory in the 19th century.<sup>14</sup> AD, then education also certainly has its own place. Quoting Tome Pires, who stated that "in Samudra Pasai there are many cities, where among the residents of these cities there are educated people"<sup>9</sup>

According to Ibnu Battuta, Pasai in the 14th century AD was already a center for Islamic studies in Southeast Asia, and many scholars gathered from Islamic countries. Ibnu Battuta stated that Sultan Malikul Zahir was a person who loved scholars and science. When Friday arrives, the Sultan prays in the mosque wearing clerical clothing, after prayer he holds discussions with religious scholars, including: Amir Abdullah from Delhi, and Tajudin from Ispahan. This form of education by means of discussion is called Majlis Ta'lim or halaqoh. The halaqoh system means that students take positions in a circle around the teacher. The teacher sits in the middle of the circle of students with all the students' faces facing the teacher.

## **Economic Conditions**

Because of its strategic geographical location, it supports people's creativity to dive directly into the maritime world. Samudera Pasai also prepares bookies that are used for:

1. Adding supplies for the next voyage
2. Dealing with shipping issues or problems
3. Collecting merchandise to be sent overseas
4. Storing merchandise before delivery to several regions in Indonesia

The year 1350 AD was the peak of the Majapahit kingdom's greatness, that time was also the greatness of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom. The Samudera Pasai Kingdom was also in direct contact with the Chinese Kingdom as a strategy to protect itself from threats from the Siam Kingdom whose area covered the Malacca Peninsula. The economic development of the people of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom is increasing rapidly, so that it is always the attention and target of the surrounding kingdoms. After Samudera Pasai was controlled by the Malacca Kingdom, the trade center was moved to Bandar Malacca.

## **Educational Institutions**

The only educational institutions during the Pasai kingdom and other kingdoms in Aceh consisted of three types of institutions, namely Meunasah, Rangkang and Dayah, the explanation of which can be explained as follows:

### **Discussion**

#### **1. Meunasah**

Meunasah is one of the typical Islamic cultural heritages of the archipelago in the Aceh region. Meunasah is a form of traditional Islamic educational institution in Aceh that has been around for hundreds of years. Even though it is similar to other formal Islamic educational institutions in the Aceh region, such as Dayah and Madrasah, Meunasah has its own differences and characteristics.<sup>10</sup>

The word "meunasah" itself, as quoted by Sabirin (2014, 107) from Safwan Idris, etymologically comes from the word "madrasah" which means a place of study or educational institution. In Aceh, the meaning of meunasah as explained above, can be found in different terms, such as "meulasah", "beulasah", "beunasah", or "meurasah" (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Meunasah is a building found in every gampong (village, village). This building is like a house but

does not have windows and other parts. This building is used as a place to discuss and discuss social problems. Apart from that, it is also a place for people to spend the night. young children and men who do not have wives. After Islam was established in Aceh, the meunasah became a place of prayer for the community in one gampong.

In its further development, the meunasah not only functions as a place of worship, but also as a place of education, a meeting place, and even as a place for buying and selling transactions, especially for immovable goods. Apart from that, meunasah, similar to surau in Minangkabau, also functions as a place for travelers to stay, a place to read stories, and a place to reconcile if there are conflicting villagers (Abdullah, 1983 120). In fact, according to Gazalba (1962: 295) meunasah is also used as a suluk place.

As an educational institution of the Pasai Sultanate and other Aceh Sultanates, Meunasah is the lowest educational institution. Those who study at meunasah are generally boys who are generally underage. Meanwhile, education for girls is given at the teacher's house.

Education at Meunasah is led by Tengku Meunasah. Meanwhile, education for girls is provided by female tengku called Tengku I nong. In providing religious education to children, teungku meunasah is assisted by several of his more intelligent students who are called sida (a kind of assistant) (Ahmad, 1972: 100)

There are no specific restrictions on the length of education at Meunasah. Generally education lasts two to ten years. Teaching generally takes place at night. The lesson material begins with reading the Koran, which in Acehnese is called Beuet Qur'an. Usually the lesson begins by teaching the hijaiyah letters, as found in the book Qaidah Baghdadiyah, with the method of spelling the letters, then arranging the letters. After that, we continue with reading juz amma, while memorizing short letters. After that, we move on to reading the large Koran complete with tajwid. Apart from that, religious principles are also taught such as the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam and the attributes of God. Apart from that, the pillars of fasting and zakat are also taught. Not to forget, lat singing lessons are also taught, especially songs related to religion which in Acehnese are called dike or seulaweut (from dhikr or selawat). The textbooks used are Malay language books such as the Perukunan Book and Masail al-Muhtadiy's Treatise. In giving these lessons, according to Van Langen, the Teungku's religious knowledge was very lacking, so the lessons they gave were

limited to the pillars of prayer, fasting, and the obligation to pay zakat fitrah. This limited knowledge results in high fanaticism towards Islam.

Studying at Meunasah is free of charge. Likewise, the Tengku are not given a salary, because teaching is considered worship. However, Tengku usually gets prizes from the students if they have studied the Qur'an up to the 15th juz, or when they have completed the Qur'an. Other gifts are also obtained during marriage ceremonies, apostolic circumcisions, distribution of inheritance, civil cases, attending court hearings, providing advice, and also from zakat and zakat fitrah.

