ACCULTURATION OF LOCAL CULTURE AND RELIGION IN THE LEK-LEK-AN TRADITION IN THE SEI KEPAYANG ASAHAN COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This research is a form of living hadith study that discusses the acculturation of local culture and religion in implementing the lek-lek-an tradition in the Sei Kepayang community, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. The data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The informants were the government, ulama, community leaders, event organizers and the Sei Kepayang community in general. The results of this study showed the tradition of lek-lek-an carried out at the birth of a baby by arranging an event at the place of the baby's parents. The tradition of lek-lek-an is completed with an aqeeqah ceremony for the baby. The primary foundation for the community in carrying out the tradition of lek-lek-an is to pass down the traditions of the local community continuously and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad related to the aqeeqah of a newborn child.

Keywords: acculturation of local culture and religion, lek-lek-an tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country whose people consist of various tribes, languages, cultures, religions and traditions. However, many people live in groups and side by side. Community activities that are carried out regularly are conveyed continuously to the next generation so that it becomes a habit that is always carried out every moment (Saputra 2019).

The local culture and Islam has been related to each other since the time of the Prophet Rasulullah SAW, (Zulfadli et al. 2021) such as the habit of Arab women in wearing a veil to protect themselves from dust and after converting to Islam, this habit is still maintained in keeping their awrat and honor (Wendry, Taufik, and Saputra n.d.).

The form of culture maintained and implemented by the Islamic community (Saputra, 2021) is a culture that does not contradict to Islamic law so that both mutually reinforce one another and become a routine activity carried out by the Muslim community.(Zulfadli et al. 2021) One of the traditions that is closely related to Islam is the Lek-lekan tradition in Sei Kepayang. It is a
The process of implementing this tradition is carried out consecutively for three nights, starting from the birth of the baby. After that, it is continued with the aqeeqah because people who carry out lek-lek-an activities should complete it with the aqeeqah. This is due to the belief of the Sei Kepayang community that the two activities are interrelated so that if one of them is not carried out, the tradition will be less than perfect.

According to the people of Sei Kepayang, if the lek-lek-an activity is not carried out when a child is born, then it becomes a byword and has violated the customs of the community. Therefore, the local traditional leaders require the activity to be carried out. (Julaika, 2021)

Basically, aqeeqah is conducted as a complement to the lek-lek-an tradition. It is because the traditional process of lek-lek-an is only limited to shaving hair and giving names, while the slaughter of the required animals is carried out at the aqeeqah whose implementation time is far from the time of lek-lek-an. However, these two traditions cannot be separated. The local community is based on the hadith of Rasulullah SAW, because lek-lek-an is part of the Sunnah of the Prophet:


Also, a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud:

In English: "Ibn Mustanna told us Ibn Abi ‘Adiy from Sa’id from Qathadah from Hasan from Samrah bin Jundub verily the Messenger of Allah said: every child will be mortgaged with aqeeqah, which is slaughter an animal for him on the seventh day, his hair is shaved and given a name" (HR. Abu Daud) (Al-Sijisti, 2005)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam is a religion of rahmatan lil alamin for all humans so that when Islam arrived in Indonesia which has various tribes, sects, races, cultures and traditions, Islam will always be able to blend with the local community. (Saputra and Fata 2021) Indonesian people always settle and live side by side, so that every activity can be carried out in groups and become a routine habit. (Ramanda, Saputra, and Sari n.d.) The tradition that develops in Indonesia, especially for the Muslim community, is a supporting activity that must be carried out to support the implementation of community traditions properly. (Mudin and Safri n.d.)

Acculturation can be interpreted as a fusion of two or more cultures that influence each other. Acculturation can also be said as the incoming process of foreign cultures that affect the existed culture in a society. Some people selectively accept this influence, and some reject it. (Taufik 2016) Thus, it can be understood that acculturation between Islam and culture is a process of converging between cultures that can provide a reciprocal influence between Islam and the culture that lives in society. As this happens a lot in Indonesia (Junaidi, 2003).
Islam and culture are two fields that cannot be separated but can be distinguished. Religion has absolute values that cannot be changed, while culture can change according to the situation and conditions that occur in society. Therefore, it can be understood that religion is a primary thing while culture is a secondary thing. (Hakim, 1999) Harun Nasution explained that the teachings of Islam are divided into two parts; first, the teachings are absolute, unchangeable and changeable. The second is the teachings that are relative, change and can be changed according to the demands of the times. (Harun, 1986) Fundamental teachings sourced from the Qur'an and hadith are not part of the culture. Meanwhile, the relative teachings, which scholars have interpreted against Islamic teachings, can be called part of Islamic culture. Some Muslims believe that the culture spread by the ulama is the result of the efforts of the ulama who understand the teachings of Islam so that it is said to be Islamic culture (Junaidi, 2003).

