A Preliminary Study On
Dayah Salafi Development

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1. Education I. Title
This study started with the government letter that emphasized prescribed regulations for the standardizing of Acehnese dayah salafi curriculum. Aceh is located on the western tip of Sumatera island, forming the far western border of the Republic of Indonesia. Aceh is known as the first place that converted to Islam in the archipelago, and there are many dayah, which are spread all over Aceh. From the literature, it is found that the dayah, which is an indigenous Islamic educational institution in Aceh, has connection with the geographical and historical sources of Islamic teaching and may be seen as a link in a continuous chain of learning. Meanwhile, there is national regulation on standardisation graduation levels from the pondok pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and diniyah (institutions offering religious study courses) educational sectors. This regulation affects dayah salafi in Aceh. Therefore, through some documents, a preliminary study related to dayah salafi development is performed.
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I. Why Dayah Salafi Curriculum?

In 2008 an official letter was sent from the Jakarta Head Office of the Department of Religious Affairs in Indonesia (official correspondence, Department of Religious Affairs, July 29, 2008) about nationwide equalisation of graduation levels from the pondok pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and diniyah (institutions offering religious study courses) educational sectors. The general idea of this letter was the standardizing of the graduates of pondok pesantren, and any similar institutions, which do not run on the government’s curriculum. This official letter was sent to all Department of Religious Affairs provincial branches in Indonesia. Subsequently a copy of this letter was received when the researcher went to the Department’s provincial branch office in Banda Aceh to gain any
information about dayah salafi in Aceh province, because the researcher was interested in dayah salafi and in conducting a research project relating to the dayah salafi, which is the Acehnese institution most similar to what are called pondok pesantren in other Indonesian regions. The reason why the researcher made this visit is that the Department of Religious Affairs is known as the Department that supervises any religious education in Indonesia. Therefore what occurred in the researcher’s mind at that time was to visit the Department and search for any information that the Department had about dayah salafi in Aceh. The researcher had not herself been a dayah student but had become interested in these institutions. At the Department office, the researcher was directed to staff in the Department’s salafi subdivision, and information related to dayah salafi given to the researcher included the official letter sent from Jakarta, referred to above. This official letter, according to the staff, would be the basis for further informing the discussion regarding the program for the development of dayah salafi in Aceh. This study focuses then on the regulations found in that letter.

II. Aceh Education Systems in a Glimpse

Aceh is one of the provinces of the Republic of Indonesia, and is located on the western tip of Sumatera island, forming the far western border of the country.
With Banda Aceh as the capital of Aceh province, the total area of Aceh province reaches 56758km² or 5,675,850 Ha (around 12.26 % of the total area of Sumatera island). Administratively, in 2010, Aceh province consisted of 23 kabupaten/kota (districts/municipalities) which are divided as 18 districts and 5 municipalities, then into 277 kecamatan (sub-districts), 754 mukim and 6423 gampong/desa (villages) (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah, 2011, pp. II-1). On the north and east Aceh province is bordered by the Malacca Straits, on the south it is bordered by North Sumatera province, and on the west it is bordered by the Indonesian Ocean (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh, 2011, p. 1). Having implemented a Population Census in 2010, it is known that the total population in Aceh reached 4,494,000 in 2010 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh, 2011, p. 6).

In relation to its system of education, generally Aceh has the same educational system as is applied in Indonesia nationally. In Indonesia, the state maintains both general state public schools and Islamic state public schools. General state public schools start with primary school, which provides a 6-year primary education program. It consists of two different types of education, namely, general primary school (SD, Sekolah Dasar) and special primary school for handicapped children (SDLB,
Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa). Next is the junior secondary or high school which provides a 3-year education program after the 6-year primary school program. It also consists of two different types of education, namely, junior secondary (general), and special junior secondary school (for handicapped children) (Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia, 1997, p. 31). The next level is the senior secondary school, with a further 3-year program, which may be general senior secondary school, vocational secondary school, service secondary school (education which emphasizes improving the ability in the execution of service tasks of civil servants or candidates for civil service) or special secondary school (Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia, 1997, p. 37).

In addition to the types of schools named above, there is also the series of Islamic state public schools administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (note that the title changed from Department to Ministry in 2010) rather than by the Ministry of Education. This starts with the Islamic primary school (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah or MI), equivalent to primary school (SD), and the Islamic junior secondary school (Madrasah Tsanawiyah or MTs), equivalent to junior secondary school (SMP, Sekolah Menengah Pertama) (Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia, 1997, p. 31). The next
level is the Islamic senior secondary school (Madrasah Aliyah or MA), equivalent to general senior secondary school (SMA, Sekolah Menengah Atas). In the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia No 19 of 2005 about National Education Standard, these same levels of schooling still applied. The state also administers higher education as well as Islamic higher education. The state “maintains numerous Islamic colleges and universities, such as the State Institutes for Islamic Studies (Institut Agama Islam Negeri), State Islamic Colleges (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri), and State Islamic Universities (Universitas Islam Negeri). The state system of Islamic higher education comprises almost 50 campuses nationwide and has been described as a “bastion of tolerant, liberal, pluralistic Islam” (Pohl, 2006, p. 398).

Besides that nationwide educational system, the availability of the many non-government dayah salafi in Aceh is related to the situation in Aceh, which is a very solidly Islamic society. Aceh has long been known as an Islamic region in Indonesia and it is also recognized as “Serambi Mekkah” (the verandah of Mecca) in Indonesia (Amiruddin, 2003, p. 58). This comes both from the fact that it is the nearest part of Indonesia to the historical Arabian and Middle Eastern centres of Islam, and from the long tradition of many pilgrims and scholars from
the region travelling to and from those places. Among the things that show the Islamic identity is the existence of an Islamic educational institution whose occurrence is believed to start with the introduction of Islam to Aceh. This is the dayah, which may be thought of as an Islamic boarding school. Another name for this kind of institution is pesantren, and this is a term that is very widely known throughout Indonesia for Islamic educational institutions that apply the boarding school system (Siegel, 2000, p. 48; Zuhdi, 2005, p. 36).

In this study, the word “dayah” is chosen to underline that there is a special name in Aceh for pesantren. Dayah is also used to give a hint that the topic discussed may well involve something specific to the Islamic boarding school in Aceh. Some authors have stated that the significance of the dayah can be seen from the fact that from the time Islam appeared in Aceh until the arrival of the Dutch, the dayah were the only educational institutions known in Aceh.

In line with that, based on the nationwide educational system mentioned before, generally there are actually four types of educational institutions in Aceh today (Amiruddin, 2008a, p. 15). They are the institutions that contribute to the development of education in Aceh, apart from higher education.
Firstly, there is the school which is under the coordination of the Education Ministry. Secondly, there is the madrasah that is under the coordination of the Ministry (formerly Department) of Religious Affairs. Both the school and the madrasah run on the government curriculum and are regarded as public school or public madrasah. The difference between the madrasah and the school is in the higher percentage of religious subjects in the curriculum taught in the former. Then, thirdly and fourthly are the dayah salafi (standard dayah) and the dayah terpadu (integrated dayah); both are under the coordination of the Ministry (formerly Department) of Religious Affairs and Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah. The latter is a co-ordinating body discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The dayah salafi is a dayah that focuses on and specializes in the learning of Islamic religious knowledge based on the use of kitab (Islamic classic textbooks written in Arabic). The dayah terpadu is a dayah which integrates in its curriculum parts of the dayah salafi’s curriculum and parts of the school’s or the madrasah’s curriculum. Most of the dayah salafi and the dayah terpadu are privately owned or belong to particular foundations.

According to the head of the regional office of the Department of Religious Affairs in Banda Aceh, there are 1,549 Dayah Salafiah ("Manajemen Dayah di Aceh harus
ditingkatkan ", 2009) in all Aceh. Different data are
given by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Aceh
province. According to this institution, there are 1376
dayah, 251,185 dayah students, and 14806 teungku
(dayah teachers) (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh,
2011, p. 11). Dayah salafi far outnumber integrated
dayah, which tend to be in more urban areas. All this
information indicates that this significant institution still
flourishes today. What becomes the focus of this
research is the current dayah salafi, hereinafter referred
to interchangeably either as dayah or dayah salafi.

