

Gueci Water at Po Teumeureuhom's Tomb: Exploring Aceh's Spiritual and Cultural Heritage

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Abstract:

This research aims to explore the cultural and spiritual significance of Gueci Water, a water source considered sacred in the Po Teumeureuhom tomb complex, Gampong Glee Jong, Aceh Jaya. The focus of the study is on the symbolic value and collective identity of the Acehnese people associated with this tradition. This research uses a qualitative approach with a combination of literature study and ethnographic methods. The literature study included historical literature, scientific articles, and cultural anthropology books. Field data was obtained through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, tomb guards, and local people. Gueci water is understood as a medium of blessing (barakah), healing and spiritual connection, used in pilgrimages and religious rituals. The use of this water is governed by customary norms and local beliefs, and is passed down through generations as part of the community's cultural and spiritual identity. This study is useful in the fields of cultural anthropology, religious studies, ethnography, cultural heritage preservation, and education of Islamic traditions of the archipelago. This research can also be applied in the development of community-based cultural preservation programs in Aceh and surrounding areas. This research offers a new perspective in understanding Aceh's spiritual traditions through the phenomenology of religion approach. By highlighting the symbolism of holy water as a form of living cultural heritage, this study also enriches the study of the relationship between sacred space, local beliefs, and collective community identity.

Keywords: Aceh Culture; Gueci Water; Po Teumeureuhom, , Spiritual Heritage.

INTRODUCTION

One important historical site is the Po Teumeureuhom tomb located in Aceh Jaya. This site holds deep meaning in Aceh's history, especially in reflecting the struggle of the local people and strengthening their cultural identity. However, the potential of this site has not

been fully realized as a means of education and the formation of historical awareness among the people of Aceh Jaya. Most existing studies still focus on the discussion of historical sites in general and do not highlight the richness of the local context that is full of traditional and historical values typical of Aceh. In fact, local history holds great potential in shaping collective consciousness and strengthening people's cultural identity. Unfortunately, this aspect is often overlooked in community empowerment initiatives. As Harrison points out, local history often does not receive the attention it deserves in community education spaces, even though it offers many educational values that can deepen people's understanding of their own historical roots and identity (Harrison, 1967).

The role of local history in education has been emphasized by Nichols, who states that many young people are unaware of important events in their own environment. This leads to a lack of appreciation or even unawareness of the importance of local history, even though these events are an integral part of Indonesia's national history. Local history often bears witness to long journeys that have shaped the identity of nations and communities. Understanding this history can foster a sense of belonging and pride in regional cultural heritage, while deepening understanding of the broader context of national history. Therefore, community involvement in preserving and utilizing local history is very important. The government can play a strategic role in encouraging historical awareness through various programs that highlight local stories that are close to people's daily lives. One effective approach is to utilize historical sites as real and applicable learning media. Through visits to historical places, people not only get to know past events, but can also experience firsthand cultural values and understand the social context that shapes their identity today. One potential site is the tomb of Po Teumeureuhom in Lamno, Aceh Jaya. This place holds high historical value related to the struggle of the Acehnese people, the importance of cultural preservation, and increasing awareness of local history. Historical awareness itself is a psychological dimension that demands cultural responsibility for the past. It includes understanding, reflecting and applying the lessons of history for the benefit of the present. In Aceh, which is known for its rich history and culture, many sites can be optimized as educational tools for the community. One of them is the Po Teumeureuhom site, which is closely related to the struggle of the Acehnese people, both during the colonial period and after independence. Unfortunately, the great potential of this site has not been maximally utilized in building public historical awareness (Suryana et al., 2020).

The phenomena of religion and spirituality often merge in the practice of pilgrimage that develops within society, as observed in the tradition of visiting the tomb of Po Teumeureuhom in Aceh. This tomb is not only the final resting place of a great figure, but also the center of religious and cultural activities of the local community. One important element that attracts pilgrims' attention is the presence of Gueci Water, stored in a distinctive container resembling an urn or small well, cemented into the floor. This water is believed to have its own blessings and spiritual value for those who come. The tomb complex is guarded by an old man who acts as a khadam (tomb guard). In addition to maintaining the sacredness of the place, the grandfather is also the guardian of the oral tradition by conveying the life history and struggle of Po Teumeureuhom to visitors (Arifin, 2017). Pilgrims are allowed to ask him directly to learn more about Po Teumeureuhom and the historical context behind the existence of the tomb. Inside the tomb complex, there is a balee provided as a resting place for pilgrims, as well as a musalla for prayers. This indicates that the tomb not only functions as a place of historical commemoration, but also as an active religious space. To maintain its sacredness, the main

