

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF SEURUMBEEK RECITATION IN THE KEUNDURI BLANG TRADITION: STUDY OF LIVING QUR'AN IN PIDIE, ACEH, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The *seurumbek*, a *mushaf* manuscript by Tgk. Chik Dipasi, is highly revered and considered sacred by the community of Waido. The presence and recitation of *seurumbek* hold great significance in the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido, setting it apart from other regions in Aceh. This research aims to explore the description of the implementation of *seurumbek* recitation and delve deeper into the symbolic meanings created within this tradition. The study employs a qualitative approach as part of field research, utilizing observation, interviews, and direct documentation techniques presented descriptively. The research is conducted in Waido, Pidie Regency, Aceh. The findings reveal that the *seurumbek* recitation occupies a central position in the *keunduri blang* tradition, evident from the special treatment it receives, both in storage and during the recitation process. *Seurumbek* recitation also creates complex symbols reflecting the relationship between humans and God, ancestors, others, and oneself. This practice serves as a mediator to draw closer to Allah, with symbolic actions such as shading, kissing, and showing respect for *seurumbek* reflecting reverence for Tgk. Chik Dipasi. *Seurumbek* recitation also symbolizes social relationships by strengthening Islamic brotherhood in the community. Additionally, it brings tranquility, patience, and sincerity as symbols of an individual's relationship with oneself.

Keywords: *Keunduri blang, Seurumbek, Manuscript of Tgk. Chik Dipasi, Tradition, Living Quran*

ABSTRAK

Seurumbek yang merupakan mushaf hasil salinan tangan Tgk. Chik Dipasi sangat disakralkan dan dianggap keramat oleh masyarakat Waido. Kehadiran dan pembacaan *seurumbek* sangatlah penting dalam *keunduri blang* di Waido, sehingga menjadikan *keunduri blang* di Waido sangat berbeda dengan daerah lain di Aceh. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menelusuri bagaimana deskripsi pelaksanaan pembacaan *seurumbek*, serta menggali lebih dalam makna simbolik yang tercipta dalam tradisi tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan *field research* menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi secara langsung yang disajikan secara deskriptif. Lokasi penelitian bertempat di Waido, Kabupaten Pidie, Aceh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembacaan *seurumbek* menempati posisi yang sentral dalam tradisi *keunduri blang*, terlihat dari perlakuan istimewa yang diberikan baik dalam penyimpanan maupun dalam prosesi pembacaannya. Pembacaan *seurumbek* juga menciptakan simbol-simbol kompleks yang mencerminkan hubungan manusia dengan Tuhan, leluhur, sesama, dan diri sendiri. Praktik ini menjadi perantara untuk mendekatkan diri kepada Allah, serta tindakan simbolis seperti memayungi, mencium, dan menghormati *seurumbek* mencerminkan penghormatan kepada Tgk. Chik Dipasi. Pembacaan *seurumbek* juga memunculkan simbol hubungan sosial dengan mempererat *ukhuwah islamiyyah* dalam

masyarakat, juga membawa ketenangan, kesabaran, dan keikhlasan sebagai simbol hubungan individu dengan dirinya sendiri.

Kata kunci: *Keunduri Blang, Seurumbek, Manuskrip Tgk. Chik Dipasi, Tradisi, Living Quran*

A. Introduction

Various customs, cultures, and traditions influenced by true religious values are inherently reflected in all aspects of community life, be it in celebratory ceremonies, mourning days, disasters, illnesses, and various other aspects of collective activities.¹ Aceh, known for its society immersed in Islamic values, is not exempt from this influence. Since the era of the sultanate, a period marked by strong social capital in implementing Islamic law, Aceh has steadfastly adhered to Islamic teachings, establishing a sociological foundation deeply embedded in its societal norms and practices.² Therefore, the social setting in Acehnese society demonstrates that diverse local cultures can intersect with religious values, forming a relationship known at the social level as cultural assimilation (customs, traditions) with religion.³

This phenomenon is manifested in various *kenduri* ceremonies, which generally consist of several elements such as offerings, prayers, and communal meals.⁴ In Acehnese society, these diverse *kenduri* ceremonies have their own symbols and meanings, ultimately understood as something that plays a crucial role in communal life. These symbols are imbued with elements of belief that enhance their value, ensuring the preservation of their existence and significance.⁵ One such *kenduri* tradition still practiced by the Acehnese community is the *kenduri sawah*, commonly referred to as the *keunduri blang*.

The *keunduri blang* tradition holds symbolic meanings within the context of Acehnese society. Originating from the era predating Islam, *keunduri blang* is an inheritance from the pre-Islamic period, bearing imprints of animism and dynamism that underscore its historical depth and cultural significance in Acehnese heritage.⁶ However, in contemporary times, *keunduri blang* is marked by various activities aimed at seeking Allah's blessings for an abundant harvest, protection from pests and diseases, and resilience against potential disruptions to agricultural activities. Celebrated either once or multiple times gradually, the tradition exhibits variations across several regions in Aceh, depending on the specific location. Simultaneously, this tradition is perceived as an integration of ancient animist

¹ Frank A Salamone, *Encyclopedia of Religious Rites, Rituals, and Festivals* (New York, 2004), p. 5.