The dayah is very much an educational institution
originally produced by Acehnese society, but its spirit of
establishment can be traced back to the Islamic teaching
system in the era of Prophet Muhammad in Madinah
during the earliest period of Islam (Amiruddin, 2008b, p.
27). This can be seen from the fact that the word dayah
itself is derived from zawiyah (Arabic language) which
means corner, and thus refers to the corner of the
mosque area where a group of people gather to listen to
the Islamic teachings (Asari, 2007, p. 167). Then
following the pattern of the Acehnese tongue in
pronouncing the word ‘zawiyah’, it turned into
dayah/deyah (Shabri, Wahyuni, Indriani, Seno, &
Wibowo, 2000, p. 3).
The general character of the dayah can be seen from the close relationship between the student and the teacher in the dayah (and with the ulama, or leader), and from the obedience and compliance of all toward the dayah’s rule, its frugality and its simple pattern in everyday living (Shabri, et al., 2000, p. 2). Because of this character the dayah students are seen as particularly able to survive in facing life’s challenges. It has been commented that “a student did not attend a dayah near his village, he was compelled to go some distance to study, ...there was no set period of study, for the number of years spent in a dayah depended on the student’s perseverance and the ulama’s acknowledgement that the student had completed his studies” (Morris, 1983, pp. 43-44). The close relationship between dayah students and the ulama is also because the students and the ulama, along with his family, live in the dayah complex.

Dayah institutions are spread throughout the entire area in Aceh province and are particularly common in the rural areas (Muhammad, 2010, p. 1). Generally, the dayah is a private institution: “since the dayah is a private and independent institution, it is never built by the state or company...at most what the state or the private company can do is provide ‘unconditional’ financial support to a particular dayah” (Saby, 2005, pp. 79-80). In the last few years, there has been financial
support for dayah from the Aceh government, allocated in the Budget Revenue and Expenditure of Aceh (APBA, Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Aceh). For example, the budget allocated for dayah in 2008 was 177 billion rupiah, which is roughly in the region of 16 million Australian dollars (Armia, 2009, p. 68). The budget allocation is to be used to improve dayah physical buildings, to create economic improvement in the dayah and to financially support the dayah teachers and leader, and the money is allocated systematically since Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah or Badan Dayah was established based on Bylaw (Qanun) Number 5 of 2007 (Armia, 2009, p. 68). This financial allocation for the dayah is part of government concern about the dayah as a result of the common dayah situation, where “a dayah is usually built without any advance planning” and thus its physical appearance is often “rather pitiful” (Saby, 2005, p. 80).

It can be stressed that inevitably government funding implies government control of some kind, either direct or indirect (through certain institution such as Badan Dayah) or both. And this is very significant, because funds for improvement of salaries or facilities may come with intervention and interference which threatens the ability of the institution to pursue its own goal in its own way. Government support in practice is rarely
unconditional. This financial issue is linked to the importance of *waqaf* bequests as a resource base.

**III. Dayah and Its Academic Life**

As an Islamic education institution dayah has certain well-defined practices in teaching. The dayah students learn while sitting on the floor around the teacher (the teungku or ulama) (Suyanta, 2008, p. 182). It is reported in Saby (2005, p. 76) that:

“The methodology of importing knowledge in the dayah is still traditional and unique in the Muslim world. In the dayahs students and teachers sit on the floor, and each of them has the textbook, or a chapter of it. Reading the text is the most important part of the class meetings. A specific part of the text is read and the teacher will then raise questions based on the texts read. The students may or may not be able to answer, and if not, the teacher will immediately explain the problems. Often the explanation will provoke discussion. The teacher will not move on until a general understanding of the case being discussed is achieved. That is why, oftentimes, certain parts of the texts have actually been memorized by the students.”
Each dayah in Aceh uses its own curriculum in the teaching process and does not apply the government’s curriculum. Commonly, what is meant by the dayah’s curriculum is a number of classic kitab from Islamic heritages which are used for teaching and learning of Islamic knowledge. Generally, the curriculum consists of theology, ‘considered opinions’, ‘mystical theory of Classical Islam’ (Luckens-Bull, 2001, p. 352) and also comprises ‘Moral Education’, and the Arabic Language and literature (Kelabora, 1976, p. 231). Moreover, as stated by Siapno (2002, p. 140), Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) and Islamic History are also taught in dayah. Saby (2005, p. 76) explicates the dayah curriculum as follows:

“The main curriculum of the dayah in Aceh follows that of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah, specifically the Shafi’i school of thought in fiqh (jurisprudence), and the Ash’ari in aqidah (creed). Among the subjects taught are Arabic grammar (nahw and sarf), theology (tawhid), prophetic traditions (hadi th) and Qur’anic exegesis (tafsir). To meet the requirements of the curriculum in fiqh, the most important books used are Matn al-Taqrib, Minhaj al-Talibi n, I’anat al-Talibi n and al-Mahalli. The completion of these books is considered the standard course of study in the
dayah. The study of *hadi* and *tafsir* are approached from the *fiqh* side. Subjects like *nahw* and *sarf* (Arabic grammar), *usul fiqh* (the roots of fundamental of *fiqh*), *tarikh* (Islamic history), *mustalah hadith* (technical knowledge of *hadith*) and *mantiq* (logic), *ma'ani* and *bayan* (rhetoric) are also taught, but they are considered the tools of knowledge (*'ilm alalah*). The *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* of al-Ghazzali is taught in the highest class of the dayah.”

Each dayah’s curriculum is designed and determined by its own leader (Thomas, 1988, p. 899). All of the main books are written in the Arabic language. Thus, the Arabic language, its grammar and sentence structures particularly, is also taught in dayah in order to understand and read the subjects in those books (Kelabora, 1976, p. 231). Beside the Arabic kitab, the kitab Jawi, where the text is in Malay/Indonesian language (though it may be written using Arabic script) is also applied in dayah teaching activity. One kitab Jawi, *Bidayat al-Hidayah*, written by an Acehnese ulama, Muhammad Zayn ibn Faqih Jalaluddin al-Asyi, has even become an important reference for Pattani-Malay Muslims in Thailand (Erawadi, 2011, pp. 9-10).

The dayah as the center for Islamic teaching is led by
an ulama. Originally, the word ulamais an Arabic plural word for the word *alim* which means someone who has knowledge. Even though the word ‘ulama’ is plural if it is tracked from its original language, in Acehnese usage it can refer to either one ulama or many ulama. In this context, the world ulama might be translated as *religious scholar*. It is suggested that “only after many years of study at a dayah could a person establish himself as an ulama in his own right” (Morris, 1983, p. 43). Additionally, an ulama was addressed by the title of *teungku*, a title of respect and honour, although lesser religious figures, such as the teachers, also gain this title (Morris, 1983, p. 42). Because many dayah are located in rural areas, they operate in close interaction with the community around the dayah. The community often refers to the dayah if they find they have some problem related to religious practices. It is generally the case that the ulama from dayah “best play their role, while living in the community, providing religious education,... leading the religious ceremonies and they offer almost-free religious education and spiritual counseling” (Saby, 2005, p. 148).

Because every dayah has designed and determined its own curriculum for the teaching process, it is not unusual to find differences between dayah curricula. Actually, the variety of curriculum of each dayah has
enriched the Aceh educational heritage, and dayah become known for various specializations, but, obviously, this makes it difficult to standardize the dayah curriculum in terms of something which can be adopted as a foundation for all dayah in Aceh.

As a result of the different curriculum at each dayah, they will produce graduates of different levels of ability. The same condition is also found in other traditional Islamic boarding schools which are similar to dayah, across Indonesia. Thus, in order to adequately recognize, but therefore standardize, a graduate of this kind of Islamic educational institution, the Department of Religious Affairs (subsequently re-titled the Ministry of Religious Affairs), which is responsible for supervising the Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, issued their regulation which seeks to standardize the curriculum of the Islamic boarding schools which do not implement government’s curriculum and other similar Islamic educational institutions right across Indonesia.