The encounter between Islam and culture will bring up the image of Islam as rahmatan lil'alamın. The flexibility of Islamic teachings that are open to the diverse cultures that live amid society allows religious teachings to be accepted readily. However, if Islamic teachings are developed without being open to the culture that lives in the community, in that case, Islam will be difficult to exist in Indonesia easily (Abdullah, 1974).

Combining the two cultures will create a culture that has its uniqueness with the image of local wisdom. People who accept the assimilation will take advantage of and change the old culture to a new one with more values according to their needs. So from this, the term local wisdom lives, which means the ability to absorb and filter influences from the incoming culture (Baso, 2002).

According to Gazalba, the spirit of acculturation in Islamic teachings can be seen in the word of Allah in the letter al-Hujurat verse 13:

بِاٰ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ نَحْلٍ وَأَنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ شَعُوْباً وَقَبَلْنَاهُمْ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَرْمَىٰكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَثَلَّهُمُ الَّذِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَيْرُ


In English: “O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious among you. Verily Allah is omniscient, All-knowing.”

The verse above explains that Islam recognizes the diversity of humankind, so it is commanded to know each other and humans must have their own culture. There will be cultural acculturation in the effort of getting to know each other.

Research on traditions carried out by people who have close relationships with worship, religion, and the Shari'a, has been widely described by academics and researchers. The researches were final assignments of undergraduate, magister, and doctoral article. However, because the territory of Indonesia is vast and socio-cultural diverse, the traditions that develop are also different (Saputra, 2019). Below are several researches related to this discussion:

First, research conducted by Gusnanda entitled Living Hadis dalam Tradisi Mambadakan Paja Masyarakat Kamang Mudiai Kecamatan Kamang Magek Kabupaten Agam, a thesis written in 2019. This thesis concluded that the tradition of mambadakan Paja is a tradition from one of Nagari in Agam Regency, in Nagari Kamang. Membadakan paja is a tradition that is carried out in welcoming the birth of a newborn baby; the events began with shaving the hair, slaughtering animals such as chickens, giving names (Gusnanda, 2020).

Second, the research conducted by Gustia, Tradisi Turun Mandi Bayi Baru Lahir pada Masyarakat Nagari Batu Gajah, Kecamatan Sangir Batanghari, a thesis for Universitas Andalas year 2016. This thesis contains a traditional activity in a Nagari in West Sumatra. The difference with this research, this thesis is not directly related to the traditions of the Prophet. This thesis only focuses on customary research, while the author focuses on living traditions carried out by a community. While the similarites are
both traditions of welcoming babies born. (Yenti n.d.)

The third, research conducted by Asfika Yogi Hutapea entitled *Upacara Mangokal holi Pada Masyarakat Batak di Huta Toruan Kecamatan Banuarea Kota Tarutung Sumatera Utara*. A thesis at Udayana University faculty of literature and culture. This study used a qualitative method. The *mengokal holi* ceremony is a culture that exists in Toruan village, North Sumatra. This culture contains the values of brotherhood, improved social status, and respect for parents and ancestors who first lived in the Batak land. The tradition held to welcome the birth of a baby so that the child will be obedient and obey their ancestors. (Hutapea n.d.)

The difference from other studies is that the *lek-lek-an* tradition carried out by the Malay community of Sei Kepayang, Asahan Regency is a form of tradition closely related to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, a *lek-lek-an* tradition is a form of acculturation between local culture and Islam.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research studied living hadith field research by describing the *lek-lek-an* tradition in the Sei Kepayang community, Asahan Regency. This study used an ethnographic approach because the tradition of *lek-lek-an* was an activity that developed in the community and carried out routinely in every momentum. (Zulfadli et al. 2021)

The research location is centered in the Sei Kepayang area, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra Province. This research was carried out for three months, from November 2020 to January 2021. The data collection techniques were observation, interviews, observations and documentation. In the research of the *lek-lek-an* tradition, the author conducted interviews with several informants consisting of the government, community leaders, event organizers and the Sei Kepayang community in general.