² Abidin Nurdin and others, 'The Implementation of Meunasah-Based Sharia in Aceh: A Social Capital and Islamic Law Perspective', *Samarah*, 5.2 (2021), p. 763 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.10710>>.

³ Rahimah Rahimah, Hasanuddin Hasanuddin, and Djufri Djufri, 'Kajian Etnobotani (Upacara Adat Suku Aceh Di Provinsi Aceh)', *BIOTIK: Jurnal Ilmiah Biologi Teknologi Dan Kependidikan*, 6.1 (2019), p. 54 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/biotik.v6i1.4045>>.

⁴ Yenny Reiza Fitriana and others, 'Hukum Islam Terhadap Kebudayaan Kenduri', *At-Tasyri': Jurnal Hukum Dan Ekonomi Syariah*, 4.2 (2023), p. 119 <<https://doi.org/10.55380/tasyri.v4i2.413>>.

⁵ Anismar, Rukaiyah, and Abdullah Akhyar Nasution, 'Pemaknaan Simbolik Pada Prosesi Kenduri Blang: Studi Kasus Gampong Ulee Gle Pidie Jaya', *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSIAI)*, 2.1 (2021), p. 23 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v2i1.1180>>.

⁶ Muhammad Arifin and Abdul Manan, 'Cultural Traditions of Khanduri Blang in Reubee Village Aceh, Indonesia', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 6.3 (2018), p. 434 <<https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v6i3.243>>.

elements and Islamic teachings, further enriching the cultural and spiritual landscape of Acehese traditions.⁷

Examining the sequence within the *keunduri blang* tradition, there are generally various activities such as the recitation of the Quran (*tadarus*)⁸, *dhikr*, *salawat*, prayers, and communal meals. Particularly in Waido, Pidie, the implementation of *keunduri blang* is still preserved to this day, known locally as *keunduri bintang* or *keunduri keubeu bintang*. In Waido, this ceremony was originally taught by Tgk. Chik Dipasi⁹ to the community, featuring a unique aspect: the recitation of the handwritten Quran manuscript called *seurumbek* by Tgk Chik Dipasi.

Seurumbek is a handwritten manuscript of the Quran comprising 30 *juz*, directly inscribed by Tgk Chik Dipasi, and it is only being used once every three years during the *keunduri blang* ceremony. This *seurumbek*, existing for centuries, stands as a historical heritage in Waido. It has become a reality in Waido society that *seurumbek* must be respected and treated with great respect. This is evident in the treatment and attitudes of Waido residents toward *seurumbek*, which significantly differ from their treatment of other *mushaf*. Even other Quranic manuscripts written by Tgk Chik Dipasi, referred to as *muqaddam*¹⁰, do not receive the same level of reverence as *seurumbek*. For the people of Waido, Tgk Chik Dipasi's *seurumbek* is considered sacred, revered, and highly valued.

The distinct attitudes, behaviors, and ways in which the Waido community treats Tgk Chik Dipasi's *seurumbek* become noticeable when compared to other *mushaf*. This divergence becomes even more pronounced during the *keunduri blang* tradition, where the recitation of *seurumbek* serves as the core of the triennial event. The enduring presence of the *keunduri blang* tradition and the recitation of *seurumbek* indicates that the Waido community continues to engage in collective interactions. When these interactions, whether direct or indirect, occur, they generate distinctive symbolic meanings in the context of Waido community life.

Furthermore, in scientific research, it is essential to trace previous studies. Therefore, the studies conducted a review of various literature, some of which explored general aspects of *keunduri blang*, with barely any discussion on the living Quran perspective. In a study conducted by Abdul Mugni titled "Ritual Khanduri Blang: Religion and Custom," UIN Ar-Raniry in 2018¹¹, it was presented that this tradition does not violate Islamic law and continues to be preserved until now. Additionally, an article by Rukaiyah et al. titled "Symbolic Meaning in the Kenduri Blang Process: A Case Study in Gampong Ulee Gle Pidie Jaya," from Malikussaleh University in 2021¹², showed that the Ulee Gle community

⁷ Abdul Manan and others, 'Paddy Cultivation Rituals in South Acèh, Indonesia: An Ethnographic Study in West Labuhan Haji', *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8.1 (2022), p. 2 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2094075>>.

⁸ Syamsuddin Daud, *Adat Meugoe* (Banda Aceh: Indatu Bookstore, 2009), p. 13.

⁹ Sheikh Abdussalam Bin Burhanuddin, a renowned scholar in Aceh in the year 1204 H. He earned the title Tgk Chik Dipasi because, following his demise, he was laid to rest in Pasi (beach) in the village of Ie Leubeu.

¹⁰ Muqaddam refers to the manuscript of the Quran written by Tgk Chik Dipasi, systematically organized on a per-juz basis. This is distinct from *seurumbek*, which is a complete Quran manuscript consisting of all 30 juz.