This governmental recognition-with-standardization is most clearly pointed to, and defined, by the already-mentioned letter from the Department of Religious Affairs in Indonesia (personal correspondence, Department of Religious Affairs, July 29, 2008) regarding the process of standardizing the graduates of Islamic
Boarding Schools which do not run on the government’s curriculum. One of the issues listed in this letter is the standardization of curriculum. Therefore, this letter also indicates that the developing of Islamic boarding school’s curriculum is needed and important, particularly in order to standardize the graduate. But before this regulation process became defined and operative, it must be noted that dayah have changed themselves in their own way in response to various changing conditions. This is as suggested by Dhofier (1990, p. 27) when he describes change in the pesantren tradition:

“Certainly the pesantren is a traditional educational institution in the sense that it was and is founded on a centuries-old tradition, but it does not mean that pesantren are stagnant,... the pesantren is constantly changing, not merely in accordance with the needs of the day, but more exactly in being able to play a decisive role in community socio-cultural change”.

However, the people who are in charge in dayah do not seem very pleased with the idea of regulation, according to what has been reported ("Ulama Aceh Tolak Akreditasi Ponpes," 2010). It is obvious that since every dayah has its own autonomy and specialization, it
is not easy to promote the idea about innovation in dayah such as developing the curriculum, since every effort is hindered by the institution’s autonomy which is a reflection of the leader’s authority and his area of expertise. This refusal is stronger if the idea is about standardizing the curriculum (Qomar, nd, p. 112). However, it is important to develop dayah curriculum because it relates to the function of dayah itself such as ‘transmission of Islamic knowledge’, ‘maintenance of Islamic tradition’ and ‘reproduction of ulama’(Haedari & Hanif, 2004, p. 198). The overall development of the dayah system, its extension through the foundation of new dayah, for example, and the tradition of teaching those who will become new teachers, and maybe start new dayah themselves, has within it a dynamism that is part of the operation of the dayah for the people concerned. For them it is a living issue.
I. Acehnese History in a Glance

The fact that there are many dayah, which are spread all over Aceh, is not particularly surprising, because Aceh province is the place where more strict Islam is found (Thomas, 1988, p. 898). In relation to the term ‘strict Islam’, there was for example the report by Anderson to the British Government in 1840: “in religion they are Mahomedans, and have many priests, and having much intercourse with foreigners of the same faith, its forms and ceremonies are observed with some strictness” (J. Anderson, 1971, p. 23). Also, Aceh is known as the first place that converted to Islam in the archipelago, even though the date is still arguable; some of the researchers believe that the conversion happened in the 13th century (Al-Attas, 1966, p. 4), rather than 840
The first part that converted to Islam in Aceh was Perlak, which later became the first Islamic kingdom in Aceh. Subsequently, the establishment of Perlak was followed by the emergence of other Islamic kingdoms in Aceh, such as Samudra Pasai, Benua, Lingga, Darussalam, and the Islamic kingdom of Indra Jaya. All of these kingdoms were united into a single kingdom under the name of the kingdom of Aceh Darussalam at the beginning of the 16th century AD, and the name of the first king was Sultan Alaidin Ali Mughaiyat Shah (Hasjmy, 1978, p. 56).

The emergence of the Islamic empires in Aceh contributed to the spread of Islam in other regions, as for example from the Islamic kingdom of Samudra Pasai, through their sending Islamic preachers to the islands of Java, Malacca, and Pattani (Dahlan, cited in Rosatria, 1996, p. 134). This is in line with Uka Tjandrasasmita's research on the chronicles Babad Cirebon and Purwaka Caruban Nagari, which led him to the conclusion that Pasai had an important role in the process of islamization on the north coast of Java, and from there to East Java and to West Java (Tjandrasasmita, 1988 cited in Ismail, 1993, p. 30). The spreading of Islam in Java is believed to have happened around the 14th century AD,
the evidence being based on Muslim tomb stones which are found in East Java at Trawulan and Tralaya (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 4-5). In addition to having a role in the spreading of Islam, Hall (1960, p. 178) stated that, by 1295, Perlak, Pase, Samudera, Aceh and Melaka, had converted to Islam entirely, followed by Kedah in 1414, Demak in 1450, Ternate in 1475, Minangkabau in 1475, Brunei in 1500, Buru in 1500, Bantam in 1525, Surabaya in 1525, Banyumas in 1586, Galuh in 1595, Makasar in 1604, Panarukan in 1614, Japara in 1616, Lamsar in 1616, Pasuruan in 1617, Madura in 1624 and Balambangan in 1639.

Long before the arrival of Islam in Aceh, however, the region had Hindu and Buddhist influences, especially in the coastal areas, while in rural areas there were influences of animism and dynamism; however, until now Hindu temples and Buddhist remains, such as those found on the island of Java, have not been found (Sejarah Daerah Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh, 1977/1978, p. 51). The difficulty of finding traces of previous cultural influence in Aceh before the arrival of Islam is because the evidence is believed to have been destroyed in an invasion, when Lamuri, which is the old kingdom in Aceh before Islam, was attacked by a Hindu king, Rajendra Cola I, from southern India in 1023-1025 (Said, 1961, p. 35; 38).
When Aceh took the form of a kingdom or sultanate, Marsden (cited in Ibrahimiy, 1993, p. 2) acknowledges that the kingdom of Aceh was powerful, as is proved by its expeditions in the Straits of Malacca and its ability to defeat the Portuguese in 1575. The Sultanate of Aceh reached its golden age during the rule (1607-1636) of Sultan Iskandar Muda (Reid, 1969, p. 3). Specifically, from the evidence collected from various documents about the period of Iskandar Muda, Lombard (2006, p. 247) concludes that the golden age during Iskandar Muda was not simply a legend as is sometimes suggested by others. It was during the period of Iskandar Muda, that Aceh was home to famous Islamic scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin Pasai, Nuruddin ar-Raniry and Syekh Adur Rauf Singkel (Sufi, 1995, p. 46). In addition, during the time of Iskandar Muda, there were 44 scholars who taught various subjects like philosophy, politics, history, health science, and agriculture beside religious knowledge. It is believed that Iskandar Muda himself received instruction in military science from his dayah teacher (Amiruddin, 2007, p. 23). This is an indication of how progressive the dayah was at that time.

After the death of Iskandar Muda, the Acehnese Sultanate, led by his successors, began to decline. It has
been said that “the sultanate was reduced to a symbol, its status recognized by all Acehnese while its effective control was limited to the port and capital” (Reid, 1969, p. 4). Other evidence is that some regions which were conquered by the Acehnese Sultanate previously, such as Pahang and other parts of Sumatra were lost one by one (Djajadiningrat, 1984, p. 57). When the Dutch declared war against Aceh on 26 of March 1873 (Reid, 1969, p. 96; Voll, 1982, p. 116; Yakub, 1980, p. 326), the Acehnese Sultanate, which still existed at that time, was ruled by Sultan Alaiddin Mahmud Syah (Sultan from 1870 to 1874). This war between the Acehnese people and the Dutch lasted for thirty years. Though in 1903 the Dutch declared victory after capturing the last Acehnese Sultan, Sultan Muhammad Daud, they still continued to face attacks from Acehnese people in scattered areas for at least ten years (Sjamsuddin, 1999, p. 16).

Aceh education institutions such as dayah that already existed before the Dutch arrival faced deterioration during the war against the Dutch (Assegaf, 2005, p. 182), because many of the dayah teachers were killed in the fighting (Alfian, 2005, p. 224; Amiruddin, 2007, p. 24). There was also a blockade of Aceh during the war (Reid, 1969, p. 106) that made Aceh lose contact with the outside world, and in particular with the Middle East, in which the sources of Islamic knowledge could be
studied (Amiruddin, 2004, p. 38). Another cause of decline in traditional education probably was related to the Dutch action of introducing a school system in Aceh, as had already happened in other regions that were defeated before Aceh, and so the dayah education system was isolated. In Aceh, the first western education model institution was introduced in Singkil, which is close to Tapanuli (North Sumatra) where the Dutch education model had already been applied (S. Idris, 1995a, p. 11). The products of the Dutch schools were to fill positions as officers performing administrative jobs in the service of the Dutch colonial government. From this tradition, a new orientation to the career of public officer or civil servant developed as part of the educational perspective, and this is still felt today (S. Idris, 1995a, p. 12). After the Dutch, during the Japanese era, the elementary schools which were established by the Dutch were transformed into six-year elementary schools known as *Kokumin Gakko* (state public school) (S. Idris, 1995a, p. 12).

