

EXPRESSION OF LOVE FOR AHL AL-BAYT IN ACEHNESE SOCIETY

Lukman Hakim

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Email: lukmanhakim@ar-raniry.ac.id

Syamsul Rijal

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Email: literasi.syamsulrijal@ar-raniry.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Theologically, the Acehnese ordain themselves as loyal followers of Sunni Islam, but there are Shi'a elements in their culture. To date, there are some traditions of expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet Muhammad's family) which is one of the main characteristics of the Shi'a. This research is based on the hypothesis that several cultural practices in Aceh contain Shi'a elements. This study seeks to reveal the cultural practices of the Sunni followers in Aceh in expressing their love for the Ahl al-Bayt. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method from a combination of library and field data. This study found that, historically, the acculturation process of Shi'a culture into the Sunni followers in Aceh has coincided with the process of the arrival of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. This is possible given the position of Aceh in the history of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago. This acculturation has left traces of culture inspired by Shi'a such as the tradition of Ashura porridge, Boh Husayn cake. All these traditions have been preserved because these Shi'a values contain expressions of love for the Ahl al-Bayt who also have a place in the hearts of the Sunni adherents in Aceh.

Keywords: Aceh; Sunni; Shi'a; Ahl al-Bayt

INTRODUCTION

The people of Aceh identify themselves as Sunni followers, but in cultural practice remains still a form of typical Shi'a tradition which is meant to be an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt. Expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt is a main characteristic of Shi'ism, because this school was founded based on fanaticism to Ali ibn Abi Talib who was a friend and son-in-law of the Prophet (Aslan, 2011; Hashem 2001). This is unique and interesting, considering that Shi'a and Sunni which have been understood as two theologically opposite schools of Islam, still influence each other in the socio-religious domain.

It seems unique and surprising because people who identify themselves as followers of Sunni have religious-cultural practices influenced by Shi'a culture. (Saby, 2013)

The historical journey of the relationship between the Indonesian Archipelago and Persia, which has existed for a long time, has also provided room for acculturation of theology between the Shi'a and the Sunni in the form of cultural contestation which later became Indonesia's fascinating treasure. The traces of the Shi'a can still be found in almost every region in Indonesia. This study specifically seeks to look at the various traditions practiced as an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt which is commonly observed in the Sunni Muslims in Aceh. In the context of Aceh, Shi'ism is thought to have developed for a long time since Islam was present in that region, along with the arrival of Islam itself.

Ali Hasjmy, an Acehnese culturalist and historian, suspects that Shi'ism has been present and developed in Aceh since the eleventh century AD in the Peureulak region (Perlak, East Aceh) brought by merchants from Persia. This condition lasted for a long time until the emergence of the Islamic kingdom of Pasee (Pasai, North Aceh) which followed the school of Ahl-al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Hasjmy, 1983). Given Aceh's position as a well-known trading port in the history of the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago, it is not surprising that it later paved the way for various schools of Islam in Indonesia. Through this trade route, it is possible to acculturate two theological schools; Shi'a and Sunni have long been part of the history of Islam in Aceh

This has left traces of religious cultural practices with Shi'a nuances in Aceh in the form of a culture of expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt. This expression of love can be found, for example, in the naming of the month of Muharram as the month of "Asan-Usen" in Aceh. Both are still preserved as a reminder of the death of Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet of Allah in a historic war (Hoesin, 1970; Ismail, 2013). In addition, the traces of Shi'a also influence other cultural practices in Aceh, ranging from religious culture, literary arts, to culinary arts.

Studies related to the existence of Shi'ism in Indonesia can be found in some previous literature. Moh. Hasim has written about the history of the emergence and development of Shi'ism in Indonesia. The existence of Shi'ism has contributed to cultural diversity in Indonesia from the past until now (Hasim, 2018; Latief, 2008; Dewi, 2016 and Atjeh, 2017). The traces of Shi'ism in its history have existed since the beginning of contact with Persia along with the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago (Saby, 2013). Evidence of this connection to Persia can be found in various archaeological artifacts

in the form of tombstone inscriptions at the Samudera Pasai historical site (Muhammad, 2013).

