

LEARNING THEOLOGY BY USING MEURUKON AS THE MEDIA

Pembelajaran Teologi dengan Menggunakan Meurukon sebagai Media Pembelajaran

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Abstrak

Meurukon merupakan salah satu kesenian Islam yang dikenal luas dalam masyarakat Aceh yang mendiami wilayah paling utara Pulau Sumatra, Indonesia. Sangat sedikit penelitian yang mengangkat meurukon sebagai objek kajian untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur teologis yang terkandung di dalamnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan aspek-aspek teologi dalam meurukon serta pemanfaatan meurukon sebagai media pembelajaran teologi. Penelitian kualitatif ini mengumpulkan data melalui pengkajian naskah-naskah meurukon yang dihimpun oleh Rahman (2010) dan Huda (2018), serta wawancara dengan delapan informan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persoalan-persoalan teologis utama yang dibahas dalam meurukon meliputi hakikat agama dan hakikat Tuhan, iman, Islam, klasifikasi dua puluh sifat Allah, iman kepada malaikat, tanda-tanda hari kiamat, dasar-dasar salat, serta perintah-perintah Rasul. Analisis juga menemukan bahwa meurukon sebagai media pembelajaran teologi dimanfaatkan melalui kegiatan wajib di pesantren, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler di sekolah, kegiatan rutin dalam peringatan hari-hari besar keagamaan, perlombaan antardesa, antarkecamatan, dan antarkota, siaran di media televisi, pesta panen padi, serta sebagai bahan ajar atau mata kuliah di perguruan tinggi bidang sastra dan seni.

Kata kunci: Meurukon; pembelajaran teologi; media pembelajaran iman; Islam; kualitatif.

Abstract

Meurukon is a well-known Islamic art in an Acehnese society that live in the northernmost of Sumatera Island, Indonesia. Very little research has raised meurukon as the research subject to analyze its theological elements. This study aims at describing the theology in Meurukon and the use of Meurukon as a medium for learning theology. This qualitative research gathered data by collecting Meurukon manuscripts from Rahman (2010) and Huda (2018), and interviewing eight informants. The results showed that the main theological issues discussed in Meurukon are the nature of religion and the nature of God, faith, Islam, classification of Allah's 20 attributes, faith in angels, doomsday sign, the foundation of prayer, and the Apostle's command. The analysis has also found that Meurukon as a medium for learning theology is used through compulsory activities in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), extracurricular activities in schools, routine activities in celebrating religious holidays, competitions between villages, districts, and cities, broadcasts on television media, rice harvest parties, and teaching materials or courses at literary and art universities.

Keywords: Meurukon; learning theology; media faith; Islam; qualitative

Informasi Artikel

Naskah Diterima 24 Januari 2026	Naskah Direvisi akhir 11 Juni 2026	Naskah Diterbitkan 22 Juni 2026
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Cara Mengutip

Harun, Mohammad., dan Siti Sarah Fitriani. (2026). Learning Theology by Using Meurukon as The Media. *Aksara*. 38(1). 394—409. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29255/aksara.v38i1.4939>

INTRODUCTION

In Acehese society, one of the most well-known Islamic arts is *Meurukon*. This art is performed dialogically between one group and another group. The performance starts after the evening prayer and ends before dawn prayer. The main media for *Meurukon* is oral poetry in which is performed in the form of religious songs by some groups. Each *Meurukon* group occupies a special hall that has been prepared for eight to ten people. On top of the opposing hall or cottage, the *Meurukon* group asked and answered each other (As 2016: 105-107; Harun 2012:245-253). The audience stood or sat cross-legged around the *Meurukon* arena solemnly listened to each question and answer given.

The art of literary *Meurukon* was deliberately created by Muslim scholars or scholars in Aceh as a medium for learning various Islamic religious problems. The scholars understand that Islam is tough if science is rooted in Muslim societies. This is in line with Ali's statement (2008:451) that since its birth in the seventh century until the end of the seventeenth century, Islam is driven by a spirit of science and literature in which that spirit push Muslims forward and allow them to reach a level of mental development and high material.

One substantive part of *Meurukon* is theology. The word theology comes from the Greek theology, a combination of the word *Theos* which means God and *logos* which means discourse or science (Bagus 2002:1090). In other words, theology is the science of divinity, which studies the substance of God, the nature of God, the words of God, and the actions of God from all their aspects. Therefore, theology is the most fundamental problem in religious life. In the context of Islam, it is related to the faith, *kalam* science, faith, and monotheism. These four terms lead to the concept of God which, in principle, refer to a systematic effort to make a Muslim bound to all sides of the existence of God in their lives.

Although *Meurukon* has played a very long role as one of the media for learning Islamic theology in Acehese society, the majority of Acehese people today barely recognize the term. If a few centuries ago *Meurukon* was often held throughout the east and north coast of Aceh, especially after the rice harvest, now it only exists in a few areas, such as a small part in Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireuen, North Aceh and East Aceh. This indicates that the *Meurukon* tradition is almost extinct along with the fading public awareness of the importance of Islamic art. In fact, most of the young generation of Aceh have never heard of the term *Meurukon* as a speech art that began with *dayah/zawiyah* (Acehese Islamic education institutions) as acknowledged by students of the Department of Indonesian Language Education, Teaching and Education Faculty at Syiah Kuala University when attending Aceh Literature courses from 2007 to 2019. The same thing was once complained by Asnawi in his opinion "When the Art of Meurukon Almost Extinct in Aceh" (broadcasted in *Lintas Nasional*, March 18, 2016).