**II. Islamic Teaching in Aceh**

Thus the history of the dayah itself can be traced back to the period before the arrival of the Dutch in Aceh in 1873. On this basis, some researchers have argued that the dayah must have existed long before the 19th century. By quoting from the script of *idharul haq*, Hasjmy, an Acehnese historian, states that the first dayah
in Aceh was dayah Cot Kala which was established around 10th century, in the Islamic kingdom of Perlak (Hasjmy, 1978, pp. 55-57). Perlak was the first Islamic Kingdom in Aceh and was established in 840, the title of the first king of Perlak being Sultan Alaiiddin Saiyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Syah (Hasjmy, 1978, p. 55).

The emergence of dayah in Perlak arose from the efforts of the kings of Perlak who gave serious attention to educational matters (Hasjmy, 1978, p. 55). This is an indication that the development of Islam in this region was followed by the development of Islamic educational institutions, and this also happened in other Islamic kingdoms that emerged in Aceh during that period of time. In connection with this, Rosatria (1996, p. 129) argues that Islamization in the Aceh region coincided with the development of the teaching of Islam because the sultan himself greatly appreciated both science and education.

Moreover, educational institutions such as dayah later began to be models followed by other regions in the archipelago with the dissemination of Islam, and this modelling had a particular start from the point when Pasai Ulama moved to other regions in Indonesia after the sultanate of Pasai was destroyed by the Portuguese (Mukti, 2008, p. 111), following an invasion in 1521.
The famous dayah in Aceh in the earlier times were: *Dayah Cot Kala* (in the early 10th century AD), *Dayah Seuruleu* (during the rule of Sultan Makhdum Alaidin Malik Mahmud Syah Johan Berdaulat in *Perlak*, 1012-1059), *Dayah Blang Peria* (during the rule of Maharaja Nurdin Sultan Al-Kamil in Samudra/Pase, 1155-1210), then *Dayah Batu Karang, Dayah Lam Keuneu’eun, Dayah Tanoh Abay* [sic], *Dayah Tiro, Dayah Lam Nyong, Dayah Lam U, Dayah Pante Geulima, Dayah Krueng Kale, Dayah Meunasah Blang, Dayah Rumpet, Dayah Lam Birah, Dayah Ulee Susu*, and *Dayah Lam Diran* (Hasjmy, 1978, pp. 57-63).

There is further Acehnese local written information about Islamic teaching in Aceh during the sultanate period and before the Dutch arrival that can be obtained from a single source, namely *Hikayat Pocut Muhammad* (Husein, 1995, p. 47). The author of this *hikayat* (epic) was Teungku Lam Rukam (Husein, 1995, p. 47; Siegel, 1979, p. 33) and it was written about the middle of the 18th century (Siegel, 1979, p. 33). It actually describes a civil war between a prince, Pocut Muhammad, and the Sultan Jamal al ‘Alam Badr al Munir around 1735 (Husein, 1995, p. 47; Siegel, 1979, pp. 33-34), but there
are some passages that contain some information about the situation of education in Aceh during that time (Husein, 1995, p. 33). There are different versions of this hikayat, namely the version which was gathered by Snouck Hurgronje, the version edited in Aceh by Guru Anzib Lamnyong and the version given in G. W. J. Drewes’s book (Siegel, 1979, p. 34). The researcher here gives the Acehnese version of this hikayat from Husein (Husein, 1995, p. 48) who refers to Drewes’s book:

‘Oh sare troih bak meunasah, geutamong leupaih sigra-sigra

Muridteungkunanam reutoih, sare reuyoh subra donya

Na nyang ladom beuet Kuru’an, ladom tuan masa’ila

Ladom jibeuet jeurumiyah, djipinah matan fatihah

Ladom jibeuet kitab djawoe, ladom laloe bak poh cakra.

Rangkang ret barat ureueng beuet nahu, rangkang ret timu ureueng meuhija
Rangkang ret tunong ureueng beuet **teusawoh**, eleumee haloih Hikam Eheueya

Meunan-meunan ban nyang babat, ladom **Arab**, ladom **Jawa**

Di teungku maung naupeutimang, jeuet-jeuet rangkang waineu na

Teungku Wako tundo ‘ulee, neu’eu lagee ureung meuhija.

Here is the translation from Drewes (Rukam, 1979, p. 135):

‘Arriving at the religious school he entered there without delay.

The **teungku** had six hundred pupils; a cheerful noise and bustle was prevailing there.

Some pupils were reciting the Qor’an, others the **Masa’il**.

Some were reading the **Ajurrumiyya**, others were translating the **Fatiha**,

Some were reading a Malay book, but others were chatting animatedly.

In the western house the pupils were studying
grammar; in the eastern house spelling.

In the house upstream they studied mysticism, the subtle wisdom of the *Hikam* and the *Ihya*,

Everyone according to his capacity; some studied Arabic works, others Malay ones.

The *teungku* exercised the superintendence, but he had a deputy in every house.

The *waki* bent his head in order to see how the pupils were busy spelling.’

Some points related to education can be extracted from the *hikayat* above. In relation to the place for study, there is used the Acehnese term *meunasah* and this is surrounded by *rangkang* (translated as *houses*). *Meunasah* is usually for the elementary level; the whole institution described is more like a dayah. The word *meunasah* is from the Arabic word ‘madrasah’ which means a place to study (but more traditional and different from the ‘madrasah’ in the modern Indonesian education system, which is more like a school in nature) (S. Idris, 1995b, p. 61). *Rangkang* are also part of traditional education institutions (S. Idris, 1995b, p. 62) but the word *rangkang* is believed to come from a term used in India (Steenbrink, 1994, p. 21). In terms of the leader of the education institution, there is the *teungku*
who runs the teaching, and some assistants of the teungku who teach in each of the rangkang. The number of students (murid) can reach up to six hundred (nam reutoih) students. The students learn from the very basic steps such as meuhiija (an activity to learn Arabic script letter by letter) up to the advanced subjects such as Tasawuf (teusawoh). In terms of subjects studied there, the course starts with meuhiija for the students who are not able to recite al-Qur’an yet. After, there follow then other subjects like chanted al-Qur’an (beuet Kuru’an), kitab Jawi (for example masa’ila, a simple catechism of doctrine), and Arabic kitab for Nahwu (as an example jeurumiyah) and Tasawuf (teusawoh).

From the estimated date of the hikayat, it seems to be a description from during the period of the later kingdom of Aceh Darussalam. It was in that period that there was some organization of education levels involving Meunasah (madrasah), Rangkang, Dayah and Dayah Teungku Chik. In broad terms the Meunasah would be for the most elementary education level, rangkang would be the same as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high) level, dayah would be the same as Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high) level, and dayah teungku chik would be the same as university level (Mundzirin Yusuf, 2006, p. 147). Thus dayah would form the upper levels of education, supported by lower levels.
Other obvious evidence for the existence of Islamic teaching in Aceh also can be seen from the literary works written by the famous scholars active at the time when Aceh reached its zenith in history. Riddell (2001, pp. 104-125) notes some famous scholars from Aceh around the late 16th and early 17th centuries, such as Hamzah Fansuri, Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani, Nur al-Din al-Raniri and Abd al-Ra’uf al-Singkili. Their writings have had great influence in Islamic society, especially in South East Asia.