In addition to the works on the history of Shi'ism or Persia in the Indonesian Archipelago, several previous studies also discussed acculturation, influence, and the Sunni-Shi'a conflict in Indonesia. Fakhriati mentioned the influence of Shi'ism on the lives of the Acehnese people, especially in Pidie District. This conclusion is based on a study of the Hasan Husen and Nur Muhammad stories (Fakhriati, 2011 and Wahyudi 2017). This Shi'a influence can be observed in the scientific tradition and the Islamic movement in Indonesia in general and in Aceh in particular (Apridar, 2015; Faiz, 2016). The acculturation and influence of Shi'a with other cultures in the Indonesian Archipelago do not always run peacefully but also create tension and conflict (Sulaiman, 2017; Sutriana and Mustahyun, 2017; Puteh, 2018; Jamal, 2011; Hamdi, 2012; Widyadara, 2015 and Shihab, 2017). Due to frequent conflicts, the Shi'a community started a movement to survive in the political and religious constellation in Indonesia (Abubakar, 2018).

As far as the literature review is concerned, in general, several works have been found based on library data and historical artifacts like books, story manuscripts, and archeological data on tombstones. In addition to using library data, this article uses field data through observations and interviews with 10 informants in each province from academics, historical and cultural observers. This article is built around the hypothesis that there is a Shi'a influence in the cultural and religious practices of the Muslim community in Aceh Province. Based on this hypothesis, this research was then developed into a literature review and field study, so that adequate data could be collected to answer the predetermined problems.

This article seeks to reveal the cultural expressions of the Sunni Muslims in Aceh and West Sumatra in expressing their love for the Ahl al-Bayt. For this reason, this study is built around several objectives, which include: 1) the historical genealogy of the emergence of Shi'a nuances among the Sunni communities in Aceh and West Sumatra; 2) How the tradition of expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt is formed among Sunni Muslims in Aceh and West Sumatra, and 3) How this Shi'a-nuanced culture survives in a Sunni Muslim society.

THE HISTORICAL GENEALOGY OF SUNNI AND SHI'A ACCULTURATION IN ACEH

One of the positive traits in society is integrating several elements of civilization

within its function (Ahmad, 2012). This trait can be found in the cultural structure that thrives in Muslim societies in Indonesia in general and Aceh in particular. This is because there are so many cultural elements that exist among Indonesian Muslims, which are “absorbed” from outside cultures, including cultures typical of Shi’ism. However, to reduce the community’s resistance, sometimes these cultures are not called Shi’a but are simply referred to as of Persian origin. As previously explained, the spread of Shi’ism in Indonesia coincided with the process of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago. According to Tabataba’I, as quoted by Khairunnas Jamal, Shi’ism is a historical reality in Indonesia (Jamal, 2011), as is the case in Aceh, the connection with Shi’ism is a historical fact. It can be seen from cultural aspects that are still deeply embedded and ingrained in the society, which is predominantly Sunni. Here it is important to see how the contact and acculturation process of Shi’a culture in the Sunni community took place, although in this regard some views disagree with the fact that the traditions that exist in Aceh today are a form of contact between Shi’a culture and the Indonesian people.

Concerning whether there is a connection between Acehese culture and Shi’ism, two different views are prevalent. First, the views that agree with the notion that there is a process of acculturation of Shi’a culture in the Sunni community in Aceh. Second, the views that disagree with the opinion that some traditions still exist in the community are a form of influence of Shi’a culture.

The first opinion is put forward by experts who say that the spread of Shi’a influence in Indonesia is an uncertain reality. At least there is historical and sociological evidence that there has been acculturation of Shi’a culture in Indonesia. Muhajir Al-Fairusi, an Acehese anthropologist, stated that Aceh has experienced a long journey of Islamization since the 2nd century AD. The region was a port that was initially open to the process of Islamization of various schools, including the influence of Shi’a. The influence of Shi’a or Persians in Aceh cannot be ignored, because many elements in the structure of Acehese society have been influenced by Persians (read: Shi’a) at the beginning of the development of Islamization. One of the terms used in the Kingdom of Aceh that received Persian influence is the title “Shah” which was then used by the elite of the Acehese Kingdom (Muhajir Al-Fairusy Interview, September 13, 2020)

In addition, historical researchers, such as Taqiuddin Muhammad have written articles proving evidence and artifacts that show such contact. There is a sort of acknowledgment that the emergence of Persian Islam under the rule of the Safavid dynasty has become an influential force after the Arabs in

the Islamic world, which has colored various sides, both in terms of language, literature, philosophy, Sufism, etc. (Muhammad, 2013).

