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# HERITAGE OF NUSANTARA

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Center for Research and Development of Religious Literature and Heritage  
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Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic Indonesia

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**NUSANTARA**

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Vol. 01, No. 1, June 2012

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## Editorial Notes

This Journal is concerned with issues on religious literatures and heritages in Indonesia or Nusantara. The purpose of the publication of this journal then is to promote the religiously based heritages of Nusantara (historical term of the past Indonesia) in particular and the world in general. In another world, the journal is certainly to develop ideas relating to the development of the Nusantara religious heritages in order to be widely known, read and reviewed by the academic community at large. For this purpose, Center of Research and Development for Religious Literature and Heritage, of the Office of Research and Development and Training, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in this regard, considers it important to publish a journal of religious heritages. This is because of such heritages have not socio-politically received adequate attentions yet in the discourse of the cultural development in Indonesia and in the world-wide.

Indonesia -- as the plural country with more than 80 % Islam, and Catholicism, Protestant, Hinduism, Buddhism, Khonghucu, and local faiths for the rest -- is the very rich country of cultural legacies. The golden age of some Nusantara Buddhist and Hinduist kingdoms, for instance, had culturally enriched the nation's legacies. Further, the religious life of Nusantara in the past, in fact, not only the products of the *sui generis* of the genuine religion itself, but most of them were the acculturative and hybridal forms adapted to the local tradition or culture. As an illustration here, Islam as a revealed religion has special characteristics of Indonesia. Islam has culturally adapted cultures and social life and thoughts of Indonesian society. It does not mean that Islam in Indonesia is not rooted in Islamic teachings from the early period of the Prophet Muhammad pbh.

Moreover, it can be said that the continuity of thought of Islamic scholars (ulama) of Indonesia from the early advent of Islam in Indonesia to the present has its deep roots in Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, Indonesia's Islamic style of course, is different from the style of Islam in other countries, such as the Middle East. This does not mean that Islam in Indonesia is not genuine, but, more than that it shows that Islam in Indonesia has its long history to adapt to local cultures in order to be more easily accepted by the local people. It should be noted, the process of adaptation is not entirely eliminates the essence of Islam which is monotheistic one. In relations to this, history of Islamic scholars and their thoughts, as well as their Islamic discourses being recorded in archaeological sites, manuscripts, and heritage need to be promoted and raised in a more serious study. For this reason, this journal is an effort to achieve this goal.

Studies on the first edition of this journal include a few posts related to Qur'anic archeology, history of Sheikh Yusuf al Makassary as an Islamic scholar and a hero of humanism, the discourse on secularism and Islam in the conflict in Aceh, the strengthening of Islamic jurisprudence schools (Fiqh) and Sufism in Islamic historiography, and about Sufis Jihad in Aceh at the end 19th century and early 20th century.

The first article is Ali Akbar on Qur'anic archeology. This study offers the Quranic archeology as one of the branches of archeology. This study offers an illustration of the idea that peoples or early nations enunciated by the Qur'an to be the initial source for the development of Islamic archeology. Akbar argues that the verses of the Qur'an that explains the history of the followers of the previous archaeological truth can be traced from the Qur'anic verses that explain it. Based on that, the Qur'an archeology substantially meets the criteria to be a branch of archeology such as to have historical reconstruction of the culture, to have the reconstruction of the thought of the actor in history, to have a

description of the event and to have the cultural reconstruction of the birth and disappearance of a civilization.

Al Qur'an is the Muslims' way of life. As the first and primary sources, it contains of values, norms, and other teachings system which have to be consistently applied in the daily life of the Muslim world. Related to this importance, the second article of Choirul Fuad Yusuf attempts to unpack and elaborate of how far al Qur'an has an applicable teachings on tolerance and peace needed by the world-wide for the sake of building the world security and peace culture.