The commitment to develop Islamic teaching, especially the Islamic sciences is also visible from one of the sultans of Aceh, Sultan ‘Ali Ri’ayat Shah (1571-1579), bringing Islamic sciences teachers from outside Aceh, such as Muhammad Azhari, Abu al-Kahyr ibn Shaykh ibn Hajar, and Muhammad al-Yamani, all of whom were Arab scholars. Beside these, there was also a teacher named Muhammad Hamid who was the uncle of Nur al-Din al-Raniri (Riddell, 2006, p. 48). According to Mukti Ali (1970, pp. 7-8), the scope of the sciences which were taught by teachers who came from abroad included logic, rhetoric, jurisprudence and metaphysics. Therefore, there is evidence that the activity of teaching and learning in Aceh achieved high levels at that time.
One can surmise that the existence of educational institutions in this earlier time in Aceh led to the famous Acehnese scholars of that time who produced their literary works.

Some brief explanation about Islamic teaching in Aceh after the arrival of the Dutch is mentioned in a work of Snouck Hurgronje, entitled “The Achehnese” (English translation 1906). Snouck Hurgronje was one of the Dutch scholars who conducted research in the late 19th century in Aceh. He mentioned “dayah” as the name for an educational institution which applied Islamic teaching. In his research, Hurgronje mentioned some names of dayah that existed at the time when the Dutch arrived in Aceh, like dayah Lam Seunong, Tanoh Mirah, Lam Nyong, Krueng Kale, Tanoh Abe, Lam Bhu’, Tiro and dayah Kuta Karang (1906, pp. 21-28).

Only a little information can be obtained about the dayah in Aceh during the Dutch era. But there are some sources which mention the subjects that were taught in dayah. Hurgronje gave information about subjects which were taught in dayah during his time, namely Arabic grammar (1906, p. 7), Tafsir (commentaries of al-Quran), Hadits, Fiqh, Ushul, and Tasawuf (1906, pp. 20-23). Specifically, Hurgronje mentioned the names of the kitab (books) used for teaching Arabic grammar at dayah in
Aceh, such as al-‘Awamil, al-Ajurumiyyah, al-Mutamimah, al-Fawakih, al-Alfiyah and Syarh al-Alfiyah li Ibn ‘Aqil (1906, p. 7).

The subjects mentioned by Hurgronje were not much different from the subjects that were then studied in pesantren in Java. This is known from research that was pioneered by L.W.C. Van Den Berg in 1886 on the kitab which formed the curriculum in pesantren in Java and Madura (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 226). Van den Berg (1886, p. 523) mentioned the subjects studied there in those days, namely Fiqh, Nahwu, Usul, Tasawuf (Sufism) and Tafsir. Van den Berg mentions the names of kitab for each subject studied in pesantren in Java and Madura, and the total number of kitab mentioned in his study reached fifty titles (1886, pp. 524-525).

III. Dayah and Its Resemblance

Dayah, an Acehnese term, is another word for what are called pesantren generally in Indonesia (Sulaiman, 1997, p. 32) or surau in West Sumatra (Azra & Afriyanty, 2005, p. 2). The similar institution is also found in Malaysia and Thailand and it is called pondok. It is described that “pondoks are scattered in every part of Thailand, one can find them in the suburbs of Ayutthaya, Tha-id, Nongchok, Phechburi, Nontaburi, and Central Bangkok” (Madmarn, 2009, p. 39). While, in Malaysia, it is stated that “in general the history of education in
Malaysia started with the emergence of ‘Pondok’ schools as well as Arabic and religious schools towards the end of the 19th century” (Hashim & Langgulung, 2008, p. 7). In Indonesia, the discussion on dayah could not be separated from the discussion on pesantren, since both institutions are native Indonesian Islamic educational institutions: the dayah, the original Islamic educational institution of Aceh, and the pesantren, rooted in Java and then spreading to all parts of Indonesia so that the term became widely known in Indonesia to define Islamic educational institutions that apply a boarding school system in their education work.

Although dayah and pesantren have the same function, which is as traditional Islamic institutions in Indonesia (Qurnati, 2007, p. 3), there is some difference between them. One of the differences can be seen in relation to the land on which dayah are established. This land is given as a waqaf (bequest and endowment) by some wealthy Muslim(s) to the ulama (Siegel, 2000, p. 48). However, for Javanese pesantren, “the land on which the pesantren complexes are built is usually the personal property of the kyai” (Dhofier, 1980, p. 50). Other differences between these two institutions are visible when one looks at the history of their establishment and the origin of the words dayah and pesantren. According to Hasbi Amiruddin and Tri
Qurnati, who are both Acehnese researchers, dayah were established at the time of Islam’s spread in Aceh, but the background of pesantren establishment is from the Hindu era (Amiruddin, 2003, p. 34; Qurnati, 2007, p. 1). Nur Cholish Madjid (cited in Yasmadi, 2002, p. 62) also clarifies that pesantren had existed in the era of Hinduism and Buddhism in Indonesia, particularly in Java.

About the origin of the word “dayah”, Snouck Hurgronje mentions that it is adapted from the Arabic word ‘zawiyah’ which means “corner” (C. S Hurgronje, 1906, p. 63). Hurgronje writes the word “dayah” as “deah”, a form which is used by the people of Aceh Besar, because his research focus is in Aceh Besar. It is believed that ‘zawiyah’ refers to a corner in a mosque precinct and the term comes from the Islamic historical era of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be upon Him (PBUH). Such a corner would be used as a place to study about Islam (Amiruddin, 2003, p. 33), or for meditation and reflection. A further distinction comes from the way students are described. A student who studies in a dayah is called “ureung meudagang” (someone who is away from home) (Mohammad, 2001, p. 85).

In elaborating the historical background of pesantren, various arguments have appeared. According
to Peacock, “it is the Hinduist hermitages which are converted to Muslim schools, known as pondok and pesantren” (1978, p. 19). Some scholars such as de Graaf and Pigeaud argue that pesantren is from pre-Islamic institution called Mandala (Saleh, 2008, p. 16). The same point is confirmed by Koentjaraninggrat, who adds that the wali (a famous group of Muslim saints) changed the mandala into pesantren in the process of spreading Islam in Java, and that the place where pesantren emerged is in the Solo and Brantas river valley (1985, p. 321). The Mandala was an institution that served as a centre for meditation before the arrival of Islam in Java (Bruinessen, 1995, p. 24). Other scholars like Fokkens, Schrieke and van der Chijs state that pesantren is related to “desa perdikan” (Saleh, 2008, p. 16). What is meant by “desa perdikan” is a village which is exempted from paying taxes and providing forced labour in recognition for carrying out religious tasks such as maintaining a sacred holy place (Bruinessen, 1995, p. 24).

The word “pesantren” itself is from Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language. Furthermore, Ahmad Shafi’i Noer points out that the word “pesantren” is derived from the word “santri”. The prefix ‘pe’ and suffix ‘an’ were added to the word ‘santri’. This addition of prefix and suffix convey a new aspect of meaning which indicates location. What is meant by pesantren then is
“the place of santri” (2001, pp. 90-91). According to Koentjaraninggrat, the term "santri" itself is derived from the word “Shastri” which in turn is from the Indian term "castri", meaning someone who knows Hindu scriptures (1985, p. 43). Another opinion suggests that the word santri is derived from the Javanese cantrik which means someone who always follows his teacher wherever the teacher goes, in order to learn certain skills from the teacher (Madjid, 1997, p. 20). Thus, by the word santri in Java is meant “the student of a pesantren”, or “someone who follows Islamic principles and practices seriously” (Koentjaraninggrat, 1985, p. 196).

This came about because, as pointed out by Mastuhu (1994, p. 3), under the influence of Islam, the pesantren education system was taken over by replacing the values in its teachings with Islamic values. Therefore, pesantren have become known as one of Islamic education institutions which is used as a learning center to study about Islam, and which implements the Holy Quran and the Hadits (sayings of the prophet Muhammad) as the primary sources of study (Thomas, 1988, p. 899).