¹¹ Abdul Mugni, 'Ritual Khanduri Blang: Agama Dan Adat', *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyyah*, 4.1 (2018), p. 8 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtima'iyyah.v4i1.4777>>.

¹² Anismar, Rukaiyah, and Nasution, pp. 23–34.

interprets *keunduri blang* in three main aspects: as a distinctive tradition, a connector of social bonds, and a strengthener of community unity. Finally, an article by Nurazizah et al., titled "Islamization Process in the Ritual of Khanduri Blang in Gampong Dayah Leubue, Ulim District, Pidie Jaya Regency," from UIN North Sumatra in 2023¹³, revealed changes in the ritual practices of *keunduri blang* in Gampong Dayah Leubue due to the Islamization process led by religious figures.

Based on these previous studies, one can observe how the *keunduri blang* tradition has been studied from various perspectives in the socio-religious context in Aceh. This article aims to delve into a more specific aspect, namely the symbolic meaning of the *seurumbek* recitation in the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido. The *seurumbek* recitation is understood as part of the living Quran activities and will be analyzed through the symbolic interactionism theory.

Through this research, the aim is to complement existing studies and contribute to the exploration of living Quran and socio-cultural studies. The article is also anticipated to expand scholarly knowledge and provide benefits to the community, especially in the study of the *keunduri blang* tradition in Aceh.

Therefore, the investigation was needed to further explore how the *seurumbek* recitation was carried out in the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido and to explore deeper into the symbolic meanings created in this tradition. Primary data and information for this research were collected based on empirical phenomena existing in real life.¹⁴ To address these issues, this research conducted qualitative research, focusing on basic principles, which had become the foundation for many human activities.¹⁵ This research was based on field research to collect data through observation, interviews, and direct documentation presented descriptively. The research took place in Waido, Pidie Regency, Aceh. Based on the data obtained, this research conducted an analysis utilizing the symbolic interactionism theory proposed by Herbert Blumer.

B. Result and Discussion

1. Tradition in Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interactionism theory is a framework that emphasizes role behavior, interpersonal interaction, and communicative expression in a social context. This theory highlights the central role of communication, particularly symbols, in understanding human life. In this theory, interpersonal relationships are characterized by the processes of interpretation and meaning formation of individual actions in their interactions with others or with themselves. In other words, the interpretation of these symbols is essentially a product of the interpretation of the world around them. Symbolic interactionism theory

¹³ Nurazizah Nurazizah, 'Proses Islamisasi Dalam Ritual Khanduri Blang Di Gampong Dayah Leubue Kecamatan Ulim Kabupaten Pidie Jaya', *SEMAR: Jurnal Sosial Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1.02 (2023), p. 79–88 <<https://doi.org/10.59966/semar.v1i02.443>>.

¹⁴ Peter Connolly, *Aneka Pendekatan Studi Agama*, trans. by Imam Khoiri (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012), p. 105.

¹⁵ Burhan Asofa, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2004), p. 20.

assumes that humans have the ability to attribute specific meanings through communication processes among them.¹⁶

The theory states that social reality is always changing. Individuals interact through symbols with meanings that evolve through negotiation between the involved parties, in line with their interests. The meanings of these symbols are flexible, influenced by individual development and the context of time and place. In this theory, individuals play an active role in shaping social reality, making the concept of self-crucial. This self-concept significantly influences how they engage in social interactions, including emotions, values, beliefs, and experiences from the past and future.¹⁷

In summary, when individuals interact in society, a process occurs that creates symbols. In social life, these symbols are created, used, and given meaning through shared agreements. Symbols with shared meanings form a strong foundation in the process of constructing social relationships by individuals within society. Each individual is active in choosing their behavior, and this action helps them understand their roles in society.¹⁸

Symbols can be categorized into two types: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication is a form of communication that is easily understood because it involves words, writing, or concrete actions. For example, when someone is called by their friend and they point to their watch, it becomes a symbol that they are in a hurry and cannot join at the moment.¹⁹ On the other hand, non-verbal communication is an indirect type of communication that requires a deeper understanding.²⁰ To comprehend it, it is necessary to analyze the meaning of the gestures or signs involved.

The theory of symbolic interactionism was first developed by George Herbert Mead and later enriched by Herbert Blumer.²¹ The foundation of this theory is the recognition of meaning in social interactions. For instance, the use of language with specific meanings in a particular community that may not be understood by other social groups.²² Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory can be summarized through three premises.²³ First, humans act based on the meanings they attribute to specific situations or objects, indicating that individuals actively engage in giving meaning to their environment and situations. Second, these meanings emerge through the process of social interaction with others, demonstrating

¹⁶ Ahtim Miladya Rohmah and Anwar Mujahidin, 'Makna Simbolik Tradisi Pembacaan Yāsīn Faḍīlah: Studi Living Qur'an Di Desa Jono Kecamatan Tawangharjo Kabupaten Grobogan', *QOF*, 6.2 (2022), p. 289 <<https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v6i2.72>>.