Further study is written by Erman Erwiza which focuses on the role of Islamic scholar and a hero in the history of Islam in particular Indonesia and Indonesia during the Dutch colonial history in general, Sheikh Yusuf al Maqassary. Sheikh Yusuf al Maqassary is a hero of humanity, because he opposed the tyranny and oppression of the Dutch. Erman rightly argues that the award given to Sheikh Yusuf al Makassary as an Indonesian and South African hero becomes very important to be realized in a concrete way. According to Erman, it can be made by giving him a title of national hero, building a museum and education that could promote the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf. In addition to that, it is also important to create the programs to establish cooperation between both countries, Indonesia and South Africa as an important part of the history of Sheikh Yusuf struggle.

The third article is written by Mohammad Hasan Ansori entitled "Secularism and the Issue of Islam in the Aceh conflict: A Framing Process Approach" which provides an overview and analysis of the conflicts that occurred between GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka/Free Aceh Movement) in Aceh and the government of Indonesia. According Ansori, the theme of the struggle which GAM carried is not Islamic values, but rather secular values such as independence (self determination, and human rights). Further Ansori argues that the connotation made by the government of



Indonesia addressed is an attempt to discredit GAM as part of the global terrorism using the name of Islam.

Further article is by Ajid Thohir which highlights the importance of persona studies in the historiography of Islam in the formation of schools of thought in the Islamic world, both in the field of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence and Sufism). Therefore, to understand the significance of the studies in the historiography of Islam means to understand the Islamic community which is in fact is divided into separate communities. Each community embraces and follows the teachings of Islam through the character of the leader as the role model. The phenomenon is very crucial and useful to understand the psychological conditions and religiosity of the diverse Muslim community.

Further article written by Hamdar Arraiyyah is about the role of Daud Ismail in the preaching of Islam in South Sulawesi and his effort to write the Qur'anic interpretation in Buginese language. This article explains the effort done by Ismail is very important and precious to give guidance to the Buginese Muslims who do not understand the Qur'an in Arabic language by the reading the meaning of the Qur'an in Buginese language. This effort is certainly help the Buginese Muslims to understand easily the Qur'an.

The next article is written by Fakhriati which discusses Sufis action in the form of Jihad in Aceh in the early 19th and 20th centuries. This study suggests that the Sufis and the religious leaders in Aceh played an important role in the formation of thought of the Muslim community in Aceh. The establishment of the Islamic community in Aceh which is very religious has very strong roots in the teachings of the scholars, teachers and their religious leaders. It is because the religious leaders in Aceh taught the religion as the whole concept of life. It is not just relating to God and worship rituals but also to justice, and the struggle against the oppression. This can be seen in the case of Sufis in Aceh who do the struggle against the Dutch colonialism. Several studies

above are expected to provide a preliminary description to understand the importance of Islam in Indonesia in the perspective of history, archeology and the manuscripts left by the Islamic scholars. Apart from that, it is hoped these studies may encourage the emergence of other studies in the development of Islamic or other religious thoughts in Indonesia based on the historical or archeological data in the Nusantara and the worldwide.



# SUFIS' ACTIONS AGAINST THE DUTCH IN ACEH IN THE LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES<sup>1</sup>

Fakhriati

## Abstract

Sufis in Aceh, historically, had shown its real action in their daily life in relation to both vertical and horizontal. For vertical relations, the followers performed any Sufi practice leading them to their God. For horizontal relationship, they protected and defended their society and state by performing jihad against the Dutch as colonizers and infidels for them. There are at least three factors influenced Sufis actions to be more attractive. *First*, the condition of Acehese sultanate became weak. *Second*, the Dutch seemed eagerly to expand their colonial territory to Aceh. *Third*, the Acehese had already kept in touch with other Muslims in Arabia since the Islam coming to this area. This article elaborates in detail on this matter by using primary sources from manuscripts and archives. Besides, secondary sources are also referred for comperation.