There are some studies that have taken *Meurukon* as the subject of investigation. Mirza and Aksa's (2010) studied Aceh's various oral traditional arts as a medium for public education. Their research only describes the theme of folk theatre and *Meurukon* tradition as a medium for public education. Warahmah's (2018) investigated the revitalization of the tradition of *Meurukon* as local learning in *aqidah* (belief) learning in Muara Batu District, North Aceh Regency. The revitalization of *Meurukon* can be done through public awareness programs, modification of *Meurukon* art to attract public attention, the use of *Meurukon* as an additional curricular learning material at various levels of education, and the publication of *Meurukon* to attract tourists. Moreover, Wahyudi (2018) explored *Meurukon* tradition in Lamgapang village, Krueng Barona Jaya, Aceh Besar Regency. His study describes that *Meurukon* is being increasingly elevated by the community dues to lack of facilities, less practice, and lack of public awareness. One interesting finding is that *Meurukon* tradition at the location of the study is conducted by women, which is something that is not common. Nurhayati (2018) researched *Meurukon* as a medium for learning Islamic religious education in Acehese society. The

findings of their study indicated that *Meurukon* is used as a medium for learning Islamic education, *fiqh* (Islamic law/jurisprudence), and morals. Fitria (2019) investigated *Meurukon* which is practised in Pidie Jaya. The results showed that *Meurukon* is a method of religious learning or propaganda method that contains the value of religious education, togetherness, social, and aesthetic, which is also used as a means of customs, communication tools, and communication and self-development.

None of the five studies we discussed above specifically examined the actualization of *Meurukon* as a medium for learning theology. Therefore, our research is necessary and important to do, considering that *Meurukon* has increasingly been abandoned by the Acehnese people as its owners; hence, the actualization efforts are needed, so that *Meurukon* re-exists as one of theological learning media in the community. For this reason, this research only focuses on two problems: What are the theological issues discussed in *Meurukon*? and How is *Meurukon* actualized as a medium for learning theology?

Theology is the science of God. In an Islamic perspective, theology is synonymous with the term *aqidah* (faith). *Aqidah* is the most important element in Islam. *Aqidah* is defined as a covenant between man and Allah Almighty, which contains the willingness of humans to submit and obey sincerely to His will (Imron 2015:445). More explicitly, Tim Darul Ilmi (2010:2) mentions that the *aqidah* is related to beliefs, not deeds, for example, belief in the existence of God and of Prophet Muhammad as an apostle. Meanwhile, *aqidah* is related to trust and confidence. *Aqidah* has a basic principle that all hearts, words and deeds are the same in one belief. Therefore, believers are those who are consistent in their hearts, in their every word, and all their actions. In other words, *aqidah* means faith, belief, and of course the growth of that faith in the heart, so that what is meant by *aqidah* is a stabbing belief or a knot in the heart that makes humans calm and peaceful (Muhaimin et al. 2005:259-260).

Islamic *aqidah* is formulated in the form of a pillar of faith consisting of faith in Allah, the prophets and the apostles, the angels, the books of Allah, the last day, and *qadha'* (Allah's creation of things and events when their time is due based on His pre-eternal knowledge and ordaining) and *qadar* (Allah's knowing of everything in pre-eternity, what happened and what will happen whether good or bad from pre-eternity to past eternity, their time, place and characteristics, and His ordaining and determining them) (Imron 2015:445-446). One contemporary scholar, Al-Qaradhawi (2010:48) said that the basic elements of *aqidah* are faith in Allah, faith in the Prophet, and faith in the afterlife or can be globalized in the faith in God and the hereafter. Faith in God includes faith in His existence, faith in His oneness, and faith in His perfection. In this matter of faith, Ad-Dahduh (2006:13-25) divides the faith and its branches into 36, starting from saying the two sentences of the shahada (the testimony that God is one and the testimony of Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah), forbidding *kufr* (covering and concealing something), not slaughtering for other than Allah, and not seeking blessings through buildings or graves to eliminate *mudharat* (dangerous, fail) or bring benefits. This is in line with Hawwa's view (2004:25) that Islam is an *aqidah* (creed) which is reflected by the two creeds and the pillars of faith, and Islam is worship which is reflected by prayer, *zakat*, fasting, and pilgrimage.

Aqidah is something that is very important in human life, both among primitive nations and civilized nations, even though some have deviated from the straight path. Therefore, according to Qaradawi (2010:17), the Qur'an makes religion -in the sense of *aqidah*- as human nature itself, according to the Qur'an Surah Ar-Rum verse 30 which says "So turn your face straight to religion (God): (stay on) slander Allah has created human beings according to that nature".

On the other hand, the concept of divinity in Islam is called *tauhid* (monotheism), which is a knowledge of witness, faith, and belief in the oneness of God with all his perfection (Imron

2015:451). Meaning, monotheism specifically talks about the concept of the oneness of God, or one part of faith. According to Miskawaih (Imron 2015:451), God is a substance that is not in the body, *azali* (eternal), and creator. God is One in all aspects. He is not divided, is not plural and none is equal to Him. He exists without being held, and His existence does not depend on others, while others need Him. The monotheistic sentence which is the basis of Moslems' *aqidah* is the sentence *laa ilaaha illallaah* (there is no god but Allah).

In another perspective, it is also necessary to explain that the science of monotheism has several names; these are *akaid* science (science of theology/belief), *ilahiyah* science (science of divine matters), *ushuluddin* science (science of religious foundations which are an essential problem in Islam), and *kalam* science (because the problem that was disputed in the early days in this science was Allah's *kalam* (words), whether he was a creature or not) (Rijal 2017:53). According to Jawas (2006:44-46), however, monotheism is divided into three, namely monotheism *rububiyah* (Oneness of Allah's Lordship), monotheism *uluhiyyah* (Oneness of Worship), and monotheism of *asthma* (Allah's names and attributes) and the nature of God. As such, these four terms complement each other and must be understood in the context of the divine problem. In this study, the four terms are used according to the context of theological elements in *Meurukon*.

According to Nata (2011:259), the science of *kalam* is a science that talks about the form of God (Allah), the attributes that must be present in Him, the qualities that cannot be possessed by Him, and the characteristics that may be present in Him; about God's apostles, the characteristics that must be possessed by the apostle, the characteristics that must not be possessed by him, and the characteristics that may be possessed by him. Nata (2011:281) added that in the science of *kalam*, arguments based on thought (arguments '*aqli*') take precedence over arguments based on the arguments of the Qur'an (argument '*naqli*') so that one's faith has a strong argumentation.

Learning Media

Learning media is one important element in learning process and learning outcome. Media becomes a tool for teaching and learning process in accordance with the context of learning. The word media comes from the Latin *medius* which means middle, intermediary or introduction. In other words, the media means the introduction of messages from the sender of the message (communicator) to the recipient of the message (communicant) (See Ministry of Education and Culture 2000:726). According to Arsyad (2017:4), If the media carries messages or information that are instructional or contain teaching purposes, the media is called learning media.