The arrival of Islam from various routes made it possible for Shi'a teachings to penetrate Aceh. As reported by a religious figure in Aceh, this may be closely related to the interaction of the Acehnese people with the outside world, especially the interaction of several world nations who had visited Aceh. Various nations of the world often visited the Pasai Kingdom (now Lhokseumawe), and they assimilated culture through trade. Thus, undoubtedly the community with the most dominant interaction will leave their culture with the indigenous people (Interview with Syukri, September 9, 2020). According to Khairil Miswar, this view has also been recorded in Ali Hasjmy's book about Sunni and Shi'a in Aceh which claims Shi'ism was once thriving in Peureulak (Interview with Khairil Miswar, 7 August 2020)

It was confirmed by Mr. Yusni Saby who said during the interview that "Islam arrived in Aceh through various agents; there were traders, Sufi experts, travelers, and even escapees from the Middle East. In the context of these escapees, many Ahl al-Bayt circles were expelled from their homeland due to political pressure and kinship to the Ahl al-Bayt. Many of these descendants of the prophet were expelled because of their status and political intrigues. The titles or names such as Habib, Sayid, indicate that they are the descendants of Ahl al-Bayt, the descendants of the Prophet, so they are highly respected. At the time, these traditions, which are now called Shi'a, were Ahl al-Bayt traditions; they were not Shi'a traditions, because the term "Shi'a" at that time had not existed; the term Shi'a only appeared later (Interview with Yusny Saby, March 17, 2020). From here, Shi'a teachings intersected with other schools of Islam in Aceh.

On the other hand, some groups disagree with the view that there is a contact or influence of Shi'a culture in Aceh. Hermansyah, an expert on Acehnese manuscripts, argued there is no strong evidence that the traditions in Aceh have been influenced by Shi'ism. According to him, the Shi'a tradition may exist in Aceh, but what needs to be considered is that the presence of Shi'ism in Aceh from the past until now has not been found, especially when referring to some axiological evidence, namely primary source evidence. For example, as revealed by Naquib al-Attas, in which he mentioned that Islam was brought from Arabia, namely Yemen. Regarding its influence, Islam in Aceh is strongly influenced by the thoughts of Imam Syafi'i and Ash'ari; in Yemen, it also influences Imam Shafi'i and Ash'ari. (Interview with Hermansyah, 19 March 2020)

Historically, Aceh has always been labeled as an area where the people follow

Ahlussunnah Waljamaah and the Shafi'i school of thought. However, it is also undeniable that the prevalent traditions are similar to the practice of Shi'a culture. In this regard, Arfiansyah, an Acehnese anthropologist, argued that knowledge and experience of Islam led to monotheism, so the Acehnese themselves in general do not have sufficient knowledge about the schools of aqidah in Islam, as well as other various schools of thought at that time. This has implications for the lack of knowledge and understanding among the Acehnese regarding the Shi'a elements in their culture. (Interview with Arfiansyah, September 8, 2020). Therefore, it's only natural that even though traditions typical of Shi'a culture take root in the Sunni community in Aceh, in general, people do not know anything about it.

Furthermore, according to Arfiansyah, the first Islamic preacher to reach Aceh via Perlak, was a Shi'a. Recently, it is strongly suspected that Islam first arrived in Aceh through Lamuri or Lamreh today. But it is not clear what sect of Islam was brought to Aceh through Lamuri. For more than 2 centuries, there has been no historical explanation of the schools of Aqidah that were adopted until the establishment of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. When Aceh was increasingly recognized as an important port, many scholars from the Middle East and other Muslim areas with Sunni aqidah and Shafi'i school of thought visited Aceh and later introduced these theological schools to the Sultanate. This explains why the aqidah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah and the Shafi'i school indirectly become the identity of Aceh, apart from cultural practices typical of Shi'a culture.

In light of the above description, there are in fact differences in views among experts regarding the presence or absence of Shi'a influence on the socio-religious of the Acehnese people. This article is more inclined to the opinion that the cultural practices in Acehnese society in certain cases show an influence of Persian or Shi'a culture. Although this is sometimes not recognized by the predominantly Sunni Acehnese as they hold that such cultural practices do not derive from Persia or Shi'a but merely a form of love for the Ahl al-Bayt.