The main teaching method in dayah and pesantren is that the teacher sits at a certain place in the circle and reads an Arabic kitab (book), then translates and interprets it, while the students sit around him/her and
listen to the teacher’s lecture. This method is labelled differently, being called *halaqah* in Arabic, *surah* in Acehnese, *weton* in East Java, and *bandongan* in Central Java (Amiruddin, 2008a, p. 75). The adopted *halaqah* system is the same as one might find performed at the ‘zawiyah’ or mosque in the Middle East (T. Idris, 2008, p. 86). This method emphasizes discussions to understand the contents of the book (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 61). In this method, the students who follow the teaching also have the same book as the book that is read by the teacher (Amiruddin, 2008a, pp. 75-76). The Arabic kitab (book) is popularly called ‘kitab kuning’ (Mochtar, 1996, p. 123; Muhaimin, 2005, p. 91; Yunanto, Hidayat, Wasik, & Nuryanti, 2005, p. 38). The other teaching method is memorization (*hafalan* in Indonesian) (Mastuki, Muryono, Safe'i, Masyhud, & Khusnuridlo, 2005, p. 89; Mohammad, 2001, p. 85). This method is used to memorize the theoretical rules of *sharaf* (morphology) and of *nahwu* (syntax) which are key parts of the necessary basic Arabic language lessons (Nata, 2006, p. 120). What supports memorization is the use of text which is described thus: “many of the basic texts are *manzum*, i.e. written in rhymed verse (*nazm, nadham*), to facilitate memorization” (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 235). At the same time, there is used also the *sorogan* method, which means a student sits face to face with a teacher in studying the Arabic kitab (Muthohar, 2007, p. 26). This
method is more individual than *bandongan*, and the name comes from Javanese word, *sorog*, which means handed over (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 143). What can be understood from this about the method is that a student has handed the book to a teacher to ask to be taught.

The information in relation to the kitab used in dayah salafi and the other similar institutions, in Indonesia particularly, can be obtained from Bruinessen (1990, p. 227) who describes a large collection of kitab that he has collected himself by going around the bookshops in major Indonesian centres, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Purwokerto, Semarang, Surabaya, Banda Aceh, Medan, Pontianak, Banjarmasin and Amuntai. He also went on to collect kitab in some regions of Southeast Asia, namely Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Georgetown (Penang), Kota Bharu and Pattani (Southern Thailand). The kitab used, including the kitab Jawi, were originally ordered from the Middle East, from Egypt for example, by the booksellers (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 232). Bruinessen picks up changes in the pattern of kitab in the last hundred years, since the paper by Van Den Berg (1886), which he refers to. He states that "printed books are a relative novelty in the pesantren" (1990, p. 230), as in the late 19th century the kitab were not printed, but were manuscript. The large-scale distribution of the different texts was only begun seriously after post-
World-War-II independence (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 232). This meant the growth of printing of the kitab in the Malay region in Southeast Asia, which led to the appearance of more kitab in the Malay language and through Malay production, which of course covers Indonesia as well as other regions in the Malay world. An interesting change in relation to the kitab pattern that Bruinessen describes is that from the 1920s, in Sumatra and Kalimantan the Malay kitab (kitab Jawi) were relatively popular, but that since that time, the standard Arabic works have become more used (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 239). This shows either a change in the curriculum, or in language and emphasis.

IV. Dayah and Islamic Education

As mentioned above the word dayah is derived from the word ‘zawiyah’, and the term ‘zawiyah’ can be found in several places in the Islamic world, including a use which is in line with the meaning of the term “dayah” in Aceh, though other uses are not. The term has been found in North Africa, and was used in Maghrib in the 13th century. It was also familiar in Central Morocco (Gibb & Kramers, 1953, pp. 657-658). In general, what is found at the ‘zawiyah’ are a prayer room, a mausoleum, a special room to recite al-Qur’an, the maktab, which is a school to learn how to read al-Qur’an, and rooms that cater for travellers and visitors to the ‘zawiyah’, and are
also for students and pilgrims (Gibb & Kramers, 1953, p. 657).

When compared to the ‘zawiyah’, in the “dayah” there are similar facilities in general, such as a congregational prayer hall, classrooms and dormitories for students, and also space for dayah leaders. A difference is that there are no special rooms provided for guests who visit and stay in dayah for a while. It is clear that the dayah has followed a way of Islamic teaching and learning which has been practiced since the era of Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

It is well known in Islamic History that Prophet Muhammad himself PBUH taught the Muslim society in the earlier era of Islam in Mecca. What is meant by teaching activities here is teaching in the broadest sense, covering all aspects of a Muslim’s life, involving the doctrines of faith, love and purity (S. A. Ali, 1978, pp. 22-23;54-55). In Mecca, the activity was held in Darul Arqam, the house of Arqam, who was one of Islam’s followers in the early era of nubuwwah (prophethood) (At-Tabari, 1881 cited in Mas'ud, 2006, p. 45).

When prophet Muhammad moved to Medina, the teaching and learning activities were held in the mosque and the prophet Muhammad himself PBUH became the teacher for his followers (Mas'ud, 2006, p. 45). Prophet
Muhammad also paid great attention to reading and writing ability by asking some prisoners-of-war to teach children how to read and write, and promising that the prisoners would be released if they could teach ten Muslim children. This happened after the battle of Badr in A.H. 2/A.D. 624 (Royster, 1978, p. 240). The Prophet also suggested that some of his friends should become teachers in the schools named Suffa and az-Zilla in Medina. Suffa and Zilla were parts of a mosque built by the Prophet as places to teach how to read, write and memorize al-Qur'an and also how to recite al-Qur'an correctly (Ahmad D. Munir, 1987 cited in Mas'ud, 2006, p. 46).

In relation to what the Prophet did, Royster has said “from him hundreds of millions of Muslims derive both meaning for personal existence and means for character development and spiritual achievement” (1978, p. 258). In relation to education in Muslim world, there is saying of Prophet Muhammad PBUH to seek knowledge even if it has to be got from China (Syams al-Din Muhammad, 2004, p. 86). And education in Islam, and particularly what was practiced during the Prophet’s era, can be described as “a two-way process which involves the knowledge giving as an effort to provide instructions and warning, as well as an effort to gain knowledge in order to get piety (takwa), not self-assertive and
intellectual snobbery" (Al-Alusi, cited in A'la, 2006, p. 37). This is the way of education which is provided in dayah salafi. This is its inspiration and aspiration.

After prophet Muhammad PBUH passed away, the first four caliphates continued the rule of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, including the teaching and learning activities. The first four caliphs are known as Khulafa ar-Rasyidun (the Rightly Guided Caliphs), namely Abu Bakar, Umar, Ali and Utsman. As Sardar points out “the actions and achievements of the Rightly Guided Caliphs is certainly a vital part of Muslim history” (1979, p. 178). Islam gives special attention to teaching and learning activities, because through these activities, a Muslim can acquire knowledge. Therefore, “in the development of early Muslim civilisation, the influence of knowledge (‘ilm) was overpowering and all-pervasive” (Sardar, 1979, p. 32). In-depth attention to the knowledge available in the world was recorded as a central feature in the history of the Islamic Caliphate in Baghdad, which ruled from 720 to 1258. One of the caliphs whose name is Caliph Ma’mun, founded Bait al-Hikmah (house of wisdom) (Saunders, 1980, p. 191) which played an important role in expanding knowledge for centuries over wide areas, through the translation of Greek ancient knowledge and philosophical works into Arabic and the development of vast scholarship from such sources.
The activities relating to the translation of Greek science are explained clearly by Rosenthal (1975, p. 49). He describes how Caliph Ma'mun asked the Byzantine rulers for permission to select a collection of books containing the ancient knowledge from the Byzantine libraries. After obtaining permission, he sent interpreters to choose the books and asked them to translate the books into Arabic. It seems from the activities in “Bait al-Hikmah” (house of wisdom) that this institution provided the crucial basis for the development of teaching and learning activities in Baghdad both at that time, and long after.

V. Dayah Today and its Curriculum

Nowadays, the dayah plays a very important role in the thriving Islamic education in Aceh and has become a characteristic part of Acehnese culture. Therefore, it is very common to find dayah in each part of Aceh province. The current dayah still lay the greatest stress in their teaching on Islamic knowledge. This is similar to Hurgronje’s finding in 19th century Aceh (1906, p. 7) and Siegel’s report of his research in 1960s Aceh (Siegel, 2000, p. 58).