Keywords: Sufi, Ulama, Aceh, Jihad, and Dutch

## Introduction

It is commonly known that a life devoted to Sufism invariably refers to a life which centers on a vertical relationship, namely the relationship between God and man. The primary aim of the Sufi's

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<sup>1</sup> This article is derived from a part of my research in Leiden held in 1998 and written for my master thesis entitled *Sufism and Jihad: The Role of Sufism in Jihad against the Dutch in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries*.

life is to have direct communion with God. This such aim is able to reach by certain spiritual journey. Thus, for Sufi followers, this spiritual journey is a far more important undertaking than any other activity. (Rahman, 1966: 130) However, when Sufism came into the organization called sufi order, Sufis began to pay attention to their society and state. With this social action, various Muslim societies, then, easily accepted them and their orders. The latter orders were become a vehicle by which to propagate the faith in most areas in the Muslim world. In the period of the Ottoman Empire, for instance, there were two reasons which explained the rapid development of the Sufi orders. First, they were more tolerant compared with established orthodox Islam and more egalitarian than clerical. Second, their action was based on piety rather than learning. (Nimzt, 1980: 36).

When the Europeans colonised Muslim countries, the tradition of jihad (holy war) played an important role in the Sufi orders and emerged as a force which united the people to perform jihad. The relationship between the practice of jihad and radical action, especially against a foreign power took place. In India, for instance, Sayid Ahmad, a leader of *Muhammadi* order, organized this order as a religious movement. After returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca, he began to agitate for jihad to be launched against the British colonizers. Then, large numbers of Muslim peasants in Bengal and India, who had suffered from the social and economic changes which occurred in the wake of the British colonizers, heeded his call. (Trimingham, 1973; Peter, 1979: 48, 54).

The Acehnese, indeed, had a long experience of war against the colonisers. In the sixteenth century, the Acehnese attacked the Portuguese. (Said, 1981: 157-172) At the end of the

nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth century, the Acehnese fought against the Dutch colonial government. This war was protracted and caused heavy losses in both the Acehnese and the Dutch armies. There were heavier losses than these of in other places in Sumatra, such as Palembang War (Woeldes, 1975) and the Padri War in West Sumatra. (Radjab, 1964: 154-169). Several Dutch generals became war victims. General J.H.R. Kohler was the first victim in the Aceh War. He was shot when leading the first expedition to Aceh on April 14, 1873. (van't Veer, 1969: 62)

In the Aceh War, the '*Ulamá*'s (muslim religious teacher) played an important role. They proclaimed the war as a jihad. They mobilised the masses to perform jihad against the Dutch colonial administration. One of their tactics was the spreading *hikayats* (poems) of jihad, called *hikayat prang sabi* (poems of jihad). They preached jihad as a part of the observance of the Islamic religion.

The Acehnese, then, created movements to fight against the Dutch. They were able to do so because they had a strong Islamic background. Islam, which came first to Pasai, the northern part of Aceh, together with Sufism (Johns, 1957: 433-59), had produced prominent figures in the seventeenth century, namely Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani, Nuruddin ar-Raniri, and Abdurrauf al-Fansuri. They introduced Sufi knowledge and the Sufi lifestyle to the Acehnese. Abdurrauf al-Fansuri, for instance, introduced Syattariyah order to the Acehnese, even to the Muslims in the archipelago also. They were regarded as pioneers in the development of Sufism both in Aceh and in Indonesian archipelago at large. (Azra, 1995: 166-128; Hadi, 1995; Fathurahman, 1999; Fakhriati, 2008). Consequently, Sufism

gathered momentum in this period. The Sufi principles, then, developed and underwent a process of internalisation to accommodate them to Acehnese attitudes and behavior, which were expressed in their daily life and various rituals, such as *dhikr* (recitation of God's name), and *rateb* (Arabic: *ratib* meaning certain exercises of devotion). (Kreemer, 1923: 490-501).

Considering to the above point of view, the study on the occurrence of the positive correlation between tradition of Sufism in Aceh and its action against the Dutch colonial becomes important. The questions developed in this research are; How was this positive correlation expressed in the life of the Acehnese, especially when they faced Dutch power? Which factor induced the Acehnese to adopt a radical stance in facing Dutch colonizers? Is there any Sufi doctrine was used to motivate their action among the Acehnese? To what extend did the role of '*ulamâ*'s mobilize the masses to undertake out the actions against the Dutch government?