CULTURAL PRACTICES OF EXPRESSION OF LOVE FOR AHL AL-BAYT

Regarding the hypothesis that in the cultural practice of the Sunni people in Aceh, there are still cultural entities inspired by Shi'a belief and culture. This influence can be seen in various cultural practices and is still preserved today. Here, it may be necessary to emphasize that this does not necessarily mean that theologically Shi'ism still survives and thrives in Aceh. This paper will

only explore the cultural side that develops in a society that is inspired by the values of Shi'a belief and culture (Saby, 2013 & Fakhriati, 2011). This influence includes several aspects of culture, such as language, poetry, cultural rituals, culinary, etc.

In Acehese society, several cultural entities are observed which are believed to have a close relationship with Shi'a belief and culture. According to Khairizaman, if explored further, several artifacts and other historical objects, some of the movements in the saman dance have also allegedly originated from Shi'a culture. Many people mention that some Acehese cultural practices, rites, and literature also originate from Shi'ism. The material culture includes texts as well as old rites that still survive today (Interview with Khairizzaman, 12 September 2020). Thus, cultural practices with Shi'a nuances exist in Acehese society.

Aceh is known for its literary texts. Among them are the mystical poems of Hamzah Fanshuri originating from Shahr-i Naw, which in Khairizman's view, in Persian means 'New City'. Shahr-i Naw is believed to be Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam, the former Thai kingdom, where the Persian community at that time was very large and influential so that many strategic positions of the kingdom and regional leadership were controlled by the Shi'a.

Some stories are suspected to have a relationship with Shi'a ideology. One of them is the story of Hasan-Husayn, a manuscript written in the Acehese language using the Jawi script. In a study by Fakhriati, it was stated that the story of Hasan-Husayn has traces of the ideology and practices of Shi'a teachings. In Fakhriati's analysis, it is stated that in terms of the textual title of the story of Hasan-Husayn, it shows an inclination to the Shi'a concept. The story describes the triumphs, successes, and pains experienced by Hasan and Husayn (Fakhriati, 2011). Furthermore, Muhammad Hanafiah's role as Hasan and Husayn's brother in seeking revenge for the death of his brother is also highlighted.

In addition to the story of Hasan-Husayn, there is also Hikayat Atjeh: Struggle of Zainab al-Qubra which tells the story of Zainab, the daughter of Fatimah, the younger sister of the Caliph Hasan Saidina, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, and Si Bungong Lidah Ali Murthada, as stated in the Preamble of the Hikayat Atjeh by Mular MS. The manuscript, which was written in 2006, tells the story of Zainab's struggle in Kuffah. The story also tells about the struggle of Imam Husayn and its relationship to the struggle of Zainab al-Qubra. Similar to the story of Hasan-Husayn, the Hikayat Atjeh Zainab al-Qubra also venerates the Ahl al-bayt. There are still several manuscripts in the form of stories that allegedly contain elements of Shi'ism in them, such as

the story of Imam Mahdi and the story of Muhammad Hanafiyah. Even the story of Muhammad Hanafiah is considered a story filled with Shi'a elements.

In addition to manuscripts, Shi'a elements can also be found in folklore, which is often conveyed in the oral tradition. There are several stories about the prominence of Ali and his sons, Hasan, Husayn, and Muhammad Hanafiyah, stories about Imam Mahdi that are also prevalent among the people. As reported by Hasbi Amiruddin in Aceh the story about Sayyidina Ali is one of the most popular in the community, especially among children. The oral tradition of the story about Sayyidina Ali describes Ali's traits, from his intelligence on the battlefield to the 99 sword scars he suffered, and how he survived and remained strong (Interview Hasbi Amiruddin, 17 March 2020). In various stories, Ali is shown as a noble, kind, humble person, in addition to being very strong.

In addition to texts and oral traditions, one of the trivial forms of habit in practice, which is allegedly derived from Shi'a culture is hand-kissing. According to Prof. Hasbi Amiruddin, kissing the hands of the teacher is derived from Shi'a. Similar to the habit of kissing on the cheek that many adults do when they meet, the actual culture of kissing on the cheek is Iranian culture. The difference is that our society only kisses the cheek twice, namely right and left, while Iranians kiss three times, namely right, left, and right. For Iranians, this kiss on the cheek is a sign of greeting when they meet (Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin, March 17, 2020).