tomb is fenced off and cannot be entered carelessly. Outside the fence is water from the urns of the past, which cannot be freely taken by anyone. The water can only be given by the khadam, in accordance with the procedures and respect for the values that have been maintained for generations. According to the khadam, the complex also contains the graves of Po Teumeureuhom's family and loyal followers, indicating that historical and spiritual values are integrated in one pilgrimage area. This tradition reflects the close relationship between local cultural heritage, community beliefs, and respect for past figures who are considered to have an affinity with Islamic values and high spirituality.

The purpose of this analysis is to understand the meaning and symbolic function of Gueci Water found in the Po Teumeureuhom tomb complex, especially in the context of local Acehese culture, religious meaning in Islamic teachings, and individual spiritual experiences of pilgrims. Through the approach of the phenomenology of religion as formulated by Mircea Eliade, water is not only understood as a physical element, but as a sacred symbol that contains a transcendental dimension, namely as a medium of hierophany manifestation of the Sacred in worldly reality (Sukrayasa, 2024). In the context of local culture, this analysis aims to reveal how Gueci Water is transformed into part of a pilgrimage tradition that contains historical, symbolic and social values. From a religious perspective, this study will explore how the practice of collecting the water is interpreted within the framework of Islamic teachings, either through fiqh, akidah or tasawwuf approaches. From a spirituality perspective, this study aims to capture the subjective and personal meanings experienced by pilgrims, such as feelings of inner peace, hopes of healing, or deep religious experiences. As such, this analysis does not only focus on the surface aspects of pilgrimage practices and the use of Gueci Water, but delves deeply into the structure of religious meaning contained in the symbol, and how it shapes the relationship between humans, the sacred space (tomb), and the Divine. This is in line with Eliade's view that religious experiences are often manifested through rites, objects and places that are considered sacred by certain religious communities, and therefore it is important to understand them from the perspective of the person experiencing them (Fromm, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the symbolic meaning and social role of the presence of Gueci Water at the Tomb of Po Teumeureuhom, it is important to review previous studies focusing on traditions and cultural sites in Gampong Glee Jong, Aceh Jaya District. These previous studies provide an important foundation for understanding the spiritual, cultural and community participation contexts of the site as a local heritage with religious and historical value.

Research conducted by Sirajul Munir, Khairulyadi, and Siti Ikramatoun (2022), entitled "Community Perception of Seumeuleung Ritual in Gampong Glee Jong", is one of the important studies that explains the dynamics of symbol meaning in traditional community practices. The Seumeuleung ritual itself is an annual tradition carried out as a form of respect for the services of Poe Teumeureuhoem, a highly respected historical figure in Acehese culture. This research emphasizes that the preservation of the ritual continues consistently, even in the midst of multiculturalism and acculturation. Through a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, the researcher identified that the symbolic meaning in the Seumeuleung ritual is not only present in the form of ceremonial activities, but also in social interactions and daily cultural practices. The symbols used in the procession become a collective means for the community to affirm identity and togetherness, thus strengthening

social commitment in preserving ancestral heritage. In the Mind, Self, and Society framework from the perspective of symbolic sociology, the Glee Jong community views this ritual as a spiritual obligation (mind), which is then embodied in concrete actions such as the formation of an organizing committee (self), and finally collectively absorbed by the wider community (society). This understanding is important in examining the existence of Gueci Water as part of a symbol system that may be perceived as a spiritual or sacred medium that complements traditional processions such as Seumeuleung.

Furthermore, research by Nurhalimah (2013), in her study “Seumeuleung Ceremony at the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb” also reinforced the importance of the tomb location as a cultural and spiritual center. In this study, Nurhalimah examines the sacred values of the Seumeuleung traditional ceremony that takes place in the tomb area, especially as a form of commemoration of the inauguration of Sultan Salatin Alaidin Riayat Syah as King of Daya. One of the important parts of this ceremony is the procession of bribing the king's descendants by the dayang, which symbolizes the traditional coronation. Through a phenomenological approach with observation and interview methods, this study shows that the ceremony contains high religious and social values. The components of pilgrimage, vow fulfillment, and the search for spiritual blessings are an integral part of the activity. People not only attend to witness the ceremony, but also take the experience as a form of spiritual recreation. This indicates that the presence of an element such as Gueci Water is likely to be spiritually interpreted, not just as ordinary water, but as part of a tradition of seeking blessings (barakah) that lives in the community. In this context, the community's symbolic values and beliefs regarding Gueci Water can be traced through an understanding of the values that accompany rituals and pilgrimages in the tomb area.