## **1. Sufi tradition and Jihad**

### **1.1. Internal Conditions as Motivators of Jihad**

To progress a long the spiritual path, Sufi followers have to perform jihad, struggling against many disturbances and obstacles which assail them on many sides, either sent by Satan or the outcome of carnal desires, or from other circumstances. The acceptance of the challenges of the jihad by the Sufi followers portrays their ability to live in a humble way that shows their love to God. They attempt to abandon a luxurious life in this world to achieve a life blessed by God and to meet God in the Hereafter. (Al-Kalabadzi, 1995: 184-185).

In the Sufi tradition, jihad can be divided into two kinds, namely jihad *akbâr* (greater warfare) and jihad *asgâr* (lesser warfare). Jihad *akbâr* means earnest striving against the carnal desires, whereas jihad *asgâr* signifies jihad against infidels. Jihad is one of the stations<sup>2</sup>, which has to be passed by the Sufi followers. (Arberry, 1950: 75).

To fight against the Dutch colonials, the Acehnese had followed a spirit of jihad encouraged by Al-Palembani<sup>3</sup> in his book on Jihad entitled *Nasihât al-Muสลm wa-Tazkîrât al-Mu'mîn fî Fadâ'il al-Jihad fî Sabîlillâh wa Karâmat al-Mujâhidîn fî Sabîlillâh*, who was considered the first 'ulamâ' to carry the jihad mission purposefully among the Indonesia and Malay people. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 119; Abdullah, 1994: 58; Azra, 1994: 283) The Acehnese, then, read this book and applied its contents in their assault on the Dutch. The reference to al-Palembani's jihad book is explicitly mentioned in *Nasihât Ureung Meuprang* (Manuscript, Cod. Or., 8035, p. 2, 72) and *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, translated by Damste. (Damste, 1928:586).

The book contents the reward awaiting those performing the jihad and the legal rules which were applied to the jihad.

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<sup>2</sup> In the Sufi theory, station is a technical term. There are two different technical terms namely *maqam* and *hal*. The station is a spiritual stage in the pilgrim's progress toward God. This station is a mystical personal effort and endeavour, whereas a state is a spiritual mood depending on God. (See Arberry, 1950: 75).

<sup>3</sup> He is a Sufi from Palembang, South Sumatra. He studied the Samaniyah Sufi order in the Middle East from al-Samman. Then, he returned to Palembang, he set to work to disseminate the *Sammaniyya* order in the archipelago. (Azra, 1995: 243-251) The Acehnese also recognised Abdussamad al-Palembani, for which evidence can be founds in the *Hikayat Ureung Meuprang*. (Manuscripts, Cod. Or. 8035) Conflating these pieces of information, the Samaniyah order, which was practiced by the Acehnese, perhaps, was the direct result of the propagation of Abdussamad al-Palembani.



Those who fought the jihad or gave funds for jihad were regarded as excellent people. For this deed, they would find great rewards in the Hereafter, such as experiencing God's mercy and being granted God's forgiveness of the sins. The legal status of jihad became an individual obligation when the infidels conquered their land. However, jihad became a communal obligation of Muslims when the infidels usurped their places. At the end of this book, the author wrote a doa, which begins with the merits of the reading the doa, namely those who recited the doa would acquire invulnerability in war. The contents of the doa consisted of a request for the God's protection and the advice that those who found themselves in a vulnerable condition should read *lâ hawla wa lâ quwwata illâ billâh* seven times. (Manuscript, Cod, Or., A. 20 C).

Not only Al-Palimbani, Abdurrauf al-Fansuri had also taught his disciples and Muslims in general on the obligatory of fighting against the infidel. Muslims are forbidden to be in infidels' power, even to treat them as a friend. He instructed to perform jihad seriously and reach for martyr.<sup>4</sup> The above jihad doctrine both from al-Palembani and Abdurrauf al-Fansuri became a motivator for the Acehnese in performing jihad against the infidels.

In Sufi practices, the Acehnese had molded their minds to live according to the Islamic doctrine and defend themselves against the enemy. They included the spirit of jihad when they performed the Sufi doctrine.