The existence of meunasah as a basic level educational institution was very meaningful in Aceh during the Pasai Sultanate and other sultanates. All parents send their children to meunasah. In other words, there are no Acehnese children who do not experience this meunasah education. In other words, meunasah was a compulsory education madrasah for the people of Aceh in the past. Therefore, it is not surprising that Acehnese people have high religious fanaticism.

## **2. Frame**

As a further education institution, the students accepted at Rangkang are generally those who have studied at Meunasah. However, special requirements are not given to enter rengkang education. As a secondary education institution, it teaches Islamic jurisprudence, monotheism, morals and Arabic. The books used are generally in Malay and a few books are in Arabic. In Arabic lessons the emphasis is on nahu sharf. Then students are guided to read books of tafsir, hadith and fiqh in Arabic, and translate them into Malay. The books used are generally books from the Shafi'i school of thought.

Regarding the length of study, it is not determined by year limits, but is determined by the student's ability to complete his studies. Students who can complete their studies can continue to higher level students. For students who do not continue to high level Dayah, with the permission of their teacher, they can return to their village to become a da'wah interpreter or teach at the meunasah.

## **3. Dayah**

Dayah in Aceh is the name for educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools in Java or surau in Padang. Linguistically, the word dayah is

absorbed from the Arabic *zawiya* which means 'corner', referring to the places in the corners of the Medina mosque as centers of Islamic education and preaching during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Dayah's presence as an Islamic educational institution and cadre of ulama in Indonesia is estimated to be as old as the presence of Islam in the archipelago (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

The term *dayah* comes from the Arabic *Zawiyah* which means corner, corner, part of a place/building. The term *Zawiyah* is used in Mecca to denote the place where a cleric of the Grand Mosque usually gives lessons. The place chosen is usually in the corner of the Grand Mosque. Here the students sit in a circle around the teacher to receive lessons from the teacher (*ulama*).

The history of the growth of Dayah in Aceh is closely related to the journey of Islamic preaching in the area. Tome Pires noted that around the 14th century in Samudra Pasei there were large cities in which there were also educated people. This was confirmed by Ibnu Battuta who stated that at that time Pasei was already a center for Islamic studies in Southeast Asia and here many scholars gathered from Islamic countries. Ibnu Battuta also mentioned that Sultan Malikul Zahir (1297-1326) was a person who loved scholars and science. When Friday arrived, the Sultan prayed at the mosque wearing clerical clothing and after that held discussions with the *ulama*. Famous scholars at that time included Amir Abdullah from Delhi, Kadhi Amir Said from Shiraz, Tajuddin from Isfahan. Teungku Cot Mamplam and Teungku Cot Geureudong.

Such gatherings (*halaqah*), which are held in the corners of the mosque to convey Islamic teachings or discuss problems that arise related to Islamic teachings commonly called *zawiyah*. From such *zawiyah* emerged an educational institution in Aceh called Dayah. Through this institution, Islam took strong roots in Aceh. The Dayah institution is estimated to have existed in Aceh around 840 AD (225 AH), starting when Islam first came to the area. Sultan Karajaan Peureulak founded an Islamic educational institution in Aceh by bringing in teachers from Arabia, Persia and Gujarat. This Dayah is called Dayah Cot Kala, based on the name of the *ulama* figure who controls the Dayah, namely Teungku Chiek Muhammad Amin (Teungku Chik Cot Kala).

Dayah Cot Kala at that time had become the first center of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. This institution is considered instrumental in spreading Islam with

many graduates becoming Islamic scholars and preachers to various corners of the archipelago. This preaching stimulated the birth of Islamic kingdoms in various regions, such as the Islamic Kingdom of Samudera Pasai, the Islamic Kingdom of Benua, the Islamic Kingdom of Lingga, the Islamic Kingdom of Darussalam, and the Islamic Kingdom of Indra Jaya. These kingdoms then merged at the beginning of the 16th century to become the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam with the first king named Ali Mughayatsyah who ruled in 916-936 H./1511-1530 AD.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, the conclusions in this paper are as follows:

1. The Pasai Sultanate is a sultanate whose system of government is based on Islamic law, its state ideology consists first of humanity and divinity, second of kingship and justice, third of democracy and prosperity.
2. The economic situation of the Pasai Sultanate is very advanced, its economic sector is maritime because the area is in a coastal area, and trade is carried out with foreign traders such as China, Arabia, India etc.
3. Educational institutions in the Pasai District consist of:
  - a. Meunasah  
Meunasah is the lowest educational institution. Those who study at meunasah are generally boys who are generally underage. Meanwhile, education for girls is given at the teacher's house.
  - b. Rangkang  
Rangkang is a further education institution, for students who have studied at Meunasah. Regarding the length of study, it is not determined by year limits, but is determined by the student's ability to complete his studies
  - c. Dayah  
Dayah is the highest level of education after meunasah and frameng. Dayah is derived from the Arabic word zawiya which means "corner", referring to the places in the corners of the Medina mosque as centers of Islamic education and preaching during the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

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