There are various teaching media that can be used by teachers to teach students in classrooms; these are audio media such as CDs, telephones, and audiotapes (Collins 2017), printed media for example books, magazines, newspapers, brochures and packaging (Kipphan 2001), electronic media (Franzoni, Assar, Defude and Rojas 2008) including the use of computers, internet and world wide webs, animations, radios and televisions (Kipphan 2001), social media for instance the use of Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and LinkedIn to teach (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane 2011), and multimedia that creates new teaching systems like Open University, Global Classroom, and Virtual School (Dai and Fan 2012).

Media functions as a source to help individuals in the learning process (Arsyad 2017:8), or called as tools for learning (Holum and Gahala 2001). Media can also function as tools to motivate students to learn, to attract students' attention to learn, and to present informative knowledge to students (Reiser and Dick 1996). Moreover, Molenda and James (1982) maintained that teaching media has a role in the classroom to build students' prior knowledge related to the materials being taught by the teacher. By building students' prior knowledge, they are able to activate their cognitive capacity to understand the materials.

Learning media can also be human based. According to Arsyad (2017:80), one of the important factors with human-based media is the availability of interactive lesson design or opportunities to interact is wider open. As a result, interactive learning encourages the active participation of learners and enhances learning outcomes and knowledge transfer; besides, it could strengthen mental and solve problems creatively.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a folklore research design as proposed by Danandjaja (Pudentia 2008:57-69), especially oral folklore which refers to ethnic culture. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), a culture which is based on oral communication should not be underestimated if it is compared to written tradition, because these two are different. In fact, oral cultures are also found in countries where the culture is dominant in written communication.

The data sources of this research are documents and informants. The document refers to the text of *Meurukon* text found Rahman (2010) and Huda (2018). The text of *Meurukon* by Huda (2018) has been shown in *Meurukon* performance in the 7th Aceh Cultural Event, 2018. The informants are the actors and/or observers of *Meurukon* from Pidie, Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Bireuen with the total of eight people. Data from the document are important to investigate theological substance in *Meurukon*, while data from the informants are needed to obtain data related to the actualization of *Meurukon* as a theological learning media.

Data were collected by documentation and interview techniques. Documentation is intended to obtain data from *Meurukon* text which is used as a core data. The stages of data collection include reading *meurukon* documents in a comprehensive and repetitive manner, marking parts of documents related to theology, and grouping the data into the types of theologybased. Interviews are intended to obtain data on the actualization of *Meurukon* as a theological learning medium.

The data were analyzed by following these steps: reading *Meurukon* texts and transcribing the interviews (with *verstehen* or understanding/comprehension and *erlebnis* or lived experience), grouping the data into the types of theology in *Meurukon* and *Meurukon* actualization data as theological learning media, analyzing data comprehensively according to the focus of the study, summarizing the results of the study, and verifying the results of the research with experts and colleagues.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theology in Meurukon

The results of this study are related to two things, namely the substance of the problem of Islamic theology discussed in *Meurukon*, and the actualization of *Meurukon* as a medium of learning theology. In *Meurukon*, many texts were found related to theological issues, which are directly related to the concept of God and to the practice of faith and creed (*aqidah*). The examples of the substance of *Meurukon* which are related to theology are presented under the following sub-headings.

Theology in Meurukon Regarding the Nature of Religion and the Nature of God

The following data show the questions and answers regarding religious issues and attributes possessed by God found in *Meurukon* (Huda 2018:2).

Su-eue (Questions)

Meutoh agama sebenarnya ulon sudi (Which is the right religion actually I am asking)

Peugah beumeuri abeh mandum hai Syaikhuna (Please explain in detail, O Syaikhuna (our sheikh))

Mandum geutanyoe sidroe Tuhan beutaturi (All of us must know the only one God)

Padum boh sipheuet neuci seubut hai syaikhuna (Please say it, how many attributes of God O Syaikhuna)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Awaluddin makrifatullah (Awaluddin makrifatullah)

Awai agama dilee beutaturi Allah (The beginning of religion is to know Allah)

Taturi Allah na dua ploeh sipheuet (To know the only one God with 20 attributes)

Jinoe lonkheun deungo bandum hai syaikhuna (Now I explain, listen all, O Syaikhuna)

Wujud, qidam, baqa, mukhalafatuhu lilhawadis, qiyamuhu binnafsih, wahdaniah, qudrah, iradah, ilmu, hayyah, sama', bashar, kalam, qadiron, muridon, 'alimon, hayyon, sami'un, bashiron, mutakallimon

Based on an interactive discussion in *Meurukon* illustrated in the table above, it is explained that someone is said to have been religious (Islam) if he already knows the only one God, which is Allah. It means, if she/he does not know God, then she/he is not a Muslim. Then, it is made explicit that the most important way to know God is to know all His twenty attributes. In other words, if someone does not know the twenty attributes of God, that person is not yet religious, because they do not know God. Consequently, a person who only knows some of the 20 attributes of Allah, she/he is not yet fully Islam. Therefore, true Muslims are those who already know and believe in the 20 attributes of Allah. In this context, it appears that Islam and faith are two inseparable things.

Theology in Meurukon Regarding The Concept of Faith Classification

Data on the concept of faith in Islam are found in *Meurukon* activities that can be seen in the following table (Huda 2018:4-5).