Then, research conducted by Misdar Astuti (2022), in her thesis “Community Participation in the Development of Po Teumeureuhom Tourism as a Religious Tourism Object” shows that the Glee Jong community has a high level of participation in maintaining and developing the tomb area as a religious tourist destination. Using a descriptive qualitative approach in a case study, Astuti highlighted four main forms of community participation: (1) involvement in social activities such as gotong royong and the implementation of Seumeuleung rituals, (2) involvement in the deliberation process for decision-making on tourism development, (3) contribution in the form of funds or donations to build tourist facilities, and (4) utilization of proceeds by opening businesses around the tourist sites. This research makes an important contribution in understanding the relationship between local cultural preservation and community economic development. In the context of this research, community participation shows that traditions and sacred places such as the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb are not only spiritual objects, but also have potential as cultural and economic assets. The existence of Gueci Water as a physical and symbolic element in the tomb area, in this case, can be studied as part of a spiritual attraction and cultural heritage that is inseparable from the social and religious construction of the local community. Thus, the three studies above provide a strong theoretical and empirical basis in examining the existence of Gueci Water in the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb, both in terms of symbolic value, spiritual dimensions, and community participation in its preservation. This review shows that the existence of cultural elements such as Gueci Water does not stand alone, but is always closely related to the structure of tradition, social values, and the collective consciousness of the Acehese people in maintaining their ancestral heritage.

METHOD

This research aims to understand the meaning and cultural and spiritual values attached to the existence of Gueci Water in the Tomb of Po Teumeureuhom, an important site in the tradition and history of the Acehese people. To deeply explore the symbolic and cultural dimensions of the object under study, the approach used in this research is qualitative, combining library research methods and ethnographic approaches. Library research was used as the first step in gaining a theoretical understanding and conceptual framework regarding cultural heritage, spiritual traditions and symbolic practices in local communities. The literature study was conducted by reviewing various relevant literature, such as cultural anthropology books, scientific journals, previous research results, academic articles, and historical documents that contain information about the Seumeuleung tradition, the role of the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb in Aceh's history, and the symbolization of water in the context of Islamic and local culture. This literature study is an important step in formulating the direction of research, formulating the focus of the study, and interpreting field findings contextually and scientifically.

In this study, an ethnographic approach is used to understand the phenomenon in depth through the direct experience of researchers in the field. This approach emphasizes the importance of researcher involvement in the social life of the community to capture symbolic meanings that are not always revealed in textual data (Halik, 2018). Through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, the researcher sought to build an understanding from the perspective of the people directly involved with the existence of Gueci Water. The data collection process was conducted in Gampong Glee Jong, Jaya District, Aceh Jaya Regency, which is the location of the Po Teumeureuhom tomb complex as well as the place where rituals and activities related to Gueci Water take place. In the implementation of observation, the researcher is directly present at the tomb location to observe the situation, community behavior, and social interactions related to the use and meaning of Gueci Water. Observations were conducted naturally without intervention, so that the social and cultural context under study could emerge authentically. The researcher recorded the process of the community collecting the water, the ritual moments using the water, and the emotional responses or beliefs they showed while at the location. In addition to observations, in-depth interviews were conducted with various parties who were directly involved or had knowledge of this tradition. The interviewees consisted of traditional leaders, tomb keepers, religious leaders, local people, and ritual performers. Interviews were open-ended and flexible to allow for richer and more in-depth information, especially regarding the origins of belief in Gueci Water, the process of passing on knowledge between generations, and the spiritual values contained therein. In practice, researchers not only asked for information, but also built social closeness so that the interviewees felt comfortable in sharing their experiences and beliefs. Data analysis in this research was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting out information relevant to the focus of the study, such as descriptions of the use of Gueci Water, narratives of community beliefs, and water symbolism in rituals. The data that has been reduced is then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, which describe the relationship between symbols, social actions, and cultural contexts. The final stage is interpretative inference, where the researcher links the field findings with the theoretical framework that has been developed from the literature study. Data validity in this study was maintained through source and method triangulation. Triangulation was done by comparing the results of observations,