¹⁷ Laksmi Laksmi, 'Teori Interaksionisme Simbolik Dalam Kajian Ilmu Perpustakaan Dan Informasi', *Pustabilia: Journal of Library and Information Science*, 1.2 (2018), p. 124 <<https://doi.org/10.18326/pustabilia.v1i2.121-138>>.

¹⁸ Laksmi, p. 125.

¹⁹ Richard West and Lynn H. Turner, *Pengantar Teori Komunikasi Analisis Dan Aplikasi*, *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 2017, LIII, p. 320.

²⁰ Rachmat Kriyantono, *Teori-Teori Public Relations Perspektif Barat & Lokal*, Cetakan Ke-2, 2017, p. 220.

²¹ Ahmad Atabik, 'Interaksionisme Simbolik Ritual Meron Di Indonesia Dan Relevansinya Dalam Al Quran', *FIKRAH*, 8.1 (2020), p. 140 <<https://doi.org/10.21043/fikrah.v8i1.7216>>.

²² Ida Bagus Wirawan, *Teori-Teori Sosial Dalam Tiga Paradigma: (Fakta Sosial, Definisi Sosial, Dan Perilaku Sosial)* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenas Media, 2012), pp. 112–17.

²³ Michael J Carter and Celene Fuller, 'Symbolic Interactionism', *Sociopedia.Isa*, 2015, 1–17 (p. 3) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/205684601561>>.

that the meaning of a symbol is not fixed in itself but influenced by collective agreement. Third, these meanings can change or evolve during the course of social interaction.²⁴

In other words, Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory addresses human behavior in society, patterns of social interaction, and relationships between individuals. It emphasizes that in society, individuals actively interact, create meaning, and interpret their actions through the use of symbols. The theory suggests that humans interact in mutually influential ways, creating symbolic systems. Thus, the theory explores how individuals, together with others, shape meaning and how the environment influences human behavior.²⁵

Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory appears to be closely related to the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido, where symbols and meanings play a significant role. When individuals in the Waido community engage in *keunduri blang*, they directly or indirectly create symbols with shared meanings. An example of this is the *seurumbek* used in *keunduri blang*, serving as a sacred symbol with specific meaning within the societal context. Additionally, it holds symbolic value in the context of swearing, as will be elaborated in the subsequent discussion. Overall, Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory aids in understanding the roles of symbols and meanings in the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido. It illustrates that this tradition involves social interaction processes, the collective formation of meaning, and the active role of individuals, as explained within the framework of this theory.

2. The *Keunduri blang* Tradition in Waido, Pidie

*Keunduri blang*²⁶ is a tradition carried out by the people of Aceh before or when planting rice in the fields. In Acehnese tradition, it is not permitted to go to the fields or engage in farming individually. Therefore, the *keunduri blang* ceremony is typically carried out in the fields before farmers begin planting rice.²⁷ This practice has been passed down through generations within Acehnese traditions.

In Waido, Pidie, the implementation of the *keunduri blang* tradition is more commonly known among the locals as *keunduri bintang*. The term '*bintang*' refers to the sacrificial use of buffalo with distinctive "star" markings on its physical features.²⁸ The emergence of this tradition is closely tied to the influence of Tgk Chik Dipasi, an influential figure in Pidie, serving as an Islamic scholar, judge (*qadhi*), and charismatic leader who significantly impacted the agricultural sector in Waido.²⁹

As a spiritual figure who really cares about the community, Tgk Chik Dipasi tries to combine agriculture as a source of community livelihood with spiritual behavior to create

²⁴ Riyadi Soeprapto, *Interaksionisme Simbolik Perspektif Sosiologi Modern* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), p. 120.

²⁵ Laksmi, p. 125.

²⁶ The term "*keunduri blang*" can have different names in each region, depicting the cultural richness and traditions of Aceh.

²⁷ L.K Ara Medri, *Ensiklopedi Aceh, Adat Hikayat Dan Sastra* (Banda Aceh, 2008), p. 197.

²⁸ The term "*bintang*" here refers to the white-colored fur or feathers found on buffaloes. It can be located between the tail and forehead or on the cheeks, resembling a piercing star (*bintang teumboh*).

²⁹ Masruraini, Bahaking Rama, and Muhammad Rusydi Rasyid, 'Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Pada Masa Awal Hingga Lahirnya Kerajaan Islam Di Aceh: Lembaga Dan Tokohnya', *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Kearifan Lokal (JIPKL)*, 2.4 (2022), p. 172.

unity.³⁰ Thus, he initiated the *keunduri blang* tradition as an expression of gratitude and a form of hope towards Allah. Additionally, it aimed to encourage unity among diverse community groups, such as in Waido, known for its agricultural produce, and in the Kuala region, where the majority works as fishermen.³¹

In managing the *keunduri blang* tradition, Tgk Chik Dipasi established various rules and procedures infused with religious meanings and values. These regulations, known as *peuneuduk*³², are considered crucial by the community. Neglecting them could have adverse consequences for the implementation of *keunduri blang* and the future conditions of the rice fields.