Su-eue (Questions)

Assalamualaikom guree meutuawah (Assalamualaikum, a good teacher)

Kamoe gohlom glah bak meurunoe (We have not finished studying perfectly)

Keu hai iman teungku ci peugah (Please describe about faith)

Neukheun beusah meubagoe-bagoe (Please mention its types)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Ngon bismillah ulon puphon (With bismillah I began)

Syaikhuna lon ingat beusah (Listen truly, O Shaykhuna)

Iman mujmal meunoe muphom (Mujmal faith means this)

Neudeungo lon hai syaikhuna (Listen to me, O Shaykhuna)

Iman mujmal deungo lon kheun (Mujmal faith I say)

Neudeungo lon hai syaikhuna (Hear me, O Shaykhuna)

Amantu billah wabima qalallah (Believe in Allah and what He says)

Anantu birrasul wabima qalarrasul (Trust the Apostle and what He said)

Di iman mufassal neudeungo ya akhi (Mufassal faith, hear me, O brother)

Amantu billah wamalaikatihi (Trust in God and his angels)

Bi wakutubihi biwarusulihi walyaumil akhir (And His book, His apostles, and the last day)

Wal qadri khairihi wasyarrihi minallahi taala

(Good and bad destiny from Allah the Exalted)

Iman mufassal nam peukara (Mufassal faith consists of six things)

Phon tapateh na zat Allah nyang kheun Allah hate khagleh (First we acknowledge the substance of God with a sincere heart)

Nyang keudua tapateh na malaikat (Secondly we believe in angels)

Jeuet nibak nur le bilangan han ek hisab (Created with light who are many and unlimited)

Teuma nyang keulhee tapateh na kitab Allah (Third, we believe that there is a book of God)

Tron di langet 104 pham beuceudah (Get down from the 104th sky, understand clearly)

Lam kitab nyan suroh teugah pengajaran (In the book, teaching instructions and prohibitions)

Dum geutanyoe wajebe taat keupada Tuhan (All of us must obey God)

Teuma nyang keupeuet tapateh na Rasulallah (Then the fourth believe in the existence of Allah's Apostle)

Nyankeuh Rasul beutajunjong bek tabantah (That is the Apostle that we should not deny)

Nyang keulimong tapateh na uroe kiamat (The fifth we believe is the hereafter)

Uroe geubangkit nyang kamate bandum ummat (The resurrected day that all the dead will rise)

Teuma nyang keunam tapateh na kadar Allah (Then the sixth we believe in the level of God)

Brok ngon jeuheuet nibak Allah sekalian (Bad and evil from Allah all)

Iman taat kufur maksiet gasien kaya (Faith obedient kufr immoral poor and rich)

Saket mangat alem jahe hina mulia (Painful pious, ignoble, noble)

The group that answered the questions explained that faith is divided into two, namely *mujmal* faith and *mufassal* faith. *Mujmal* faith is about believing and trusting in Allah and what

He said, as well as believing in the Prophet and what he said. *Mufasssal* faith is about believing in the existence of Allah's substance, believing in angels created from light, believing in the books of Allah containing God's commands and prohibitions, trusting the apostles of Allah, believing in the existence of doomsday, and believing in *qadha* and *qadar* from Allah.

Theology in Meurukon Regarding The Meaning of Islam and Its Pillars

In the following data, there are matters of theology that relate to the meaning of Islam and its harmony (Huda 2018:7-8).

Su-eue (Questions)

Ngon bismillah tapujoe Tuhan (With bismillah praising God)
Ulon tanyong bak syaikhuna (I ask the Shaykhuna)
Syarah Islam neuci peutrang (Islamic sharia, please explain)
Peugah bandum padum perkara (Explain all the things)
Arti Islam neuci sebut (Say the meaning of Islam)
Kiban maksud neuboh makna (How do you give meaning?)
Binasa Islam hai teungku cut (Perish Islam, O *teungku cut*)
Nyan pih beujeuet hai syaikhuna (That, too, must know O Shaykhuna)
Rukon Islam nyan pih beujeuet (Pillars of Islam must be understood)
Neuci sebut hai syaikhuna (Try to say O Shaykhuna)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Arti Islam na tatuban (Know the meaning of Islam)
Suroh Tuhan takeurija (Tell God we do)
Teugah Allah tapeujeu-oh (God's prohibition keep it away)
Larang bek roh uleh gata (Do not include you there)
Rukon limong nyan phon syahdat (The first five pillars is the shahada)
Seumayang nyan nyan keudua (The second is prayer)
Rukon keulhee tabri jakeuet (The third pillar is issuing zakat)
Soe nyan na jeuet mat hareuta (For those who have wealth)
Ohnoe abeh kabar zakeuet (It's done about zakat)
Rukon keupeuet tapuasa (Our fourth pillar is fasting)
Soe puasa buleuen Ramadhan (Who fasts the month of Ramadan)
Page taulan nekmata teuka (Hereafter the pleasures will arrive)
Rukon keulimong ta-ek haji (The fifth pillar is the pilgrimage)
Soe beureuhi na kuasa (Who is strong and powerful)
Tunai rukon ibadah haji (Do the pilgrimage)
Ka samporna limong peurkara (It is perfect in five cases)
Nyan jawaban peue na beutoi (That is the answer somehow correct)
Neuci sebut hai syaikhuna (Please respond, O Shaykhuna)
Meunyo salah meu'ah meulakee (If wrong please forgive)
Ateueh ulee jaroe dua (On the head is the two hands)

It was explained that Islam is synonymous with carrying out all the commands of Allah and being away from all His prohibitions. That is, a human being who claims to be Muslim must be reflected in his daily behavior and actions. Therefore, a Muslim is obliged to fulfill the five pillars, namely to say two sentences of the shahada, perform five daily prayers, issue zakat, perform fasting in the month of Ramadan, and do the pilgrimage to *Baitullah* (*kaaba*). A person who claims to be Muslim, but does not pray and fast in the month of Ramadan, for example, is not a true Muslim, because the form of a Muslim is represented in his actions based on his intentions and trust in what can be done and what should not be done.

Theology in Meurukon Regarding The Classification of Allah's Twenty Attributes

In *Meurukon*, a discussion about twenty attributes is also displayed, namely the attributes of God that must be known and believed by all Muslims. In this connection, those who asked questions from other groups ask for an explanation of the twenty attributes of Allah (Huda 2018:12-18).