**DISCUSSION**

*Geography of Sei Kepayang*

Sei Kepayang is one of the (twenty-five) sub-districts in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, located on the east coast of North Sumatra. Astronomically, Sei Kepayang is located at coordinates 2°51'28.34"U and 99°51'23.43"E with an altitude of 2-7 meters above sea level. Sei Kepayang occupies an area of 23 828 Ha (238.28 Km²) consisting of six villages; Perbaungan, Pertahanan, Bangun Baru, Sei Paham, Sei Kepayang Kanan, and Sei Kepayang Tengah villages. Perbaungan village is the largest village, with an area of 59.87 (Km²) or about 25.12% of the total area of Sei Kepayang District. In contrast, the smallest area is Sei Kepayang Tengah village, with an area of 28.33 (Km²) or about 11.88% of the total area of Sei Kepayang sub-district. (Wahyudi, 2019)

Sei Kepayang has two kinds of climates, the rainy season and dry season with an average rainfall of 371mm/month and has natural conditions of lowland, clay, and gray. The population in the Sei Kepayang sub-district in 2018, the BPS Asahan population in 2018 was 9212 males and 9312 females with a total of 18524 inhabitants. Thus, it included the Development area, with 2106 males and 2039 females populate, the Pertahanan Village has a male population of 1118 and 1149 female, the Bangun Baru village has a male population of 893 and a female population of 882, the Sei Paham village has a male population 2194 and 2230 women, Sei Kepayang Kanan village has a male population of 1131 and a female population of 1117, and finally the village of Sei Kepayang Tengah has a male population of 1770 and a female population of 1895.

Sei Kepayang in the north is bordered by the West Sei Kepayang sub-district, in the east by the North Labuhan Batu Regency, in the south by Pulau Rakyat District and in the west by Simpang Empat District.

Most of the area of Sei Kepayang District is coconut and oil palm farming land, and the majority of the people of Sei Kepayang District work as farmers. Below is the detail of the work of the Sei Kepayang District:
The people of Sei Kepayang District, Asahan carried out from generation to generation by Tradition. The History and Origin of the Lek

Attachment of this thesis.

The author will describe the education of the people of Sei Kepayang District in the earlier than other sub-districts of Tanjung Balai City, where the distance to Tanjung Balai City is not too far. Hence, it is also a supporter of economic development in Sei Kepayang District, Asahan Regency. Sei Kepayang sub-district can be categorized as a sub-district that exists earlier than other sub-districts that have been developing for a long time in Asahan Regency. The author will describe the education of the people of Sei Kepayang District in the attachment of this thesis.

The History and Origin of the Lek-lek Tradition

Lek-lek-an is a tradition that has been carried out from generation to generation by the people of Sei Kepayang District, Asahan Regency. This tradition was brought by the Javanese, who did immigration around the 1940s. The lek-lek-an tradition was previously unrelated to the aqeeqah tradition; it only stood alone and ended with slaughtering aqeeqah animals.

This tradition has existed for a long time. However, previously the lek-lek-an event could not be held only for one night but had to be done three nights consecutively. Time went by, the tradition of lek-lek-an is starting to be shortened to one night. In other words, the first night and the second night are abolished because these two nights are only filled with a visit by guests. As to when and who was the first to do one night of lek-lek-an, the author did not find it, but it is most likely above 1996. This is based on the interview with one of the people of Sei Kepayang Tengah. According to them, it is not known the precise time of the entry. (Peah, interview, 2020)

The lek-lek-an was only held one night, on the peak night, which is the last night. However, this was only held by people who migrated and then returned to their hometown only to do lek-lek-an after the birth of their child. Likewise with aqeeqah, nowadays people have done a lot of aqeeqah when children have grown up, 1-year-old or more. However, in the past, aqeeqah was carried out 3-5 months from the lek-lek-an event.

From the interview results in the five villages in the Sei Kepayang sub-district, none gave certainty about the year the lek-lek-an tradition was started. From the five villages, the expression of the community is almost the same: “antahlah, semenjak mengingat aku sudah ado lek-lek-an di sungai payang ni”, even though the author has searched for the oldest adults in five villages in Sei Kepayang District, but the answer is still no one knows for sure the beginning of this tradition in Sei Kepayang District.