interviews, and literature review to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings. The researcher also conducted a member check or confirmation back to the informant regarding the results of the initial interpretation, to ensure that the meaning captured truly reflects the views of the community under study. The choice of library research method and ethnographic approach is considered the most appropriate to reveal the complex and deep cultural meaning of the existence of Gueci Water in the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb. The use of these two approaches allows the research to be holistic, as it combines the power of textual data and direct field experience. As such, the results of this research are not only descriptive, but also interpretive and reflective, describing how spiritual heritage such as Air Gueci is understood, safeguarded and passed on by the people of Aceh as part of their cultural identity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research produced important findings related to the existence of Gueci Water at the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb as part of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Acehnese people, especially in Gampong Glee Jong, Aceh Jaya. The main findings reveal that Gueci Water is not only understood as a physical element, but has undergone a symbolic transformation into a sacred object that contains collective meaning, religious value, and local cultural identity. Through an ethnographic approach and participatory observation, a comprehensive picture of how the water is treated, interpreted and passed on from generation to generation was obtained.

First, observations show that Gueci Water is an integral part of pilgrimage practices at Po Teumeureuhom's tomb. Local people and pilgrims from various parts of Aceh consider this water to be a source of blessing (*barakah*), which can bring calmness, healing, and spiritual protection. The water is taken in a certain manner, such as using a special container, with a respectful attitude, and accompanied by prayers and good intentions. This phenomenon shows the spiritual construction of water as a sacred symbol in the tradition of society, where the meaning of water is no longer limited as a natural object, but as a medium of connection between humans and divine powers. Second, Gueci Water has an important position in the cultural structure of the Glee Jong community. Based on interviews with traditional leaders and tomb-keepers, it is known that the existence of this water is believed to be closely related to the blessing of the holy figure, Po Teumeureuhom. The water is believed not to be taken carelessly, but must go through the approval or knowledge of the tomb guard. This indicates the existence of a customary system that regulates the procedures for water collection and shows that the water does not stand alone as a physical object, but as part of an ecosystem of local values and beliefs that live and are collectively guarded. Third, from the results of in-depth interviews, it was found that Gueci Water is not only used for personal needs such as healing illnesses or calming down, but also in a broader socio-religious context. The water is used in a series of rituals such as reading prayers together, *tahlil*, and traditional medicine involving local religious or traditional leaders. Pilgrims who come from outside the region also bring this water back to their hometowns, as a symbolic form of hope, blessing, or *wasilah* (intermediary) to God through a glorified figure. Fourth, historical research through literature review and interviews shows that the existence of Gueci Water has become part of the collective identity of the Glee Jong community. The collective experience of Po Teumeureuhom's grave and the Gueci water became a cultural narrative that was passed down orally from generation to generation. Parents tell the story of the water's blessings to their children, which then becomes the reason for them to continue the pilgrimage tradition

and maintain the sacredness of the place. This process of inheritance strengthens the community's bond with their local heritage, while making the grave site a center of spiritual civilization that remains alive and thriving in the midst of modernity. Fifth, the results also show that the use of Gueci Water does not stand in a vacuum of meaning. It is understood in a very rich symbolic framework, in line with Mircea Eliade's theory of religious phenomenology that sees water as a hierophany, a manifestation of the divine. In the context of Acehese society, the water is understood as a medium of purification, a symbol of blessing, and a representation of Islamic values and local civilization. Pilgrims do not simply bring water as a souvenir of pilgrimage, but make it a means of building a spiritual connection with the Almighty, with very personal hopes and prayers.