The researcher herself had an opportunity to stay in a dayah which is located in Pidie Regency, Aceh, from
January 2005 until March 2005. During her stay in this dayah, she had a chance to watch closely the dayah system and its activities. This dayah had several buildings which included classrooms, dormitories for the students, the dayah leader's house, teachers' dormitory, library, and mosque or *mushalla* (little mosque). These facilities are similar to the pesantren facilities which are described by Howell (2001, p. 704), who points out that the facilities in pesantren include dormitories, a mosque and the residency of the pesantren headmaster (Muslim scholar).

It is well-known in general that the owner and the founder of a pesantren will be a famous ulama (Muslim scholar) who also acts as the leader of the pesantren (Kelabora, 1976, pp. 230-231). This was not, however, the situation of the dayah experienced by the researcher, because the ulama and Founder of the dayah did became the first leader as well, but did not automatically become the owner of the dayah, because he arranged that the dayah would be owned by the Muslim community. But, despite whatever differences in ownership or inheritance patterns might exist, there is an exactly similar situation that can be found in relation to the religious position of the founder of a dayah or a pesantren, which is stated thus by Bruinessen: “an unbroken chain from one’s teacher, living or dead,
through previous teachers and saints to the Prophet and hence to God is deemed necessary for salvation” (1994, p. 5). It is a good description of a kind of handing on of an unbroken chain. It is the same sort of thing one can depict in the case of kitab, where there is a kind of chain when one hands on to another; one teacher teaches the kitab, it is handed on, and so the learner then teaches the same kitab in turn. It is central to the character of institutions like dayah and pesantren that they preserve those links. The preservation of this link can be regarded as something essential which dayah or pesantren do.

In the daily life of students and teachers, dayah activities start after shubuh praying (the praying at dawn, roughly started from 05.15am). Each group of students studies at its different level. Each teacher, who is called teungku, teaches his/her students in a different classroom. The meaning of classroom here can be as a standard classroom or simply a space in the ulama’s house or bale (hut). The study after shubuh praying ends at 6.30am or 7.00am, as the students start doing their daily activities such as preparing their breakfast, taking a bath or cleaning the dayah area and buildings. Study starts again at 10.00am and finishes around noon, so the students have enough time to prepare themselves for dhuhur praying, having lunch and taking a rest for a while.
The students start to study again at around 2.00pm or 2.30pm, and these activities will finish around 4.00pm in the afternoon before *ashar* praying. After praying, the students do further daily activities, for example preparing their dinner, cleaning the dormitory area or doing sport activity. The study will start again around 7.00pm after *magrib* praying. The students stop their activities around 10.00pm or 11.00pm after *isya* praying, and the next day the students will start the same schedule again after *shubuh* praying.

The above is roughly the schedule for the dayah salafi students that do not attend the school. The above schedule has to be altered somewhat for the large number of dayah salafi students who also attend ordinary schools which are nearby or associated with the dayah. For the dayah students who attend the school, from 7.00am in the morning until 1.30pm is the time for school. As a comparison, a picture of dayah and pesantren student life can be captured from Peacock when he describes the santri pattern as follows: “rising from his mat at dawn, cooking his own rice breakfast over a flame, laboring by day in the fields, and contemplating sacred texts by night, the adolescent student (called a *santri*) at the *pesantren* led an ascetic, individualistic, and disciplined life” (Peacock, 1973, p. 25).
This dayah specifies some qualifications needed by the prospective students who intend to pursue their study there. The prospective students must be graduates from elementary school, junior high school or senior high school or at least be between 12 years old to 13 years old. Other qualifications are their ability to read the Holy Quran and to write Arabic letters. All the prospective students will be examined in order to assess their ability in reciting the Holy Quran and writing the Arabic letters.

The teaching and learning process in the dayah is divided into five levels. The students will also be examined in the process of pursuing the higher levels. Even though almost all levels study subjects such as Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Arabic language and grammar (nahwu and sharaf), Bayan (rhetoric), Akhlak (character development), Tarikh (Islamic history), Tauhid (theology), Tafsir (Quran interpretation), Hadits (prophetic tradition), Mantiq (logic), Ushul (principles of fiqh) and Tasawuf (devotion prayer), the sources which are used in the teaching and learning process are different. The lowest levels use basic texts and the highest levels study advanced texts.

The subject areas are traditional, one describes it as part of ‘perennial knowledge’ (Makmun, 1982, p. 7). But
it is important to note that there have been some changes of emphasis over time. For example, in regard to *usul* or *usul al-fiqh* there has been a change from it not being part of the ordinary pesantren curriculum, to it becoming an obligatory subject in almost all pesantren since the 19th century (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 250). There has also developed an increasing interest in studying *tafsir* (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 254), whereas in the 19th century Javanese pesantren, only one *tafsir* kitab was studied, namely Jalalayn (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 253). So there has been a change from it not being very important to becoming more important. There has been also a change in terms of curriculum regarding the study of *hadits*, involving changes in the texts used and in the emphasis in the different parts (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 255). This indicates that dayah and similar institutions do also change or develop in their own way. In Acehnese dayah salafi, there have been additions to the curriculum with subjects like *Mantiq, Balaghah* (rethoric) and *Ushul Fiqh*, all of which were initiated by Syeikh Haji Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy in his dayah in Labuhan Haji, South Aceh. Subsequently, these subjects were adopted in other dayahsalafi in Aceh (Leigh, Srimulyani, & Dhuhri, 2007, p. 24).

It may be suggested that the tendency to focus on studying Islamic knowledge, for example *Fiqh, Hadits*
and Tafsir, is related to the duty of Muslims in the world, namely to worship Allah and to obey all of Allah’s precepts. To make Muslims able to perform this duty, they must master the required knowledge, and so this is why the dayah concentrates on teaching Islamic knowledge, in order to prepare Muslims to be able to do their primary duty (Hidayat, 2000, p. x; Muhaimin, 2003, pp. 16-17).

Generally, what is common in Aceh is that there are seven levels in the dayah salafi, from level 1 until level 7. In each level there is the list of certain kitab that should be studied by the dayah salafi students. Level 7 is the highest level, and is not available in all dayah salafi because the highest level kitab are studied for this level and not all dayah salafi have teachers capable of teaching those kitab. It is believed that the level system was also firstly introduced in the dayah of Syeikh Haji Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy in Labuhan Haji (Thahiry, Zarkasyi, Hamdani, Malik, & Jalal, 2007, p. 162), and before that the level system that is applied nowadays among dayah salafiin Aceh was not known. In relation to the level, there are terms used like ibtidai, thanawi and ‘ali (meaning primary, secondary and high) and another term, khawass, which is for the more advanced level (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 240). The ibtidai, thanawi and ‘ali level system is similar to the pattern in the madrasah
system found in Indonesia nowadays, as experienced by the researcher herself when she studied in the madrasah system during her school years.

Based on the researcher’s experience, what is meant by basic texts are the textbooks which are used in teaching the introduction to each subject which is taught in dayah. Every subject has its own introductory book which explains everything with a brief explanation and gives the main points of each section’s material. In regard to this introductory curriculum, it has been noted that the curriculum has become standard not only in space, from Kurdistan to Sumatra for example, but also in time, certainly from the 19th century into the 20th century (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 241). While there may be changes, there is something which is really very much the same and it is over a wide area and a long time, because obviously some of these kitab are very old coming from the 10th century onwards (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 241).

All texts in the kitab are written in Arabic and that is why Arabic grammar is also taught in dayah. In the teaching process, the teacher (teungku) reads the text and translates it into Acehnese while the students listen and annotate their own texts. The case of using local language to present the subject for the dayah student is
similar to the practice noted in pesantren in Kalimantan where the teacher also uses the local language such as Banjarese (Raihani, 2001, p. 111). In relation to teaching the Arabic language, some of the classical texts have been giving way to more modern teaching material from about 1921 in Hijaz (Saudi Arabia today) which can be said to be relatively modern, and also similar more modern kitab by an Egyptian author then started to be used in the more modern madrasah in West Sumatra (Bruinessen, 1990, p. 242). Thus there is a further clear indication of change in the curriculum, in that they were following a more modern language book, with a more modern language teaching schema. Also in regard to language development, it was noted that the dayah the researcher stayed in also organized a “Muhadharah” (speech competition) event every Thursday night and this activity provided the opportunity to train the students to give a speech in front of other students. It is an example of the practical skill emphasis that can be found within the dayah curriculum.