The *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido is held every three years, with conditions and regulations carefully maintained throughout its execution. From the initial planning discussions to the completion, everything is organized and has been practiced for several decades. The series of events in this tradition are sequential, complementary, and hold unique significance in the eyes of the community, especially among the farmers in Waido. The sequence is briefly outlined as follows.

The *keunduri blang* tradition, essentially a duty for the core family (descendants) of Tgk Chik Dipasi, gathers substantial enthusiasm from the community due to their aspirations for agricultural blessings. This connection fosters a shared responsibility in executing the tradition. The core family, as descendants, fulfills this ancestral duty, while the community relies on the organized conduct of the ritual to ensure a seamless process, spanning from planting to rice harvesting.³³ The *keunduri blang* series begins with a preparatory discussion involving the core family and village leaders to determine the event's date. This is followed by the search for a qualified star-marked buffalo and thorough preparation, including the installation of *tameh* (pillars) and *bleut* (coconut leaf weavings). Integral components encompass the setup of a *peupanji* (a white cloth containing Quranic verses) on a bamboo frame and the positioning of bamboo poles as restraints for the buffalo during the slaughter.

Distinctive local dishes, *ie bu* and *eungkoet kleut*, are then cooked, forming a crucial component of the communal meal. Following this, the reading of *samadiyah* and the communal meal, initiated with the recitation of Quranic verses, takes place. Subsequently, a significant event in this tradition unfolds—the reading of *seurumbek*. This reading is categorized as crucial and is only conducted under specific conditions. Both before and during this reading, *peusijuek* is performed—an act of cleansing and purifying essential objects in the tradition.

One of the pinnacles of the tradition is the slaughtering of the star-marked buffalo, conducted in the early hours of the day. The next day involves the reading of *muqaddam*, sections of the Quran written by Tgk Chik Dipasi, serving as the conclusion of the *keunduri*

³⁰ Usman Usman and Hanafiah Hanafiah, 'Peranan Teungku Chik Di Waido Ulama Ahli Meugoe', *Seuneubok Lada: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sejarah, Sosial, Budaya Dan Kependidikan*, 6.1 (2019), 1–10 (p. 2) <<https://ejournalunsam.id/index.php/jsnbl/article/view/1189>>.

³¹ Interview with Tgk Asnawi on March 5th, 2023.

³² The term "*peuneuduk*," when taken literally, means "what is set" or what has been established as it should be. In the context of *keunduri blang*, "*peuneuduk*" is a 'requirement' or something that must exist in the implementation of the *keunduri blang* tradition. This is established by Tgk Chik Dipasi.

³³ Interview with Tgk Faisal on March 5th, 2023.

bintang tradition. The event is attended by numerous individuals, including governmental figures and journalists, highlighting its significance in preserving the cultural heritage and spiritual values of Waido's community. It also underscores the interconnection between the core family (relatives and descendants of Tgk Chik Dipasi) and the broader community during its execution.

The implementation of the *keunduri blang* in Waido showcases the undeniable role of Tgk Chik Dipasi in developing the agricultural sector in the region.³⁴ Thanks to his efforts, the *keunduri blang* tradition has evolved into a vital fragment of Waido's agricultural life. With his charisma and appeal as a prominent Islamic scholar, the community is inspired to perpetuate this tradition as an inseparable part of their cultural identity.

3. The Practice of Reading *Seurumbek* in *Keunduri blang* in Waido

As previously mentioned above, a crucial element in the execution of the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido is the reading of *seurumbek*, a handwritten Quranic manuscript by Tgk Chik Dipasi. *Seurumbek* has a brown-colored cover, showing signs of aging. The condition of the paper indicates signs of fragility, although it remains intact. On the edges of the *seurumbek*'s paper, there are specific Arabic inscriptions. This relatively thick *seurumbek* is protected by a first layer of white cloth, followed by a red-white cloth as the second layer. *Seurumbek* is stored in a tightly sealed box made of glass. The special treatment of *seurumbek*, besides honoring and respecting Tgk. Chik Dipasi's handwritten script, is also based on its age, reaching hundreds of years, making it vulnerable to termite attacks and other factors that could permanently damage the manuscript.

This manuscript is perceived as a significant effort by Tgk. Chik Dipasi in dedicating himself to the religion of Allah, thereby granting *seurumbek* a special place within the Waido community due to its sacred nature.³⁵ *Seurumbek*, which has aged for hundreds of years, is exclusively preserved for specific situations, and stored in a special place by the descendants of Tgk Chik Dipasi. One such condition for unveiling *seurumbek* to the public is during the triennial *keunduri* event. Alternatively, it may be utilized when disagreements arise within the community and resolution seems elusive. In such instances, the conflicting parties will swear in front of *seurumbek* to determine who is at fault or if there is deception involved. One of the descendants, Tgk Asnawi stated:

"Many people come to take an oath in front of the *seurumbek*, but we (the family holding the *seurumbek*) will not immediately bring it out. Before revealing the *seurumbek*, we always ask a follow-up question to ensure whether they indeed want to take an oath using the *seurumbek*." We give them 100 days to reflect and consider their oath. If they remain steadfast, then they proceed with the oath process. However, most people cancel their intentions within this 100-day period. Sometimes, there are even physical changes before they take the oath, such as feeling weak, and so on. For our family, *seurumbek* is highly sacred and should not be taken lightly. Bringing out

³⁴ Ibrahim Usman, *Kemukiman Tungoe Dan Sekitarnya Zona Civilazation, Historis-Culture of Teungku Chik Di Pasi in Waido* (Langsa: Unsam, 2014), p. 28.