Furthermore, this research also found that although the local community has a strong attachment to the symbolism of Gueci Water, there is still a lack of formal documentation and preservation of these values. There are not many written narratives that systematically explain the origin, usage and spiritual role of the water urn. As a result, this knowledge risks being eroded if there is no systematic effort to record, archive and introduce this heritage to younger generations more widely. In this context, the Po Teumeureuhom site and its Gueci Water hold potential as a means of historical and cultural education, not only for the people of Aceh, but also for the people of Indonesia in general. In addition to the spiritual and cultural aspects, the research results also show that there is a socio-economic dimension associated with the existence of Gueci Water. Local communities, especially tomb guards and micro-entrepreneurs around the tomb complex, make pilgrimage and water collection activities part of the local economic dynamics. For example, there are residents who provide water containers, sell pilgrimage equipment, and provide guide services for visitors from outside. Thus, Gueci Water is not only symbolic or spiritual, but also has a real impact on the social life of the community around the tomb. Overall, the results of this study show that Gueci Water in the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb is not only part of a cultural artifact, but has become an active element in the spiritual, cultural and social life of the community. The symbolism of water, which is believed to carry blessings and religious meanings, shows how the people of Aceh Jaya maintain their ancestral heritage through pilgrimage practices that are alive and continue to be passed down. The existence of Air Gueci is clear evidence that local traditions can still exist amidst the challenges of modernity, provided there is collective awareness, a strong value inheritance system, and respect for sacred spaces in local culture.

Phenomenological Theory of Religion (Mircea Eliade)

The phenomenology of religion according to Mircea Eliade is an approach that seeks to understand human religious experience in its most basic, universal and symbolic form. Eliade does not judge the rightness or wrongness of a belief, but rather seeks to reveal the deepest meaning of symbols, rites, and sacred spaces experienced by religious people. In his view, religion is not sufficiently understood through historical or sociological dimensions alone, but must be traced through the human experience of the sacred. For Eliade, religious symbols are concrete manifestations of spiritual experiences, and places such as mountains, water, or tombs can be a means of hierophany, which is the manifestation of the divine into the profane (non-sacred) world (Rakhmat, 2021). Therefore, in the context of Gueci Water in Po Teumeureuhom's tomb, the belief in the blessing and efficacy of the water can be understood in this symbolic framework: as water that has been given religious meaning by the traditions,

collective experiences, and spiritual symbols of the local community. Water is no longer neutral, but has become a sacred sign through a process of repeated religious experiences, beliefs and practices.

Aspects of Local Culture

Po Teumeureuhom, whose real name is Sultan Salatin Alaidin Riayat Syah, was the founder of the Islamic Kingdom of Negeri Daya in 1480 AD. He was known as a scholar and king who led wisely, spread the teachings of Islam, and enforced customs and sharia in the Lamno region. The term "Po Teumeureuhom" in the Acehnese language means "Our Lord Who Has Passed Away", indicating the community's respect for him. Po Teumeureuhom is a figure who holds executive power and a symbol of Aceh's greatness. The custom of Bak Po Teumeureuhom refers to the culture applied by the kings who once led Aceh, starting during the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda. Hukom Bak Syiah Kuala in Aceh reflects the strong influence of religion in people's lives, where religious law is an important basis in regulating the lives of Acehnese people. The law in question is not ordinary state law, but Islamic law that regulates all aspects of human life, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Islamic Sharia, derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, not only regulated the law, but also became a guideline for life that was applied by the ulama as judicial rulers. The implementation of sharia began during the leadership of Syaikh Abdurrauf bin Ali Al-Singkili as Wali Al-Mulk. In Aceh, adat and Islamic law are closely interconnected, with adat containing values that are difficult to separate, as expressed in the saying, "Hukom ngen adat lage zat ngen sifeut, tawiet han meulipat, tatarek han meujeu'eut." Custom and law are two things that are intertwined and cannot be separated. If it is broken it will not be separated, and if it is pulled it will not be disconnected (Ismail, 2022).

In Acehnese tradition, the tombs of revered holy figures or kings are not only seen as the final resting place, but also as spiritual centers and symbols of local culture. Po Teumeureuhom's tomb, for example, plays an important role in religious rituals, pilgrimages, and the preservation of customs and collective identity of the Lamno community. First, pilgrimage to tombs is a common practice that reflects respect for ancestors, religious figures, or kings who are considered meritorious. In this context, Po Teumeureuhom's tomb is not only a place to remember history, but also a medium to get closer to the Divine through the intermediary of the pious. Pilgrimage is carried out with prayers, recitation of yasin or tahlil, and taking water from an urn that is believed to have blessings. Secondly, the tomb is also the location for annual rituals, such as the Seumuleung tradition. This ritual is not just a cultural ceremony, but contains spiritual and symbolic values: feeding the king's descendants symbolizes genealogical continuity, respect for past leaders, and hopes for blessings for the community. Third, in terms of custom, the tomb serves as a binder of cultural identity and local history. The prohibition of taking water carelessly from the urn and the presence of the tomb's pengkhadam (spiritual guardian) show that the tomb is not only respected physically, but also managed customarily and spiritually, exposing the local value structure and ethics passed down through generations. Thus, Po Teumeureuhom's tomb is not only a historical site, but also a sacred space that actively shapes the relationship between the past, present society and the spiritual dimension. This function is very much in line with Mircea Eliade's concept of the phenomenology of religion, where certain spaces and objects become hierophany, i.e. the manifestation of the Sacred in human life (Manan, 2015).