In response to the current situations, the Sufi practices can be divided into three categories. The first category covers the

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<sup>4</sup> See *Wasiyah Syaikh Abdurrauf al-Fansuri* in Wan Shaghir Abdullah, 1991:131-134.

contents of *ratebs* which gave impetus and encouragement to the Acehnese to perform the jihad. In the text of the *rateb* from Hazeu's collections (Manuscript, Cod. Or. 6544 (4): 46-48), it is written that the followers recited the *surat al-Fatiha* to the Sufi order saints who were the leaders of jihad, like Habib 'Abd al-Rahman,<sup>5</sup> and prayed to God that all believers would be saved from all disasters. In the text of *rateb rapa'i* (*Rifa'iyya ratib* performed by the Acehnese), the Acehnese always prayed to God for help in the jihad. The poems contained a request for God's help in their holy war can be seen in the Acehnese words: *Ja Allah, prang thabilellah – ja bantoe prang thabilellah* (Manuscript, Cod. Or. 8184 (1): 57) "Which means 'O, Allah, there is holy war – O, for help in the holy war". This performance was usually accompanied by tambourines to which rhythmical movements were performed. Then, the participants in this performance used a sharp weapon to stab themselves. By doing this, they reached a state of ecstasy. (Djajadiningrat, 1934: 648-649; Archer, 1937: 108-109). They would be invulnerable when

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<sup>5</sup> Habib 'Abd al-Rahman, who was born in Hadramawt in 1832 and arrived in Aceh in 1864, had a good position in Aceh. He was regarded as a venerated teacher and his name was always mentioned in the *rateb* text. His great respect stemmed from his position as a *sayyid*, which is a descendant of the Prophet, and in recognition of his religious learning. In the biography of Habib Abd al-rahman, I.D.I. van der Hegge Spies, the commander of the Dutch warship the 'Curacao', did not go into detail about his religious knowledge. Vander Hegge Spies only wrote that when habib 'Abd al-Rahman was five years old, he learned to read and write, and studied *Qur'an* in Egypt. Then he continued to study in Mecca. At the age of sixteenth, he began to learn a trade. In Aceh, he quickly made known his attitudes and behavior, which corresponded with what was required by the Islamic religion such as opposing sins against Islam, like gambling and opium smoking. He also played an important role in the Ache war. He was sent by the sultan to Turkey to try to procure weapons in preparation for the war. Then, he came back to Aceh and joined the Acehnese in their fight against the Dutch. (Reid, 1972: 158-165).

they pierced themselves, because they felt that they were close to God.

In a *rateb saman* performed by men, there was an attempt to islamise the Dutch. The followers uttered:

*Meuseujideharam Allahu Allahu, di Meuseujideharam na urueng lhee droe-  
Nabiteu sidroe sabatneu dua. Neupeu'ek surat keudeh nanggroe Cham Geuyue maso eseulam bandum Blanda.*

This means:

'The holy mosque (sc. In Mecca), Allahu, Allahu. There are three persons in the holy mosque, the Prophet and two of his companions. These persons sent the letter to a land of Sham (Syria) with command that all Dutch should become Muslims". (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 220)

In their interpretation of the *rateb* text, the Acehnese seemed to be shaping the text in accordance with their own interests. It is ahistorical that the Prophet gave a command to the Dutch because the Prophet had already passed away long before the colonial powers including the Dutch appeared. Historically, it is true that the Prophet encourage the expansion beyond Arabia, including Syria. (Watt, 1970: 51-54). Perhaps, he did, indeed, send a letter to Syria to ask for connection to Islam. This interpretation might be linked to the spiritual connection between the Acehnese and the Prophet. Therefore, the Acehnese will have composed this *rateb*, after they had received the message from the Prophet that the Dutch should be Muslims in spiritual way. Texts of other *rateb* also mentioned that the life of a person who had a relationship with the Dutch would be useless. (Manuscript, Cod. Or. 8161: 67)

The second category covers the creating of spontaneity and bravery through the discipline of practicing *rateb*, which

contains the repetition of God's name. This repetition will come up spontaneously in every situation. This process is in line with the theory propounded by Vaughan-Lee, a psychologist and a follower of the Naqsyabandiyah order. He state that:

"Normally, in our everyday life, the mind follows its automatic thinking process, over which we often have very little control. The mind thinks us, rather than the other way around. Just catch your mind for a moment and observe its thoughts. Every thought creates a new thought and every answer a new question. And because energy follows thought, our mental and psychological energy is scattered in many directions. Spiritual life means learning to become one-pointed, to focus all our energy in one direction, towards Him. Through repeating His name we alter the grooves of our mental conditioning, the grooves which like those on a record play the same tune over and over again, repeated the same patterns which bind us on our mental habits, the *dhikr* gradually replaces these old grooves with the single grooves of His name. The automatic thinking process is redirected towards Him. Like a computer we are reprogrammed for God". (Vaughan-Lee, 1993: 27).