Su-eue (Questions)

Sipheuet dua ploh geubagi peuet (The twenty attributes divided by four)

Neuci seubut hai syaikhuna (Try to say O Shaykhuna)
Sipheuet nafsi padum sipheuet (What is the attribute of *nafsi*)
Nyan pih beujeuet dalil ngon makna (Must know the proposition and meaning)
Sipheuet salbi nyan pih beujeuet (Should also know the attribute of *salbi*)
Seurta neukheun dalil makna (And show the proposition and meaning)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Ulon meujaweueb jinoe dua krak (I answer a word or two)
Deungo meusigak wahe syaikhuna (Listen really O Shaykhuna)
Meunyo na salah meu'ah hai guree (I'm sorry teacher if I am mistaken)
Kamoe meulakee ubak syaikhuna (We ask the Shaykhuna)
Bak nafsi sipheuet wujud (In *nafsi* there is the attribute of *wujud* (exist))
Deungo beujeuet hai syaikhuna (Listen really O Shaykhuna)
Wujud na droeneuh Potallah (Being exist is God)
Mustahe 'adam hana droeneuh Potallah (It is impossible if God doesn't exist)
Daliljih: Allahullazi khalaqassamawati wal ardh wama baina huma (The verse: *Allahullazi khalaqassamawati wal ardh wama baina huma*)
Bak salbi limong sipheuet (In *salbi* there are five attributes)
Deungo beujeuet hai syaikhuna (Listen really, O Sheikh)
Qidam, awai na Potallah (*Qidam*, Allah exists in the beginning)
Mustahe hudus, dudoe na Potallah (*Mustahil hudus*, Allah exists in the end)
Daliljih: Huwal awwalu wal akhiru Wa dhahiru wa bathinu (The verse: *Huwal awwalu wal akhiru Wa dhahiru wa bathinu*)
Tuhan awai Tuhan akhe (God in the beginning God in the end)
Qidam Tuhan cit ka lahe (God's *Qidam* already exists)
Daliljih: Wayabqa wajdahu rabbika Ziljalali wal ikram (The verse: *Wayabqa wajdahu rabbika Ziljalali wal ikram*)
Tuhan sidroe Mahabesar (God Almighty the Greatest)
Kemuliaan tapateh na (Our glory believes He exists)
Mukhalafatuhu lilhawadis (*Mukhalafatuhu lilhawadis*)
Hana sa droeneuh Potallah ngon peuneujeuet (God is not the same to the creature)
Muma tsalatuhu lilhawadis (*Muma tsalatuhu lilhawadis*)
Mustahe sa droeneuh Potallah ngon peuneujeuet (It is impossible for God to be a creature)

The above data are some examples related to some of God's attributes. The group who asked questions stated that the attribute of God is divided into four groups, although there are only two attributes, namely the attribute of *nafsi* and the attribute of *salbi*. It was explained by *Meurukon* Sheikh that the nature of the *nafsi* is that God is tangible; the existence of God and impossible if God does not exist. Meanwhile, in the group of *salbi* there are five attributes of Allah. In this passage, only three are mentioned, namely, God existed from the beginning and it is impossible for God to end, God is eternal and impossible if God is impermanent, and God is not the same as all creatures and it is impossible if God is the same as creatures. All of these attributes are shown completely with their propositions. Furthermore, two more attributes are also explained, namely the attribute of *makni*, and the attribute of *maknawiyah*, complete with their respective propositions.

Theology in Meurukon Regarding The Believe in Angels

Although believe in angels has been discussed in the context of faith in general, it is also presented in specific questions. This can be noted in the following data (Huda 2018:21).

Su-eue (Questions)

Murib teumanyong ka ubak guree (The student asks the teacher)
Meu'ah meulakee sibarang desya (We apologize for all sins)
Malaikat h'an ek hisab le geutanyoe (Angels are innumerable to us)
Beutaturi wahe teungku na siploh droe (We know, *teungku*, only ten)
Dum buet gobnyan neupeurintah uleh Tuhan (All duties are ruled by God)
Neuci peutrang abeh mandum hai syaikhuna (Please explain everything, O Shaykhuna)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Malaikat siploh wajebe taturi (There are ten angels we must recognize)
Phon Jibra'il nyang ba sabda (First is Jibrail who brought a revelation)
Neuba sabda firman Tuhan (Bring the revelation of God's words)

Uroe malam jeueb kutika (Day and night never let up)
Dua Mikail nyang peutren ujeuen (The second is Mikail who sent rain)
Ho nyang geukheun le Rabbana (To where as ordered by Rabbana)
Ho nyang geuyue peutren reujang (To where as told to be sent down immediately)
Meudum gantang meudum gunca (According to their needs)
Lhee Israfil gobnyan geuyub sangkaikala (The third is Israfil who blow the trumpet)
Phon dilee kon sampoe jinoo (From the past until now)
Seurune di babah hana leukang (Trumpet in the mouth does not crack)
Teungoh geupreh jan peurintah teuka (Waiting for orders to arrive)
Watee geuyup hanco alam (When blown the world is destroyed)
Meuthon-thon payang sangkaikala (Years the length of trumpet)

The *Meurukon* group that was asked immediately answered the ten angels that have to be recognized along with their respective duties. In this study only three angels are presented. This question arises which shows that faith in angels is an important part of theology. This part of the faith also represents one of the faiths to the unseen, because angels are created from light, invisible substances, even though some of their tasks or works are visible, such as the rain sent by Israfil.

Theology in Meurukon About Doomsday Signs

Muslims must believe in the end of the world or the end of life of the universe. Since doomsday has not yet taken place, in the *Meurukon* the doomsday signs are discussed as seen in the following excerpt (Huda 2018:23).

Su-eue (Questions)

Tanda kiamat ulon teumanyong (I ask the sign of doomsday)
Pakri ban bangon hai syaikhuna (How is it O Shaykhuna)
Neuci seubut padum keunong (Please specify the signs)
Hai guree lon eeee syaikhuna (O my teacher, O Shaykhuna)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Wahe Muhammad geunaseh Allah (O Muhammad, the love of Allah)
Fireuman Allah keunoe Neuyue ba (Bring the words of God here)
Meulikat gata ya Nabiyullah (After you O Prophet of Allah)
Siploh go lon tren u alam donya (Ten times I went down to the world)
Lon tren nyang keuphon lon cok beureukat (I first took the blessing)
Laot ngon darat lon cok dum rata (Sea and land I take all)
Nyang kaya-kaya udep meularat (Rich people live in poverty)
Hana le beureukat raseuki dumna (No more treasure)
Lon tren keudua lon cok geumaseh (The second down I take affection)
Sinoe ngon sideh gaseh han le na (Here and there there is no more love)
Ureueng dum mate teutiek teu-eh-eh (Many died lying dead)
Hana le gaseh akan syedara (No more love for brothers)
Poma ngon ayah saket ka teu-eh (Mother and father are ill on their backs)
Aneuk hana deuh meubulee mata (Children do not seem just a flash)
Guree ngon murid hana le malee (Teachers and students are no longer shy)
Kajipeujeuoh gaseh han le na (Love for each other is gone)
Lon tren nyang keu lhee cit lon cok laju (I take the third down immediately)
Malee sigeutu bacut han le na (Even a little shame is no longer there)
Hana le malee agam ngon inong (No more shame in men and women)
Bak jeueb-jeueb gampong gle deungon kuta (In every village and city)
Lon tren nyang keupeuet lon tuka adat (The fourth down I exchange customs)
Ulon boh pangkat bak nyang kon kada (I gave the rank not in place)
Ureueng nyang raja hana le pangkat (Ureueng nyang raja hana le pangkat)
Bangsa nyang rakyat ka jeuet keu raja (The people become a king)