From the five villages in Sei Kepayang District, there is one distinctive village, Sei Kepaham Village. The people said that previously in other villages had already carried out lek-lek-an. However, in Sei Kepaham village, they had not done it. This tradition began to live in Sei Kepaham in 1992 by Atok Hitam who had moved from the village of Sei Kepayang Tengah. He held a lek-lek-an event for his first grandson. This

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<td></td>
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Source: Community business/work

The Sei Kepayang sub-district area is an agricultural land area. More than 70% of its agricultural land is planted with coconut trees, oil palm trees, and rice fields. In addition, the people of Sei Kepayang also earn by planting bananas on the sidelines of coconut plantations between one munggu and another munggu.

Most of the people of Sei Kepayang Subdistrict have coconut plantations, and some have oil palm plantations. This makes the economic life of the people in Sei Kepayang Sub-district more prosperous. The majority of the people in Sei Kepayang District belong to the upper-middle economic group. However, there are also people whose economy is lower-middle. Nevertheless, this is not up to 20% of the total population in Sei Kepayang District.

Sei Kepayang District is one of the sub-districts of Tanjung Balai City, where the distance to Tanjung Balai City is not too far. Hence, it is also a supporter of economic development in Sei Kepayang District, Asahan Regency. Sei Kepayang sub-district can be categorized as a sub-district that exists earlier than other sub-districts that have been developing for a long time in Asahan Regency. The author will describe the education of the people of Sei Kepayang District in the attachment of this thesis.
information found from one of his grandchildren. Then the author referred to his wife, even though the circumstances and age factors were difficult to communicate, but her answer was indeed correcting her husband involvement as the person who started the lek-lek-an tradition.

The lek-lek-an tradition in the Sei Kepayang District was not carried out simultaneously by all villages. Based on the researcher’s information from the Sei Kepayang sub-district office, the village that was first established was the village of Sei Kepayang Tengah. After having many residents, this village was divided into two villages, Sei Kepayang Tengah and Sei Kepayang Kanan. The other three villages were new villages, such as Desa Bangun Baru, which opened in 1985. (Asmuni, interview, 2021).

From this information, the writer assumes that the first village to carry out the lek-lek-an tradition is the village of Sei Kepayang Tengah. The researcher’s opinion is also supported by the head of the sub-district, who has the same thoughts because Sei Kepayang Tengah was the first village to be established in Sei Kepayang District. Thus, this village was the first to do lek-lek-an and aqeeqah. It was complicated to know the year of the beginning of the lek-lek-an tradition in the village of Sei Kepayang Tengah. The researcher did not find the exact year of entry, which the researcher believes is around the 1940s. This is based on the researcher's findings at the Asahan Regent's Office about when the Sei Kepayang District was formed. So, the researcher found that in 1935 a circular letter was issued regarding the order for land clearing for coastal areas, particularly in Sei Kepayang District. However, Mr. H. Surya himself could not confirm it because he conveyed the remains of the documents he had read and seen.

As development progresses, the five villages in Sei Kepayang Subdistrict have carried out the tradition of lek-lek-an and aqeeqah. However, at first, they did not coincide. Even other villages outside the Sei Kepayang sub-district have also carried out the lek-lek-an and aqeeqah traditions. This development is very rapid, starting from the food menu, which used to be mostly just bread. It has started to vary, such as fried rice, green bean porridge, rice with sidedish, and many more. The community worked together to decorate the swing as beautifully as possible regarding the lek-lek-an decoration on the last of the night. However, a trend of decoration service can now be hired by the lek-lek-an host who is financially sufficient.

The development of the times has brought changes in its implementation in the tradition of lek-lek-an and aqeeqah. Lek-lek-an was initially conducted three nights consecutively. Some people accumulated it into one night, as well as aqeeqah. Initially, the distance between lek-lek-an and aqeeqah was still a matter of months, but now some people carry it out in a matter of years.

The lek-lek-an tradition and aqeeqah as a form of hereditary tradition are still maintained and implemented until now.

The Process of Implementing the Lek-lek-an Tradition

Lek-lek-an activity is a tradition carried out by the Muslim community in Sei Kepayang District. This tradition is carried out three nights consecutively after the child's birth. After this tradition is held, followed by aqeeqah, which is done in different times of lek-lek-an depending on the host's will. The tradition of lek-lek-an in Sei Kepayang Subdistrict has the meaning of staying up late together. This means the researcher found from interviews with one of the people in Sei Kepaham Village, Sei Kepayang District.