Aspects of Islamic teachings

In the Islamic tradition, the practice of tabarruk or taking blessings from people, places or objects considered sacred has a contested basis but is also recognized in Islamic history, especially in the treasures of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah. Tabarruk is etymologically derived from the word barakah, which means blessing or goodness that continues to increase. In this context, tabarruk is interpreted as an effort to get closer to Allah by honoring things related to pious people or places that are considered to have spiritual value (Rofiah, 2021). In Islamic history, there are examples that are often used as a basis by scholars supporting tabarruk, such as the history of the Companions who took the rest of the Prophet's ablution water, his hair, and even the soil from his footsteps (HR. Bukhari and Muslim) (Kharisman, 2021). This practice shows that taking blessings from the relics of saints is not automatically considered shirk, as long as it is not believed that the object itself gives power, but rather God blesses through the medium.

In the context of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints, including the use of water from the urn at Po Teumeureuhom's tomb, the practice of tabarruk is acceptable within certain limits, as long as it is still believed that the blessing comes from Allah and not from the tomb or the water itself. The urn water at Po Teumeureuhom's tomb, for example, is believed to bring blessings because it is associated with a holy figure and a strong local Islamic history, without changing the substance of faith in the oneness of Allah. In the Islamic tradition of the archipelago (such as Aceh), drinking urn water from the graves of scholars is understood culturally and spiritually, not as a form of worship, but rather a form of respect and belief in the prayers of the pious. As long as it does not violate the faith (tawhid), does not contain unclean elements, and is not believed to be an independent power, the law of drinking it is allowed as a form of tabarruk. A moderate interpretation in this context means giving high respect to the ulama, as respected figures in the Islamic tradition, but not making them an absolute authority in matters of practical or ritualistic nature (Abou El Fadl, 2006). In the case of water, what is meant is not to place water as an object that is sanctified or given an equal status with Islamic sharia law. In the moderate view, water is still valued as an essential need in life, but it does not need to be considered as an object that has special sanctity outside the context of its function as a source of life, cleanliness, and daily needs. In other words, water remains an important part of Muslim life, but it does not need to be positioned in a context that could be misinterpreted as a sacred object, let alone equated with a larger sharia law.

Aspects of Spiritual Experience

For many pilgrims who come to Po Teumeureuhom's grave, their experience of Gueci Water is not just a physical interaction, but a spiritual one. They bring not only a container to hold the water, but also deep hopes and prayers. Inner peace is often the first impression. In the quiet atmosphere of a tomb full of historical and spiritual values, the water from the urn becomes a symbol of self-purification. Some pilgrims mention that washing their faces or drinking the water makes their hearts feel lighter, as if the burden of life has been lifted. In addition, there are testimonies of physical and emotional healing. While not all claim miracles, many believe that the urn water contains blessings thanks to the prayers and good intentions that accompany it. For some, this belief strengthens their efforts in the face of illness or life's difficulties. Equally important is hope. The urn water, which is considered to have witnessed the prayers and pilgrimages of many people since time immemorial,

provides a sense of connection to ancestors and divine power. For local people, the water is a symbol of the continuity of tradition and the spiritual power that flows from the past. The existential meaning of pilgrimage journeys and interactions with sacred symbols can be understood as profound experiences that go beyond mere ritual aspects, reaching dimensions of identity, the search for the meaning of life, and humanity's spiritual relationship with the transcendent.

1. The Search for Self and Meaning in Life

Pilgrimage is often a form of existential quest, when one feels the need to leave the mundane routine to rediscover life direction, identity or inner peace. The physical journey to a sacred place mirrors an inner journey that leads the individual to deep self-reflection. In this sense, pilgrimage functions as a liminal ritual, a threshold phase between the ordinary world and the sacred world (Erhard, 2019).