The main problem discussed in this context is related to faith in the unseen, doomsday. If someone believes in doomsday, he must also believe in doomsday signs. In the data above it is explained that the signs of doomsday are, among others, the loss of *barakah* (blessing) in the sea and on the land, the loss of affection between human beings; between children and parents, between students and teachers, the loss of shame in all places, the exchange of prevalence, such as fools becoming leaders and people who should be leaders look like fools.

Theology in Meurukon About the Prayer Pillar

In Aceh and other Muslim communities, prayer is known as the pillar of religion. However, the people of Aceh are also familiar with the term the pillar of prayer. This is also discussed in *Meurukon* activities, as in the excerpts quoted from Rahman (2010:15) which are presented below.

Su-eue (Questions)

Tameh seumayang na padum peurkara? (How many pillars of the prayer?)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Tameh seumayang na tujuh peurkara (There are seven pillars of prayer)

Pertama phon takot keu Tuhan (First of all, fear of God)

Bek meudaleh kareuna donya (There is no reason caused by the world)

Nyang keudua hadir hati (The second is the presence of heart)

Akan Rabbi bek talupa (We must not forget Rabbi)

Teuma nyang keulhee wahe taulan (Then the third O taulan)

Agama Iseulam tasamporeuna (Our Islamic religion is perfected)

Teuma nyang keupeuet wahe akhi (Then the fourth, O brothers)

Amar ngon nahi tapeubida (The commands and prohibitions we distinguish)

Nyang keulimong wahe taulan (The fifth O taulan)

Peurayek Tuhan rabbul 'akla (Glorify the Highest God)

Keunam taharap rahmat Tuhan (Sixth, we hope for God's grace)

Bek hai taulan tachok-chok sangka (Do not you O taulan have bad thought)

Keutujuh malee takot keu Tuhan (Seventh is shame, fear of God)

Sibeunar iman di dalam dada (Truly faith in the chest)

Ektikeuet jroh beurangkajan (Good intention at any time)

Peurayek Tuhan azza wajalla (Glorify Lord azza wajalla)

Nyan hai teungku tameh seumayang (That is all O Teungku prayer pillars)

Tujuh boh wajeb turi le gata (Seven that you must know)

The data above show that a person who performs prayer perfectly must be supported by seven pillars. The first pillar is the fear of God, without reason. The second pillar is the presence of the heart in all activities. The third pillar is perfecting the religion of Islam, which means that one's prayer is not perfect if it does not appear as true Islam. The fourth pillar is being clearly able to distinguish between God's commands and forbids. The fifth pillar is to always glorify God. The sixth pillar is not having prejudice to God. The seventh pillar is the real fear of God with real intention in the heart.

The issue of prayer is further discussed in depth in *Meurukon* (version of Rahman 2010:22-33), such as various prayers, especially *tarawih* prayer, and congregational prayer accompanied by procedures and benefits. In this section it is closed with the poem '*Ohnoe lon suson fadhilah teuraweh/ Kureueng ngon leubeh meu'ah lon pinta*' (Suffice me to arrange the benefit of *tawarih* prayer/ more or less I am sorry).

Theology in Meurukon Regarding The Apostles' orders

The issue of marriage in Islam is one of the social dimensions that is closely related to legal issues. There are various texts about this, including the problem of a man who marries a woman without paying dowry beforehand. How is the law? The following is an excerpt from the *Meurukon* text from Rahman (2010:44-45).

Su-eue (Questions)

Na sidroe ureueng teungku meutuawah (There are humans, O my good teungku)

Kalheueh meunikah deungon isteri (Married to his wife)

Goh bayeue jeunamee kalheueh meunikah (Not yet paid dowry even though married)

Cut putroe indah hajat diwat'i (A beautiful princess cannot be touched)

Pakriban muphom teungku meutuawah (How do you explain O my good teungku?)

Pat asai liyah peue nyang terjadi (Where is what happened?)

Teungku neuseubot soe nyang hikayah (Teungku please mention who has said)

Guree peujeulas toh hadis Nabi (Please explain the Prophet's hadith)

Jaweueb (Answers)

Na sidroe sahbat Panghulee Nabi (There was a friend of the Prophets' chief)