Announcement of lek-lek-an to the public is circulated door to door by neighbors. In this sense, the lek-lek-an invitation is not like an invitation to walimah where the host must deliver a letter or invite people directly. Nevertheless, the announcement is enough for one neighbor, and later from one person will inform another person, so it goes on and on until the news of lek-lek-an quickly spreads.

Before carrying out the lek-lek-an event, the youth and families who carry out the lek-lek-an will do the cooking that will be served in the evening. In addition, they also prepare decorations such as decorating swings, carving green coconuts for washing scissors, decorating glasses to be given as gifts to qasidah members. These were prepared because they will do the swing at night, cut the hair, and qasida with tambourine (rabana) instrumental.
Implementing this tradition is carried out three nights consecutively, starting from the birth of the baby into the world. For example, a baby is born on a Saturday morning, meaning Sunday night is the first night the baby is born in the world. So that the first lecture will be held, and the second lecture will be continued the next night. Likewise, the third night was held the following night. If the lek-lek tradition has been carried out, the aqeeqah will follow. Below are several forms of activities at the Lek-lek-an event:

First, Opening. This last night's order or sequence of events starts at 20.30 WIB or usually after the isha prayer. The opening of the event can be started if the guests have arrived, such as the elderly, close relatives, and tambourine (rabana) players as well. The first event is the opening in which traditional leaders usually open. If traditional leaders are unable to attend, the event will be opened by elders.

The Second, Entertainment. After the event was opened, people started with the next event, which is singing/qasidah while waiting for the guests to arrive. The researcher found that the songs sung were sometimes between four till five songs by the tambourine (rabana) players. When the tambourine players sing, the child is taken up to a swing that has been decorated and then swinging slowly accompanied by the tambourine. All of the songs sung are Islamic songs.

The third, Barzanji. The next activity is barzanji which often called barzanji. It is prayers, praises, and narrations of the history of the Prophet Muhammad, which are recited with a rhythm or tone that is usually sung at the birth, circumcision, marriage, and the day when Prophet Muhammad was born. The barzanji book itself is the written work of Sheikh Ja'far Ibn Hasan Ibn Abdul Karim Ibn Muhammad al Barzanji, which contains prose and poetry that tells about the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, including his lineage (genealogy), his life from childhood to becoming apostle. In addition, he also told the various values of his role models that deserve to be emulated by generations of Indonesian Muslims in particular.

The fourth, Marhaban and cutting hair. As soon as the barzanji was finished, people immediately played the marhaban by the tambourine (rabana) instruments. When the marhaban is upon, the hair cutting activity is carried out. Families, close friends, neighbors and the community took turns cutting the baby's hair. Cutting hair is a recommendation of the Prophet Muhammad and is included in the obligations of parents towards babies.


In English: "Salman bin Amir al-Dhabiy has told us that he once heard the Messenger of Allah say: "Every child has a character. So slaughter the animal for him and remove the disease from him (shaving his hair)." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). (Al-Bukhariy, 1998)

Cutting hair is part of the obligations of parents to their newborn child. Shaving the hair is usually done after carrying out the aqeeqah. However, suppose the parents are not financially capable. In that case, it is enough to shave the hair and give the child a name without slaughtering the animal as an aqeeqah animal.

During the haircut, the marhaban was repeated until the guests who wanted to shave the baby's hair were no longer there. After cutting baby's hair, each guest throws Rampai flower (assorted flowers sliced for fragrance). During the marhaban and shaving activities, the guests would stand. After shaving the hair, the guests will sit back down.

The fifth, Naming. They were furthermore giving the name that the players of rabana will announce. The name was, of course, chosen by his parents. From the researcher's observation, sometimes some parents have not prepared a name for the baby, so before the announcement, the traditional leaders and the whole family will negotiate or consult to find the best name for the child.

The sixth, Enjoying the meal. After the name is announced, the meals will be
served to the guests, which have been prepared since afternoon.

**Seventh.** Chanting prayers. After the entire series of events has been completed, the lek-lek-an is ended with a prayer like sholawat. However, some of its contents are in the form of recommendations for filial piety to both parents. As far as the researcher’s observations during the research, the one who brought the prayer was the imam (prayers lead) of the mosque or the administrator of the local mosque. After the prayer, it is closed by traditional leaders or elders. During the closing, words will be conveyed in the form of aqeeqah warning that must be carried out to continue this lek-lek.