³⁵ Interview with Ali Basyah on March 5th, 2023.

seurumbek is done with a grand ceremony, especially during the celebration of *keunduri bintang* held every three years."³⁶

Concerning the treatment and central position of the *seurumbek* within the implementation of *keunduri blang* in Waido, it is evident that the community has imbued the Quran with significance beyond being an 'ordinary' text meant for reading. Instead, they perceive it as a 'living' entity, an integral part of their daily lives (Quran in everyday life). This aspect constitutes the primary focus of the study on living Quran, with the inquiry directed towards the community's responses to the Quran.³⁷

The reading of *seurumbek* takes place after the Isha prayer in the Meunasah Blang hall, a designated location for the event. Attendees gather around the designated reading area surrounded by previously installed *bleut*³⁸. Reading *seurumbek* is a task entrusted to the descendants of the family of Tgk Chik Dipasi, and only they are allowed direct contact with the manuscript.

The event begins with the descendants who will read, sitting in a circle on prepared mats under a tent. The retrieval of *seurumbek* from its storage place is carried out by a prominent family member from the descendants of Tgk. Chik Dipasi. *Seurumbek* is then taken with great care, sheltered under a golden-yellow umbrella similar to that of a bride.

Before unveiling the covering of *seurumbek*, various prayers, salutations, and *dhikr* are recited as a sign of respect. *Seurumbek* is placed in the center of the attendees who will participate in the reading. Several Qurans are already placed before the attendees. In one corner of the reading area, there are containers of water stored in gallons and mineral water bottles belonging to locals, believed to become 'blessed' water (*ie rajah*) after being prayed over and after the reading of *seurumbek*.

The ceremony involves *peusijuk*, one of the traditions of the Acehnese community that is consistently employed in various ceremonies and is still preserved to this day³⁹, where essential items in the tradition, such as the buffalo, cooking stoves, cooking pots, and bamboo poles, are "purified" with splashes of water and coconut shell smoke infused with fragrances. The *seurumbek* manuscript, previously wrapped in red and white cloth, is then opened, placed on the head, kissed with great admiration, and then placed back on the head several times before the reading commences. Before unveiling the covering cloth of the *seurumbek* box, various prayers, salutations, and *dhikr* are recited. After the reading by one family member, *seurumbek* is handed over to another family member to continue the reading in a similar manner—placed on the head, kissed with great reverence, and then read, and so forth.

The reading is carried out with precision, devotion, and with special attention to the rules of *tajwid*. When the reading reaches several pages, one family member touches *seurumbek* to bottles and gallons of water that were prepared beforehand, believed to bestow

³⁶ Interview with Tgk Asnawi on January 5th, 2023.

³⁷ Sahiron Syamsudin, 'Metodologi Penelitian Living Qur'an Dan Hadis', *TH-Press*, 2007, p. 97.

³⁸ "*Bleut*" refers to rectangular coconut leaf weaving placed around the area where *seurumbek* is recited. This weaving is considered an essential element that must be present (*peuneuduek*) and is used as a support or reinforcement.

³⁹ Khairil Fazal and Mawardi Mawardi, 'Hubungan Simbiosis Masyarakat Aceh Besar Dengan Tradisi Hindu', *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1.1 (2021), p. 85 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v1i1.9482>>.

blessings. Meanwhile, on the other side, some members gather to recite *samadiyah* together. After the reading is complete, *seurumbek* is returned to the glass box and shielded under an umbrella as it is taken back to its storage place, while the family continues reading the Quran until several sections are completed. The reading of *seurumbek* concludes with a communal meal for the surrounding community, including the distribution of the traditional dish *ie bu*⁴⁰ to take home.

4. Symbolic Meaning of *Seurumbek* Reading in *Keunduri blang* Tradition

The theory of symbolic interactionism encompasses all interconnected elements in the formation of meaning for a symbol or sign through the communication process, whether in the form of verbal messages or non-verbal behavior. The ultimate goal of this interaction is to attribute meaning to the symbol or emblem based on the shared agreements within a specific society. This theory is formulated based on three premises by Herbert Blumer. First, human actions towards something are based on the meaning that the object holds for them. Second, this meaning is acquired through social interaction with others. Third, these meanings can undergo modification or change during the process of social interaction.⁴¹