Furthermore, there is also a belief among the people that the game of football is a form of humiliation to the family of the Prophet. Today, some Acehnese forbid playing football because they liken playing football to the incident of Husayn ibn Ali's head kick after being beheaded by Yazid bin Muawiyah's soldiers in Karbala. This belief then holds that football is a form of humiliation to the Prophet's family. This kind of belief is still prevalent among the Acehnese as quoted from Tgk. Hanafi Juned as follows: "In the past, we were forbidden to play football by our parents because football originated from the murder of Sayyidina Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (Interview with Hanafi Juned, February 25, 2020).

There are other cultural practices among the Acehnese as a form of commemoration of the killing of Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib such as naming the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Husen because the Karbala tragedy occurred on 10 Muharram in the year 61 Hijri (Hoesin, 1970; Ismail, 2013). Regarding the designation of the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Husen, according to Tgk. Jazuli "is a form of profound appreciation of love for the Ahl al-Bayt shown by the people of Aceh, and I think this is

a traditional Acehnese cultural offering to remind us all about the story of Sayyidina Husayn's murder by Yazid ibn Muawiyah's soldiers" (Interview with Jazuli, 3 March 2020).

Still, in connection with 10 Muharram, it has become a culture among Acehnese Muslim women to cook Ashura porridge or Iebu Hasan Husen. Today the tradition of cooking Ashura porridge is also still preserved in Aceh. For Acehnese Muslim women, cooking Iebu Hasan Husen is not an observation of certain beliefs but merely as a form of preserving tradition from generation to generation to remember the murder of Husayn bin Ali in Karbala which became a milestone in Shi'a history.

Thus, the history of Shi'a has inspired the emergence of culinary culture in Aceh. In addition to the Ashura porridge, the Acehnese also have a type of cookie or snack called Boh Husen. This cookie is in the shape of a crescent moon. According to Dr. Safir Iskandar Wijaya the curved shape like a crescent moon was inspired by the shape of a typical Persian sword. While its shape is similar to a Persian sword, the cookie's name depicts one of the Shi'a figures, namely Husayn (Interview with T. Safir Iskandar Wijaya, January 20, 2020).

Several cultural practices traditionally preserved in Aceh to this day provide sufficient evidence of the existence of a Shi'a cultural identity in the Sunni community. This shows the moderate and open attitude of the Acehnese people. Moreover, they perceive such cultural practice as an expression of respect and love for the Prophet's family.

SURVIVABILITY OF LOVE EXPRESSION FOR AHL AL-BAYT

One of the factors that make for the Persian cultural tradition which is influenced by Shi'a teachings acceptable in the Indonesian Archipelago is their alignment with the Ahl al-Bayt. Regarding this context, the fact that the Acehnese themselves love and venerate the Prophet and his family has paved the way for Persian/Iranian traditions and cultures to be easily accepted by the Acehnese and these traditions have been preserved for centuries. It seems that the influence of Iran was brought via the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean, while from Saudi Arabia, it was from the Red Sea, down to Yemen, then to the Indonesian Archipelago. So, there are three sources of influence: first, the Arabs; second, the Persians; and third, the Indians (Ghujarat). Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry, a native Ghujarat who died in Ghujarat, India was in Aceh for 4-5 years). Hence, the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt veneration in Aceh is regarded as being the Shi'a teachings (Interview with Yusny Saby, 17 March 2020).

In a similar vein, Khairil Miswar reported that when it comes to the survivability of Shi'a culture in Aceh, it is because the Acehnese themselves do not see this culture as a Shi'a tradition, but rather as an Ahl al-Bayt tradition. As is known, the Acehnese claim to love the Prophet dearly, so everything related to the Prophet, such as the killing of his grandson, Husain, or Hikayat Asan Usen, etc., are preserved as a form of their affection for the Prophet. In addition, the celebration of Maulid (the Prophet's birthday) in Aceh also tends to last quite long, up to three months, even though historically Maulid was first celebrated by the Shi'a in Egypt. Therefore, the preservation of this Shi'a tradition in Aceh is merely a medium to show their love for the Prophet and the Ahl al-bayt, not following Shi'a theologically, because as far as Shi'a fiqh model is concerned, it does not apply in Aceh. The preserved traditions have nothing to do with beliefs or worship models (Interview with Khairil Miswar, August 7, 2020).