Another effect of this repetition is to motivate the mind to be powerful and courageous in facing those challenges, which are opposed to religious teaching. This can be seen when the Acehnese attacked the Dutch troops, they spontaneously uttered the name of God and faced the Dutch troop with great energy and blind courage. (Bruinsma, 1889: 33)

The final classification is refers to having *keuramat* (Arabic: *Karâma* means the power possessed by saints). Saints<sup>6</sup> had a great charismatic power because the Acehnese believed in the *keuramat* of the saints and showed respect to those who had

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<sup>6</sup>There were two kinds of saints whom the Acehnese respected, deceased saints such as 'Abdul Qâdir al-Jîlanî and Abdurrauf Al-Fansuri (Acehnese also called him by Teungku Syiah Kuala), and living saints such as Teungku Tanoh Abee, Teungku Chik di Tiro, and Teungku tanoh Mirah. The Acehnese went to the graves of the dead saints and usually brought food with them or recited the *Qur'ân*. The Acehnese followed completely the instructions and teaching of the living saints.

*keuramat*. As Weber says, the concept of charisma for natural leaders who have a specific gift of the body and spirit is believed to be supernatural and not accessible to everybody. (Eisenstadt (ed.), 1968: 18-19) The saints used this charisma to direct the people's minds towards fighting against the Dutch.

*Keuramat* had a high value for the Acehnese. They accorded great respect to those who had *keuramat*, called 'Ulamâ' (Teungku Chik).<sup>7</sup> They were able to transfer *barakah* (blessing) to the live of human beings. Their prayer, for instance, could cure the illness of people (Hurgronje, 1906: 154) Examples of the Acehnese's ways of showing reverence and respect to the saints can be seen in their doa. An example of an Acehnese doa is:

*Lailaha'illah, firman Allah neuyou prang kafe. Beureukat syufaat Nabi Muhammad bak meunang umat, beutalo kafe. Boh beudee jife jimeusu. Beureukat Teungku Syiah Kuala. Hatee bak puteh, iman bak teugoh. Bak Allah beh kafee Ulanda. (Manuscripts, Cod. Or. 7992 (5): 3)*

This means:

"There is no god but except God, God asks us to attack infidels. By the grace to blessing of the Prophet, may the Muslims win and the infidels lose. It is hoped that the shooting will be silent without noise with thanks to Teungku Syiah Kuala. Our heart should be white and our faith should be strong. May God destroy the Dutch infidels".<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>There were four levels of *Teungku* in Aceh; *Teungku Meunasah* (teacher of Ibtida'iyah or elementary levels), *Teungku di rangkang* (teacher of Shanawiyah or junior levels), *Teungku di Balee* (teacher of Aliyah or high level), and *Teungku Chik* (teacher who had taught for a long time at the high level). *Teungku Chik* were most respected and were regarded by the Acehnese as saints were close to God and endowed with *keuramat*. They were regarded as sacred, holy, and sometimes having supernatural qualifies. (See Yeoh, 1994 : 155 – 156)

## 1.2. External Conditions Leading to Perform Jihad

In Aceh, there are, at least, three factors played a role in Sufis achievement of ascendancy. First, the Acehese sultanate was weak. Second, the Dutch seemed intent on expanding their colonial territory to Aceh. Third, the Acehese had kept in touch with other Muslims in Arabia since Islam coming. These factors are worthwhile examining in more detail.