Saidina Ali pahlawan kuat (Saidina Ali a strong hero)
Tueng keu meulintee Paghulee Nabi (Becoming the son-in-law of the Prophet)
Peukawen Ali ngon aneuk jasad (Marriage to Ali with a corpse)
Fathimah Zuhra nama geurasi (Fatima Zuhra is an appropriate name)
Saidina Ali cut bintang takat (Saidina Ali the star man)
Ohlheueh peunikah aneuk di Nabi (After the Prophet's married off his child)
Seureuta lagi linto geuintat (Bride accompaniment also departs)
Ngon alakada geumeukhanduri (With minimum party)
Untuk raseumi Sitti ngon sahbat (Sign of inauguration of Siti with the prophet's friend)
Tapi jeunamee Fathimah Sitti (But about the dowry of Fatima Sitti)
Sipeng kompeuni gohlom na mupat (Not a dime clear address)
Sineuk deureuham gohlom na geubri (One dirham has not yet been given)
Meunan hai akhi bak geuriwayat (That is according to history)
Komdian teuma Saidina Ali (After that Saidina Ali)
Akan isteri ka geumeuhajat (For the wife he wills)
Ohtroh u teumpat Panghulee Nabi (Arrived at the place of the Prophet's chief)
Meuna hai akhi laju geusapat (That's it brother, keep close together)
Ya Rasulullah waya habibi (O Allah's Apostle, O Habibi (love))
Akan isteri ka lon meuhajat (Will my wife be gracious)
Di kamoe toh pat jeunamee Sitti (How to dowry for Sitti)
Wa ya habibi neupeugah leugat (O habibi say it immediately)
Jaweueb Muhammad Panghulee Nabi (Answered Muhammad the chief of the Prophets)
Han jeuet hai akhi ta-eh meusapat (You may not sleep together)
Saboh-saboh hai meugohlom tabri (Something that is not yet finished)
Jeunamee Sitti gohlom na mupat (The dowry for Sitti does not yet exist)
Meunyo gohlom na jeunamee Sitti (If there is no dowry for Sitti)
Sikali-kali hanjeuet meusapat (Can not be together yet)
Suroh Muhammad Panghulee Nabi (Muhammad the chief of the prophets' orders)
Bajee prang sabi geuyue suet leugat (Armed suit was told to open)
Yue jok pakaian alat prang sabi (Asked to give up a stable war suit)
Jeunamee Sitti Ali jok leugat (The dowry to Sitti was handed over immediately)
Fathimah Zuhra peurab bak Ali (Fatima Zuhra approached Ali)
Manyoh hai akhi ka geumeusapat (Now you are together)
Jiteuka guroh sang runtoah bumi (Come roar as if the earth is collapsed)
Geumubuet Ali jibeudoh asab (Ali's action went out of smoke)

The data above explain that a husband cannot have intercourse with his newly married wife if the husband has not yet given the dowry to his wife. This was exemplified by the Prophet's son-in-law, Saidina Ali. When he married Sitti Fatima, Ali could not provide dowry for his wife, even though he was already eager to sleep with his wife. The Prophet forbade Ali to sleep with Fatima until Ali could give up his dowry. Because Ali did not have property, the Prophet asked Ali to hand over his armour as a dowry. In this context it is necessary to understand that the dowry does not have to be gold, silver or the like. Dowry is enough of something valuable and blessed by the prospective wife. This also means that the dowry for marriage is appropriate in the context of time, culture, and situation.

The Actualization of Meurukon

Interviews with informants indicate that actualization of *Meurukon* can be done through various activities, including compulsory activities at Islamic boarding schools, extracurricular activities in boarding schools, religious holiday activities, on inter-sub-district and inter-district trips, television media, rice harvest parties, and teaching materials and courses in literature and art-based universities.

Mandatory Activities in Islamic Boarding Schools

Pesantren or *dayah* (boarding school) is one of the main pillars of education enforcement in Aceh, especially religious education. This role is still ongoing today. From this institution, the *Meurukon* tradition was born and developed around Samalanga and Pidie. This tradition grows and develops to discuss various religious issues, especially about theology.

Therefore, according to the informants, *pesantren* must be the 'host' again for *Meurukon* activities. The religious issues discussed are adapted to the latest developments, specifically with the latest views of Muslim scholars from various parts of the world. *Meurukon* activities at *pesantren* can be held several times a week.

Extracurricular Activities in Boarding Schools

Formal education institutions, such as the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) under the Ministry of Religion in Aceh can organize *Meurukon* as one of their extracurricular contents. The material for *Meurukon* refers to the study of the *aqidah* (faith) in accordance with the current curriculum, such as about *kalam* (God's words), *aqidah*, and monotheism. With the practice of discussion like this, students are expected to more quickly understand the creed, such as those related to *rububiyah* monotheism, *al-asma wa-sifat* monotheism, and *al-ibadah* monotheism (compared with the views of Zakir Naik in Ramadhani (2019:1-19)). In this activity, students are trained in literary arts while mastering religious material.

In boarding schools' environment that speaks the Acehnese as a mother language, *Meurukon* activities can be carried out using the Acehnese language, while the boarding schools that speak heterogeneous, can use Indonesian, English, or Arabic. Whatever language is used, the core of *Meurukon's* extracurricular activities is to train students to discuss theological issues through spoken literature or art.

Routine Activities on Religious Holidays

Actualization of *Meurukon* activities can be carried out as one of the activities of religious holidays, such as the new year of Hijri, Nuzulul Quran, and the Prophet's birthday. The Prophet's birthday (called as Maulid) in Aceh has a very long duration, almost three months, including Rabiul Awal (the beginning of Maulid), Rabiul Akhir (the middle of Maulid), and Rajab (the end of Maulid). In this Maulid activity, children and young people are assigned to discuss apostolic issues (including monotheism of worship) between *Meurukon* groups. According to the informants, this activity is far more meaningful than the Maulid lectures which sometimes often deviate from the apostolic substance. Likewise in the celebration of Nuzulul Quran, the issue of God's revelation can be discussed, including the nature of revelation, the process of revelation, how to understand revelation, to the verses of *kauniyah* that must be known by believers.

Race Activities

Meurukon competitions can be held between villages, between districts, and between sub-districts/cities in Aceh. Even though the nature of *Meurukon* is not intended as a competition, the arena for discussing religious issues can be actualized as a competition, as is the reading of the Qur'an or the MTQ. Several districts in Aceh have organized *Meurukon* competitions such as in Pidie Jaya, North Aceh, Aceh Besar, and at the Aceh Cultural Week in 2018. The *Meurukon* competition should be a routine district/city activity in Aceh as an effort to streng then the commitment of the Aceh Government as the only province implementing Islamic law in Indonesia. *Meurukon* participants need to be classified into groups of children, adolescents, and adults. This is important so that early children are accustomed to learning theological problems within the framework of an Islamic art.

Meurukon material for groups of children and adolescents needs to be designed specifically according to their age. For children, theological material must be light in direct language. For adolescents, the material is adapted to the language of the *aladadic majazi*. As for the adult group, the material, as it has been discussed, is in accordance with the depth of

knowledge of the *Meurukon* group. Besides material, the time needs to be adjusted, for example for one to two hours; not similar to the duration for adults, which is seven hours.