It is for the love for the Ahl al-bayt that the Shi'a culture is adopted as part of the tradition among the Sunni. In the context of glorifying the Ahl al-bayt, according to Faisal M. Nur, "One thing that must be noted is that the expression of love for the Ahl al-bayt among the Sunni sometimes exceeds that of the Shi'a" (Interview with Faisal M. Nur, March 23, 2020) For the predominantly Sunni people of Aceh, all the Persian cultural practices they preserve are not meant to perpetuate Shi'a teachings, but simply as a display of love for the Messenger of Allah and his family.

Furthermore, according to Maizuddin, apart from seeing a culture that directly reflects respect for the Prophet and his descendants as the dominant factor that contributes to the survivability of Shi'a traditions in the Sunni community, the respect for the indatu (forebears) also strongly influences the Acehnese society. For certain circles, local wisdom is more important to maintain and observe than to show the identity of the culture (Interview with Maizuddin, August 8, 2020).

In line with the statement made by Arfiansyah, culture has lived for centuries and is practiced every year. There is a view held among the people that if they abandon the culture, there will be a disaster. Moreover, the Shi'a nuanced cultures are not seen by the Acehnese as Shi'a practices, but understood as part of Islamic teachings to love God, His Messenger, and his family. Arfiansyah believes that not many Acehnese, especially those in rural areas who preserve the culinary culture of Ashura cookie, understand the story of the murder of Hasan and Husayn, nor do they know who killed the Prophet's grandsons and on whose orders and for what purpose (Interview with Arfiansyah, 8 September 2020). In other words, they understand that the tradition is only a celebration that is not related to any other faith.

Culture is a set of traditions observed in the daily life of the Acehnese. Adat (custom) and culture are two terms that have close meanings, even customs are part of culture. Both custom and culture have become people's traditions passed down from generation to generation, and are difficult to change as they have become a habit (*tabi'at/peukateun*). The customs and culture that have been approved by the ulama are likely to last and be preserved by the community, and that is why Aceh's customs and culture are commonly respected and adored by the Acehnese since ancient times and used as the basis of life.

This acceptance of values with Shi'a nuances among the Acehnese is then maintained through cultural practices, then continues to be preserved because it is continuously taught orally. According to Badruzzaman, "In the past, in the villages of Aceh the recital of Hikayat Hasan-Husayn and Hikayat Ibn Hanafiah was very common. In this way, the preaching of Shi'a values became a collective understanding in Acehnese society (Interview with Badruzzaman Ismail, 29 March 2020). The story and poems that tell the history of Shi'a culture are still very much alive today, such as the popular song of Hasan ngon Husen by Rafli, an Acehnese singer and culturalist.

CONCLUSION

Several studies have found that in a long historical process, there has been a contact of Shi'a Muslim culture with the teachings that had long existed in the Indonesian Archipelago. The contact between these two cultures then gave birth to a cultural formation whose genealogical roots have been influenced by Shi'a culture and practices. These cultural formations then develop and continue to be preserved by the Sunni community in Aceh, and are no longer seen as related to Shi'a rituals. They only see it as a profane culture, not sacred theological teaching. This culture is then practiced as an expression of love and respect for the Prophet and his family (Ahl al-Bayt).

In the context of Aceh, the practices of this tradition can be found in several forms still preserved today, such as Ashura porridge (Kanji Asan Usein), Boh Husayn cookie, the naming the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Usein, recital of stories about important Shi'a figures, such as Hikayat Hasan Husen, Hikayat Zainab Al-Kubra, Hikayat Iman Hanafiah. Based on the view that culture does not conflict with the Shari'a and is practiced as an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt, these cultural practices are not considered to be against the faith of the Acehnese Muslims who are predominantly Sunni. Interestingly, this expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt by the followers of Sunni Islam has provided room for Shi'a culture to continue to exist and even

develop in a Sunni society. Moreover, the current Shi'a theological movement supporters in Indonesia do not call themselves Shi'a but instead operate under the name of the Indonesian Ahl-Bayt Jama'ah Association (IJABI). This is intended for minimizing resistance from the majority of Sunni Muslims in Indonesia.

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