The utilization of symbols as a means of communication is not unfamiliar in Islamic teachings. However, a lack of understanding in interpreting the textual evidence (*nash* or *dalil*) has led many to reject the existence of these symbols in the context of religious life. Often, these matters are considered superstitious, innovations (*bid'ah*), superstitions (*khurafat*), and even viewed as actions leaning towards polytheism (*musyrik*). However, there are instances in the life of Prophet Muhammad that demonstrate the use of symbols. For example, during the *istisqa* (prayer for rain), prophet changed the position of his head covering (sorban) as a form of prayer (*du'a bi al-rumuz*) using a symbol or sign⁴². This action by Prophet Muhammad illustrates the use of nonverbal symbolic behavior. On another occasion, the use of verbal symbols is evident when Prophet Muhammad and his companions performed *ruqyah*, an effort to heal oneself or others who were ill by reciting the verses of *al-Mu'awwidhatain* (Surah al-Falaq and al-Nas).⁴³

Meanwhile, the community of Waido also incorporates the use of symbols in the implementation of the *Keunduri blang* tradition, particularly evident in the reading of *seurumbek*. The recitation of *seurumbek*, a manuscript of the Quran left by Tgk. Chik Dipasie, is highlighted with various symbolic traditions such as the reading of *samadiyah*, the procession of shading and reverence for *seurumbek*, the "making" of *ie rajah*, and the distribution of *ie bu* (a traditional food item) along with communal meals. Therefore, the Waido community can be categorized as a traditional society, as they frequently use symbols or communicate with nature through symbols. The following will outline some symbols manifested in the tradition of *seurumbek* reading.

⁴⁰ "Ie Bu" is a typical dish cooked during the *keunduri blang* event. This food has rice as the main ingredient, which is cooked with water until it becomes thick like sticky rice. For the filling of *ie bu*, it includes fruits such as bananas, *boh gadong* (a type of tuber), and old jackfruit commonly referred to as *boh panah*.

⁴¹ Rohmah and Mujahidin.

⁴² Hagie Wana, 'Berkomunikasi Menggunakan Simbol Dalam Islam' <<https://www.nu.or.id/opini/berkomunikasi-menggunakan-simbol-dalam-islam-ZsfXE>> [accessed 14 November 2023].

⁴³ Al-Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari* (Daar at-Taseel), p. 550.

Firstly, the recitation of *seurumbek* serves as a symbol of the relationship between humans and God.⁴⁴ Humans are social beings with an inherent inclination towards religion. In practicing religion, one of the mediators to establish a connection with God is through the reading of the Quran. By reading and studying the Quran, which serves as guidance for humans, one draws closer to Allah and gains numerous virtues. One such virtue is mentioned in Surah Fathir: 29 as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ
تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ

Those who recite the Writ of God and uphold the duty and spend of what We have provided them, secretly and openly, expect a trade that perishes not.

Imam Musbikin emphasizes the virtues of reading and studying the Quran, encompassing several aspects. Firstly, both those who read the Quran and those who listen to it will receive rewards from Allah. Secondly, the Quran is considered a therapy that can calm the heart and be a source of solace for those facing difficulties. Thirdly, those who enjoy reading the Quran will receive intercession on the Day of Judgment. Fourthly, they will be in the company of angels in the hereafter.⁴⁵

In the recitation of *seurumbek*, which is notably a manuscript of the Quran handwritten by Tgk. Chik Dipasie, the community appears highly enthusiastic, diligently participating in the sequence of Quranic recitations. Everyone present listens with seriousness, concentrating on the recitation of Quranic verses, and there is no conversation or chatter heard. Citing Mira Fauziah, listening to the recitation of the Quran can bring profound tranquility to the human soul. Even a hardened heart can become more tender through frequent exposure to the recitation of the Quran.⁴⁶

The procession of *samadiyah* recitation in the series of the *seurumbek* reading tradition can also be understood as a symbol of the relationship between humans and God. In *samadiyah*, Quranic verses and various prayers with specific purposes are recited. As prayer is a form of human request to their Lord, it is also evidence that a servant is always mindful and connected to Allah.⁴⁷ Therefore, some examples of prayers in the *samadiyah* recitation involve seeking protection from unjust treatment, praying for Allah's grace, seeking safety, praying to be kept away from all hardships, seeking forgiveness and safety, praying for healing, praying for a good harvest, praying to be kept away from harm, and several other prayers.

Secondly, the recitation of *seurumbek* serves as a symbol of the relationship with ancestors. Besides being a medium for reading and practicing the Quran, *seurumbek* is also linked to the *karamah* possessed by Tgk. Chik Dipasie, forming the basis for its sacredness.

⁴⁴ Zikri Fachrul Nurhadi, 'Komunikasi Dalam Pendekatan Islam (Telaah Teoretis Tentang Kajian Komunikasi Dengan Allah Melalui Shalat Dan Membaca Al-Qur'an)', *Communication*, 6.1 (2015), p. 105 <<https://doi.org/10.36080/comm.v6i1.7>>.

⁴⁵ Imam Musbikin, *Mutiara Al-Qur'an: Khazanah Ilmu Tafsir Dan Al-Qur'an* (Madiun, 2014), p. 363.