Television Media

In addition to the four activities above, the informants mentioned that television is one of the media that can be used to actualize *Meurukon* activities. Through television, people can enjoy *Meurukon* in their spare time. At the very least, *Meurukon* shows on television become one of the ways to introduce and familiarize *Meurukon* as a medium for learning theology in society.

Rice Harvest Festival

Through boarding schools, in the past, people were accustomed to hold *Meurukon* just after the rice harvest (*koh pade*). This custom is still held in several places such as in Seunuddon and Nisam in North Aceh that takes place in the rice fields or in the village's prayer rooms (*mushalla*). This noble tradition needs to continue to be actualized as a form of gratitude of the people to enjoy God's grace in the form of sustenance provided. This gratitude is part of monotheism with regard to *la raziqa illa Allah* (no giver of sustenance other than Allah) and *la hafidha illa Allah* (no keeper but Allah (see Imron 2015:451)).

Teaching Material in Higher Education

Meurukon also needs to be taught at universities in Aceh, especially those whose teaching material is related to performing arts. Therefore, the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, performing arts education arrangements at several universities in Aceh, particularly the Indonesian Institute of Arts and Culture (ISBI) Aceh needs to include teaching materials or *Meurukon* subjects in their curriculum. In college, *Meurukon* as a model of interactive-dialogic learning can be created to discuss various other matters, besides theological issues.

Meurukon as an Indigenous Medium for Theology Education

The research findings show that *Meurukon* is one of the Islamic arts that live and develop in the Acehnese mother-tongue community in Indonesia. Theological material is one of the fundamental topics discussed in depth. This means *Meurukon* became a medium for learning theology. The choice of *Meurukon* art as a medium for learning theology is in line with the Acehnese passion who is proficient in the art of speech or poetry as it has been called by Hasjmy (Ara, Ismail and Hasjim 1995:vii). This fact also shows that the *ulemas* in Aceh are experts in oral literature as well as in ethnographic aspects. They preach Islam in an emic perspective. In this way, learning Islam is quickly accepted in society. In addition, according to the character of Aceh community, creators of *Meurukon* believe that learning with oral poetry media can create a fun and passionate learning environment.

To encourage people to learn naturally and indirectly, the *ulemas* deliberately design learning models in interactive-dialogic *Meurukon* between groups. Interactive-dialogic learning is a teaching-learning technique to motivate learners to ask questions and answer (question-answer) during learning process. This learning model is believed to increase the intelligence or thinking skills of learners because they are invited to think deeply when engaging in interactive dialogue (Alexander 2006; Lyle 2008; Mortimer and Scott 2003; Skidmore 2006). This fun dialogical interactive learning is in line with Joyce and Weil's (1980:6) view that one of the goals of learning is to create an environment to ease learning. Meanwhile, Bakhtin (1986) mentions that the term 'dialogical' in learning can refer to behaviors that respect each other for differences in ideas.

The place chosen for *Meurukon* is not in *zawiyah* or *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), however it is in *meunasah* (this word comes from *madrasa*: a place of prayer in Aceh that is smaller than a mosque) or in a field near a rice field or garden. *Meurukon* which is held in the *meunasah* arena (house of worship) has implications for the habituation process so that people routinely visit places of worship. Meanwhile, if *Meurukon* is carried out around rice fields and gardens, it has implications for showing joy and increasing community gratitude about God's grace in the form of sustenance, namely rice as the main food. That is why this Islamic art has become more popular, not only among students (students of religious education institutions), but also among farmers and fishermen.

As a medium for learning religious issues, *Meurukon* is not deliberately called a race. It is referred to as the arena to explain the problem of religion. Therefore, there is no losing and winning groups. In the discussion that lasted for about seven hours, group members ask questions and other group answers questions. Questions are usually asked by the sheikh or group leader to be answered by other groups of sheikhs. Answers can be given simultaneously by all group members called *Syaikhuna* (meaning all of our teachers). The sheikh plays the role of arranging questions and answers, and designing the rhythm or rhythm of the *Meurukon* so that it is pleasant to hear, impressing, and easy to remember. In this context, *Meurukon* does not only function as a learning medium, but also as a learning resource.

At first, *Meurukon* was a tradition practiced by *santri* (students of Islamic boarding schools), but later it became a general tradition among religious people. This is a positive side in the development of Islam in Aceh from time to time. If in *zawiyah* this tradition is only followed by teachers and *santri*, while in *Meunasah*, rice fields, and gardens, it is followed by various groups of people. To follow the tastes of the wider community, *Meurukon* was designed as a speech art performance; the combination of the beauty of humming oral poetry with various dynamic rhythms and gestures of the members of *Meurukon* (compared with Setyawati's view of "Literature in Words, Sounds, Motion, and Fine" in Pudentia 2008:4).

Up to date, *Meurukon* is still very much needed to teach theology and other religious elements to the public. With *Meurukon* activities, children become accustomed to hearing discussions of religious issues so that they become accustomed to the matters of faith, Islam, and *ihsan*. That is, this human-based learning media needs to be maintained. In this context, Arsyad (2017:83) believes that one of the important factors in learning with human-based media is interactive lesson design. With humans as the main actors in the learning process, opportunities for interaction are increasingly wide open. Well-structured interactive learning is not only interesting, but also provides opportunities for mental experiment and creative problem solving. In addition, interactive learning encourages students' participation and if it is used properly, it can enhance learning outcomes and transfer knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are as follows. First, the theological issues discussed in *Meurukon* include the concept of Islamic religion and the attributes of God, the concept of faith, the concept of Islam, the classification of God's attributes of 20, the concept of faith in angels, the concept of signs of day after, the concept of obligatory prayers, and the concept of the Apostles' commands, such as the matter of dowry on marital matters. Second, the actualization of *Meurukon* as a medium for learning theology in society can be done through the re-habituation of *Meurukon* mandatory activities in *pesantren*, extracurricular activities in religious school institutions, routine activities on celebrations of religious holidays, such as Nuzulul Quran and the Prophet's Birthday, intergroup, inter-district, and district/city competitions for children, adolescents and adults, broadcasts on television media for

introduction and habituation, rice harvest parties, and make *Meurukon* as teaching material or courses in literary and arts-based universities.

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