2. Interaction with Sacred Symbols as a Transcendent Experience

Sacred symbols such as tombs of saints, water urns, stones, or heirlooms are not just ordinary objects. They carry collective meaning and serve as a bridge between humans and the divine. Touching, drinking, or taking home part of the symbol can provide a sense of spiritual connection, even a feeling of being protected or blessed. According to Mircea Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane*, sacred symbols turn "ordinary" time and space into "sacred", and in that moment, humans re-experience the myth of origin or closeness to God (Hadiputro, 2023).

3. Community and Collective Memory

Pilgrimages also strengthen social and spiritual ties within communities. Sharing stories, hopes and beliefs on pilgrimage strengthens collective identity and maintains the continuity of inherited cultural and religious values. Pilgrimage, then, is also an existential-communal experience (Fadyah & Imron, 2024).

4. Hope and Transformation

Interaction with sacred symbols often involves the expectation of transformative healing, salvation, or guidance. While not all wishes are fulfilled in a literal sense, these journeys provide psychological transformation: calmness, strength, and a sense of being cared for by a greater power (Turner, 2012).

In local contexts such as the water urn at Po Teumeureuhom's tomb, water is often a spiritual tool that carries collective meaning. Although not a theologically sanctified object, interaction with the water can evoke religious awareness, hope, and a sense of connection to ancestors and God. Here, water becomes both a symbol and a means of spiritual bonding between the real world and the sacred world. Water, in the spiritual dimension, is not just a liquid for physical needs, but a symbolic light that touches the recesses of the soul, bringing awareness of God's presence into daily life. The relationship between sacred spaces such as tombs and the human sense of connection to the divine is an important theme in the study of spirituality, the anthropology of religion, and the phenomenology of sacred space. The tombs of holy figures or saints are often the meeting point between the temporal and the eternal, the profane and the sacred, creating deep existential experiences for pilgrims.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the existence of Gueci Water in the Po Teumeureuhom Tomb is not just a material object, but a spiritual symbol that contains religious values, culture, and collective identity of the Acehese people, especially in Gampong Glee Jong, Aceh Jaya. Through an ethnographic and library research approach, it was found that Gueci Water plays an important role in pilgrimage practices, customary traditions, and the belief system of local communities that are still alive and maintained for generations. Water symbolism in this context has complex dimensions. First, water is not only treated as a physical object, but has gone through a symbolization process that makes it sacred and spiritually meaningful. Second, the practice of collecting and using Gueci Water is carried out in a certain manner that shows the existence of a strong system of local customs and norms, where water collection must go through the tomb guard's permission, as a form of respect and preservation of cultural values. Third, Gueci Water is also interpreted as a medium for *tabarruk*, an effort to take blessings from something that is considered to have spiritual closeness to God. This practice is understood by the local community not as a form of shirk, but as an expression of respect for the figure of Po Teumeureuhom who is believed to be a pious and historical figure in local Islam. This interpretation is in line with the moderate view in the teachings of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* that places objects of spiritual heritage as intermediaries, not as independent sources of power. Fourth, phenomenologically, the urn water has become a symbol of hierophany, which is the manifestation of the sacred in profane space. In the spiritual appreciation of pilgrims, the water becomes a bridge between the real world and the transcendent dimension, creating an existential experience that strengthens people's connection to God, ancestors, and community. Many pilgrims feel a sense of calm, hope, and even healing after interacting with the water, indicating the important role of symbols in the spiritual fabric of society. Fifth, the function of Gueci Water also extends beyond the spiritual aspect and into the socio-economic dimension. Pilgrimage activities and the need for water have helped revive the economy of local residents through guide services, the sale of pilgrimage equipment, and the provision of water containers. This shows that cultural heritage can contribute to community development, provided it is managed wisely and based on local values. However, the research also found challenges in preserving knowledge and documenting values related to Gueci Water. The majority of information is still oral and passed down informally, which is vulnerable to being lost with generational changes and the influence of modernization. Therefore, there needs to be a systematic effort from the local government, academics and local communities to document, archive and publicize these values so that they can be passed on to future generations intact. Thus, Gueci Water in Po Teumeureuhom's Tomb is a representation of a living cultural heritage that contains symbolic, spiritual, historical, and social richness. This research shows that local heritage has great potential as a means of education, identity strengthening, and community development, if understood and utilized contextually and wisely. The findings confirm the importance of local culture preservation not only as a form of physical conservation, but also as an effort to maintain the spiritual values and collective identity of the community amid the dynamics of changing times.

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