**Eight.** Slaughtering aqeeqah animal. After completing the lek-lek-an tradition, the family proceeded the aqeeqah animal as regulated by Islamic law. This aqeeqah is the end of the lek-lek-an tradition procession at the time of the baby's birth.

Basically, aqeeqah must be done when carrying out lek-lek-an. However, through this research, it turned out that some people did lek-lek-an but not for aqeeqah. According to the explanation of the local community, the aqeeqah was not carried out because there were obstacles. Such as, the baby died before the aqeeqah, or the economic downturn made it very difficult to buy aqeeqah animals. However, this only happens to some people. There are no fines for those who do not carry out the aqeeqah because the community and traditional leaders will understand situation and conditions for not implementing it.

**Religious Values in Lek-lek-an Tradition**

The first, a form of Gratitude to Allah SWT as Rasulullah SAW has taught about several sunnahs in welcoming the birth of a baby, where the sunnahs are usually applied by the community in one aqeeqah event. It is sunnah to express joy and congratulations on the birth of a child. Allah SWT says related to the story of Prophet Ibrahim AS. In the letter Ash-Shafat verse 101,

“Maka Kami beri Dia khabar gembira dengan seorang anak yang Amat sabar”

It means: “Then We give him a good news along with a very patient child”

In Surah Al Hijr verse 53, Allah also said:

Mereka berkata: "Janganlah kamu merasa takut, Sesungguhnya Kami memberi kabar gembira kepada kamu dengan (kelahiran seorang) anak laki- laki (yang akan menjadi) orang yang alim.

It means: “They said: "Do not be afraid, indeed We give you good news with (the birth of a) son (who will become) a pious person”

When the Prophet Muhammad was born, Tsuwaibah conveyed joy for his birth to Abu Lahab. Tsuwaibah was a slave, he said, "This night, a son was born to Abdullah." So Abu Lahab freed Tsuwaibah as a form of his joy. Allah did not waste this action of Abu Lahab, after his death, Allah gave him a drink from the groove at the base of his thumb. Because the expression of joy can cause happiness, it is recommended that Muslims convey the good news to their brothers. Certain lafazh spoken in the momentum of the birth of a child. There seems to be some tolerance in this matter, provided that the congratulations do not show the jahiliyyah tradition.

The joy of parents because of the birth of a child causes a right that the child must accept and becomes an obligation for parents to fulfill it. The Prophet has explained the child's rights through his hadiths about aqeeqah, which have been described in the previous chapter. Aqeeqah outwardly is identified with the slaughter of goats or sheep. However, there is also a meaning that must be deeply contemplated, so the meaning is deeper or wider than that.

The form of gratitude for the people of Sei Kepayang District for the birth of a child is shown from the implementation of lek-lek-an and aqeeqah. Thanksgiving is seen in distributing a little sustenance to neighbors and close relatives through the food served during lek-lek-an and when praying at the aqeeqah.

Once the child is born, the parents are delighted, so they want the happiness to be felt by the surrounding. Carrying out this tradition can be seen as a deep-felt expression of gratitude for the birth of a child. Gratitude can be seen from the sincere intention in serving food for three nights consecutively. Then slaughtering goats at the aqeeqah is a form of gratitude for both parents to God. (Icah. interview, 2020)

The most concrete form of gratitude is seen in the procession of praying together. This position is led by the imam of the mosque
Further prayers and hopes can be seen from the hair cutting procession during the *lek-lek-an*, where every close relative and guest take turns shaving the baby's hair. Then, they will rub their head while saying a wish/pray, such as: "sehat-sehat ya nak, panjang umur, sukses kalau sudah besar, jangan durhaka." It means: "Be a healthy son, long life, success when you grow up, be faithful", and there are many other expressions of hope from close relatives who shave the baby’s hair.

**CLOSING**

After conducting research related to the acculturation of local culture and religion in the *lek-lek-an* tradition in the Sei Kepayang community, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra Province, many immeasurable things were found and became lessons for Muslims in general. The *lek-lek-an* tradition that developed in the Sei Kepayang community to welcome the birth of a baby is a form of gratitude carried out by the local community. In addition, the *lek-lek-an* tradition is part of the implementation of the Sunnah of the Prophet related to the aqeeqah of a newborn child.

The activities carried out by the people of Sei Kepayang are very beneficial. Thus, if this tradition is not continued to the next generation, it will impact the sustainability of local culture, and the practice of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad will also be lost. Therefore, every activity carried out by the community and has become a routine for every momentum must also be maintained and preserved as well as possible.

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