⁴⁶ Mira Fauziah, 'Principles Of Listening In The Quran And Their Development In Islamic Preaching: A Study Of Surah Al-Nahl/16:78', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al Mu'ashirah*, 20.2 (2023), 361–68 (p. 367) <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/jim.v20i2.19452>>.

⁴⁷ Abdul Hadi, 'The Internalization of Local Wisdom Value in Dayah Educational Institution', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 5.2 (2017), p. 193 <<https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v5i2.128>>.

The respect for *seurumbek* is not only evident in the treatment by the core family but also in the enthusiasm of the entire community in Waido.

The practice of shading *seurumbek* when brought to the reading place, respectfully kissing it, placing it on the head, and even symbolically placing it on water spots (for *ie rajah*) demonstrates a profound appreciation for the *seurumbek* handwritten by Tgk. Chik Dipasie. The special treatment of this legacy *seurumbek* (not done for other *mushaf*) indirectly indicates its uniqueness, and its presence is deeply respected and sanctified in the life of the Waido community.

Third, the recitation of *seurumbek* as a symbol of the relationship with others. As social beings, humans demonstrate that their lives depend significantly on the assistance of others. The interaction between humans and their peers aims to fulfill complex needs, both physically and mentally, essentially encompassing the fulfillment of individual needs. This fact illustrates that humans are endowed with limitations that are actually beneficial for creating harmony in interactions.⁴⁸

The tradition of reciting *seurumbek* in Waido, apart from serving as a means of worship (through the recitation of the Quran) and prayer (through the recitation of *samadiyah*, *shalawat*, *dhikr*), also serves as a means for the community to build solidarity and strengthen the bonds of Islamic brotherhood with others. With the existence of the *seurumbek* recitation tradition, the sense of togetherness among the community is further strengthened, and the values of brotherhood that emerge based on mutual harmony contribute to creating a harmonious society. This is reflected in the high enthusiasm of the community to attend and enliven this tradition, supported by the distribution of *ie bu* and communal meals.

Fourth, the recitation of *seurumbek* as a symbol of the relationship with oneself/individual. In the tradition of *seurumbek* recitation, various processes involve the recitation of *samadiyah*, *shalawat*, *dhikr*, and various prayers. In an individual context, engaging in the recitation of all those things creates a sense of calmness, alleviates anxiety, and raises patience and satisfaction in accepting Allah's decrees. Therefore, it can be said that with the presence of these values in the tradition of *seurumbek* recitation, it is equivalent to building a relationship with oneself. Additionally, it improves the feelings of gratitude, hope, and optimism in anticipating better harvests.

In conclusion, the tradition of *seurumbek* recitation in Waido encompasses various symbols widely believed by the community and regarded as something real. These symbols refer to the terms used by the congregation in the practice of *seurumbek* recitation. This concept aligns with Herbert Blumer's premise, stating that humans act based on the meaning attributed to an object according to their interpretations. These meanings are acquired through social interactions with other individuals, enriching and perfecting these meanings through the interaction process. Therefore, it can be concluded that symbolic interactionism theory is appropriate and relevant to the practice of *seurumbek* recitation in the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido.

C. Conclusion

⁴⁸ M. Muhammadiyah, 'Kebutuhan Manusia Terhadap Agama', *Jurnal Ilmu Agama UIN Raden Fatah*, 14.1 (2013).

The recitation of *seurumbek* is an essential moment in the implementation of the *keunduri blang* tradition in Waido. The recitation of *seurumbek*, a manuscript of the Quran written by Tgk. Chik Dipasie, is carried out with earnestness and receives high enthusiasm from the community. Through the recitation of *seurumbek*, the people of Waido express deep appreciation for the cultural and spiritual heritage left by Tgk Chik Dipasie. The significance of *seurumbek* in the *keunduri blang* tradition is evident in the special treatment it receives, both in storing and during the recitation process. This manuscript is indirectly considered "alive" and an inseparable part of daily life for the community, reflecting the concept of the Quran in everyday life, which is the focus of the study of living Quran.

Using Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory, it is evident that the recitation of *seurumbek* creates complex symbols reflecting the relationship between humans and God, ancestors, others, and oneself. The recitation of the Quran, *shalawat*, *dhikr*, and prayers in the *seurumbek* procession is interpreted as a means to draw closer to Allah, with the belief in the blessings and virtues that will be obtained. Furthermore, through the recitation of *seurumbek*, there are symbols of respect for Tgk. Chik Dipasi, reflected in symbolic actions such as shading, kissing, and placing the *seurumbek* in places with water, understood by the community to receive blessings.

The recitation of *seurumbek* also functions as a symbol of social relationships, strengthening Islamic brotherhood, and creating harmony in society. The community's high enthusiasm for participating in this procession reflects the cherished values of brotherhood and unity. On the other hand, the recitation of *seurumbek* is considered a symbol of an individual's relationship with oneself, bringing peace, patience, and sincerity. Finally, in the context of symbolic interactionism theory, the practice of reciting *seurumbek* shows that human actions are based on the meaning attributed to an object through social interaction, forming a profound understanding of the values held by the local community.

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