### 1. The Weaknesses of the Acehese Sultanate

Internally, after Iskandar Muda's reign, the sultanate of Aceh went into a state of suspended political decline. This condition continued inexorably until the late nineteenth century and coming of the Dutch colonial power. The Acehese kingdom was beset from within by periodic feuds. The sultan did not have complete power and was not directly involved in developing his country. The relationship between *uleebalangs* (territorial chiefs), *'ulamâ's*, and the sultan tended to act for fission rather than fusion within the state.

There were actually two responsibilities owed by *uleebalangs* to the sultan. In the first places, the *uleebalangs* had to give a portion of their revenues to the sultan. Secondly, they had to comply with the stipulations in the *sarakata*<sup>9</sup> (letter patent) issued by the sultan. The *sarakata* mentioned some of duties that the *uleebalangs* were expected to perform, namely attending Friday service, building mosques, *dayah* and *meunasah*, and contributing for *zakat*. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 130-131; Siegel,

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<sup>8</sup> The expression is quite similar to those who performed *rateb*, called *Beratib Beramal*, to fight against the Dutch. This *Beratib Beramal* took place in Banjarmasin, 1859 - 1863. (See Rees, 1865: 186).

<sup>9</sup> About the texts of *sarakata* see the book of Tichelman, published in 1933, pages 369-370.

1969: 42). Originally, the *uleebalang* was the military commander of his *mukims* (subjects of *uleebalang*) and they mobilized fighting men to support the sultan. The *uleebalangs* also collected taxes and duties from his controller, but in practice he farmed out the collection to *uleebalangs*. (Hign, 1995: 8-10).

The *uleebalang* generally ignored the rules laid down by the sultan. As an example of this, Snouck Hurgronje mentioned that the *uleebalangs* never reported to the sultan on the legal sentences, which they imposed. The *uleebalang* then either decided on the sentences by consulting with their plaintiffs and defendants or the disputes remained unsettled and gave rise to quarrelling. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 108). Almost invariably, the *sarakata* given by the sultan was not obeyed by *uleebalangs*. The *uleebalangs* only used the *sarakatas* when they needed acknowledgement of their position. (Siegel, 1969: 43).

The instability of the situation was exacerbated because the '*ulamâ*'s were also in conflict with *uleebalangs*<sup>10</sup>. Snouck Hurgronje maintains that the blame for the conflict could be laid at the door of the '*ulamâ*'s, whom he regarded as non-indigenous people, by which he meant that they had studied in other places. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 20-21). In his eyes the '*ulamâ*'s disturbed the life of *uleebalangs* like a gadfly. However, Siegel rejected this opinion. He asserted that it is right that the '*ulamâ*'s had a conflict with the *uleebalangs*, but this were concerned only the personal immoralities of particular *uleebalangs*. As long as *uleebalangs* were prepared to follow Islamic doctrine and did not

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<sup>10</sup> The conflict is clearly seen in a manuscript written by Teungku Muhammad Ali Pulo Pueb (d. 18th) on his work entitled *Ra'suddin*. Before explaining on Syattariyah doctrine, he complained on how the Dutch and Uleebalang worked hand in hand to overthrow the *ulamas*. (See his work in Fakhriati, 2008:136).

misbehave, there was no conflict between them and the *'ulamâ's*. The *'ulamâ's* were intent purely on spreading and teaching Islamic doctrine to everybody. (Siegel, 1969: 49-50). Siegel statement seems correct, because when it was all said and done the *'ulamâ's* were Islamic leaders in the society. The functions of *'ulamâ's* such as leading prayers, teaching the *Qur'ân* and *sharia*, and maintaining village sanctuaries were what were important to the common people. In order to underline the functions of the *'ulamâ's*, the Acehnese used to call the *'ulamâ's* the "mother" of society, while "secular" authorities were viewed as the "father". (Sabi, 1995: xxiv).

Even though many situations surrounding the sultanate in Aceh was thrown into turmoil, the ideology of the Acehnese society was still based on Islamic doctrine. The Acehnese were of the opinion that the *adat*, which was not written but was effectively observed by the society, divided from *potumeuruhom* (Iskandar Muda who ruled the state according to the precepts of Islam), and that the law had been handed down by *Syiah Kuala* (Abdurrauf Al-Fansuri). A well-known proverb current among the Acehnese was *adat bak poteumeureuhom* and *hukom bak Syiah Kuala*, which means "*adat* came from Iskandar Muda and law from Abdurrauf Al-Fansuri". The Acehnese also stated that *Hukom ngon adat lagee zat ngen sifeut* (*adat* and law are like substance and attribute) implying that *adat* and law cannot be separated,<sup>11</sup> showing that they were completely in line with the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda. The Acehnese gave great respect to their rules whether it was the sultan or his family, or *'ulamâ's*.

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<sup>11</sup> Ismuha thinks that *Syiah Kuala* was actually from the word *syiah 'ulamâ'*, which means the *'ulamâ'* in general, not only Abdurrauf Al-Fansuri. Therefore, according to Ismuha this proverb reads *Adat bak poteumeureuhom, hukom bak syiah 'ulamâ'*. See (Ismuha, 1976: 84).



Therefore, when a son of the sultan, for instance, made a mistake, the Acehnese did not dare to punish him, because the Acehnese thought that this action would create a danger and remove the blessing from their life. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 141-143).

In his administration of his state, the sultan always referred to his cautions in an Islamic way. When the sultan was appointed, a *Qadi* read the verse of the *Qur'ân* which runs as follows: "Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and those charged with authority among you" (Q. 4:59). Likewise, in the preamble of *sarakata*, the sultan called for the blessing of God, the prophet and the major saints, like Abdul Qâdir jîlanî. (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906: 130; Drewes, 1938: 10).

It seems that there is every reason to link the behaviour of the Acehnese and the sultan with the Sufi tradition. The Sufi tradition has always been strong in the Acehnese life. Prominent Sufi figures namely Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin As-Sumatrani, Nurudin ar-Raniri, and Abdurrauf Al-Fansuri guided the Acehnese in their recognition and understanding of Sufism. Therefore, it is justified to assume that this was a basic principle in the Acehnese way of life. It was made obvious, for example in the fact that when issuing *sarakata*, that the sultan always prayed for the blessing of Abdul Qâdir jîlanî, the founder of *Qâdiriyya* order. The respect for the sultan himself as a ruler and as a holy person is based on the following reasons. The position of the sultan did not only have a political aspect, it was also deeply imbued with religion, which was based on the connection between sultan and God. This connection is mentioned in the *sarakata* which used to state that the sultan was *zilla Allâh fî al-'alâm* (the shadow of God in the world). (Jalaluddin, 1982: 13). In this context, the sultan is regarded as *al-insân al-kâmil* (perfect man)

and as Allah's caliph in this world. To become an *al-insân al-kâmil*, a sultan needed to fulfil two requirements in governing his state, namely attaining sufficient islamic knowledge and restraining his desires. (Jalaluddin, 1982:14). The *al-insân al-kâmil* depends on *ubudiyya*, which is absolute obedience to Allah by following the *sharî'a*. Anyone who does so can behave properly. (Noer, 1995: 141).

In short, the weakness of the Acehese sultanate had nothing to do with the fact that Sufî doctrines had disappeared from Acehese life. These indeed had been integrated into the life of the society. Hence, when the Dutch set at to expand their colonial territory, the Acehese reacted to the Dutch challenge radically. The '*ulamâ*' had no difficulty in uniting the people to struggle against the Dutch power.

## 2. The Dutch Expansion

Externally, the chaotic situation in Aceh let to a disharmonious contact between the foreign colonisers and the Acehese. The Dutch colonisers came to Aceh with the express intention of taking charge of the Acehese area making it a part of their colony. The trouble began when the Dutch broke the treaty concluded in March 1824 between them and British. One of the provisions of this treaty was that they agreed to guarantee the independence of Aceh. The creation of a new treaty in 1858 marked the preaching of the 1824 treaty by the Dutch coloniser. Under this Siak kingdom was brought under the Dutch rule. This action, of course, provoked the Acehese anger because historically Siak had fallen the Acehese control. The Dutch ambitions to colonise Aceh grew when in 1869 the Suez Canal was opened. This made the position of Aceh important. The traffic between the West and the East multiplied tremendously busy, and