Typically there is no time limit to study in the dayah because the determinant is whether the students are capable of finishing the advanced texts. The students can study there as long as they like, and it might be for three years, seven years or even ten years. When the
students finish studying the advanced texts, they can choose to either go to some other dayah or remain in their dayah and become a teacher there. The matter of providing these new links in the chain of handing on the teaching is of key importance, of course.

Regarding the financing of these institutions, the only fee which is collected from the students is to pay the electricity bill. This means that there are no actual salaries for teachers in dayah, and therefore the teachers must work in addition on their own to survive by farming the waqaf land, or by trading; sometimes the local community supports the teachers by paying zakat (alms tax) and shadaqah (alms, charity) (Mohammad, 2001). The students themselves get support from their parents who send them foods or money in order to fulfil their daily needs; and students also may work on the dayah land.

VI. Documentary on the Development of Dayah

1. Official Letter

Dayah salafi face increasing regulation, as is common in modern times, as part of a national education and religious education system. A key document was a letter from the Department of Religious Affairs in Indonesia
(personal correspondence, Department of Religious Affairs, July 29, 2008) about standardizing the graduates of Islamic Boarding Schools which do not follow the government’s curriculum. That letter was dated 29th of July 2008. At the opening of the letter it was stated that the subject of the letter is graduate equalization of pondok pesantren and diniyah education. It was addressed to the Provincial Head Offices of the Department of Religious Affairs throughout Indonesia.

The letter contains three main points. Firstly, recognition of equality of standard for graduates of pondok pesantren and diniyah education must be through provision of educational programs such as the Compulsory Basic Education program for 9 years (Wajar Dikdas) at pesantren salafiyah; through educational equality programs called Paket programs (Package programs) for the different levels labelled Paket A, B, and C; or through the granting of a given status (mu'adalah) to the pondok pesantren, whether it is equivalent to madrasah aliyah (Islamic senior high school), or equivalent to ordinary senior high school, or equivalent to specified foreign higher level educational institutions, especially the ones located in the Middle East.

Secondly, besides provision of the above programs,
the legal recognition of the ijazah / syahadah (certificate) for graduates of pondok pesantren and diniyah education can be gained by complying with the following terms and procedures: in regard to the length of study, to be equivalent to SD/MI (Sekolah Dasar/Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah, primary school-Islamic primary school) at least 6 years of study are needed; to be equivalent to SMP/MTs (Sekolah Menengah Pertama/Madrasah Tsanawiyah, junior high school-Islamic junior high school) at least 9 years of study are needed, or a further 3 years after graduating from SD/MI; to be equivalent to SMA/MA (Sekolah Menengah Atas/Madrasah Aliyah, senior high school-Islamic senior high school) at least 12 years of study are needed, or a further 6 years after graduating from SD/MI, or a further 3 years after graduating from SMP/MTs; to be equivalent to foreign educational institutions, at least 12 years of study are needed, or a further 6 years after graduating from SD/MI, or a further 3 years after graduating from SMP/MTs or equivalent; in regard to the certificate, this will be a certificate from the institution concerned. If the institution is approved as providing the appropriate education, the certificate will be legally recognised; in regard to the kitab studied, the kitab which are studied must at least cover all the specified subjects, and the reference kitab and/or the kitab of equivalent contents are specified as follows:
1. **Basic Level**
   Al-Quran : Khatam 30 juz bin-nadzar dengan tajwid yang bagus
   a. Tauhid : Aqidatul Awwam/Ummul Barohim
   b. Fiqih : Safinatun Naja/Sullamut Taufiq
   c. Akhlaq : Al-Akhlq lil Banin/Banat
   d. Nahwu : Al-Ajrumiyyah/Nadzom al-Imrithy
   e. Sharaf : Matn al-Bina wa al-Asas / al-Amsilah al-Tashrifiyyah

2. **Secondary Level**
   Al-Quran : Hafal juz 30 al-Quran dengan tajwid yang bagus
   a. Tauhid : Kifayatul Awwam / As-Sanusiyyah
   b. Fiqih : Fathul Qarib/Kifayatul Akhyar
   c. Akhlaq : Bidayatul Hidayah / Ta’lim Muta’allim
   d. Nahwu : Mutammimah / Al-Asymawi
   e. Sharaf : Nadzam Maqsud / Al-Kailani
   f. Tarikh : Nurul Yaqin
   g. Tajwid : Hidayatul Mustafid / at-Tibyan fi Hamalatil Quran

3. **Higher Level**
   a. Tafsir : Al-Jalalain
   b. Ilm Tafsir : Mabahits fi Ulum Al-Quran / Al-
itqan
c. Hadis : Riyadus Sholihin/ Bulugh al-Maram
d. Ilm Hadis : Albaiquuniyyah/ al-Manhal al-Latief
e. Fiqih : Fathul Muin/ I’anatut Tholibin/Muhadzdzab
f. Ushul Fiqh : Al-Waraqat/al-Luma/Al-Asybah wa al-Nadza-ir
g. Tauhid : Al-Husun al-Hamidiyyah/al-Milal wa al-Nihal
h. Nahwu : Alfiyah Ibn Malik/ Syarh Ibn Aqil
i. Sharaf : Al-l’lal/Qawaid Lughah al-Arabiyyah
j. Tharikh : Ismam al-Wafaq/ Tarikh Tasyri’
k. Balaghah : Al-Jauhar al-Maknun

(This list is transcribed from a copy of the original official letter); in regard to providing ratification or authorization for the certificate, there are some procedures that should be followed, such as in relation to the configuring of an institutional inspection team for the purpose of certificate authorization by the Department of Religious Affairs; in relation to the application from a pondok pesantren to have its certificate ratified/authorized; in relation to the verifying visit by the departmental inspection team to
the pondok pesantren; and in relation to the result of verification, according to which the Department has the right to accept or refuse the application for authorization.

Thirdly, to promote the system of giving recognition to all pondok pesantren or diniyah education located in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, it is instructed in this official letter that all the Provincial Head Offices of the Department of Religious Affairs should disseminate the policy to all interested parties, particularly to the leaders of pondok pesantren or diniyah education, and that the Offices plan a strategy taking the necessary steps.

This letter indicates that the developing of Islamic boarding school’s curriculum is needed and important in the government’s view, particularly in order to standardize the graduates according to some recognized educational level attained.

2. Departmental Handbook

The key official letter put in definite form a general policy that had been developing for some years at the Indonesian national government level. A departmental handbook entitled “Pola Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren” (The pattern for the development of pondok
pesantren) was published by the Department of Religious Affairs in Jakarta in 2003, and this handbook aimed to bring together the mission and vision regarding a direction of development in accordance with the demands of the times, which include some necessary efforts to improve education quality and increase the role of the pondok pesantren in building (the nation) (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. vii). This book contains eight chapters with 114 pages.

The first chapter contains the introduction and the last chapter is a summary. The second chapter contains the history and progress of pondok pesantren at different times in the Indonesian context. The third chapter contains information on the overall operation and management of pondok pesantren. The chapter deals with the definition of pondok pesantren, with pondok pesantren types, with curriculum and teaching method, with the length of study and certification, with standardisation of kitab teaching, and with issues of managing the pondok pesantren. The fourth chapter deals with the role of pondok pesantren in the national education system within the Indonesian context. The fifth chapter deals with the Compulsory Basic Education (Wajar Dikdas) program in pondok pesantren. The chapter gives an overview of Wajar Dikdas and its importance and the way it is can be implemented in
pondok pesantren. The sixth chapter discusses the relation between pondok pesantren and the activity of Islamic preaching. The seventh chapter discusses the role of pondok pesantren in community development and skill development within pondok pesantren.

In regard to curriculum standardisation in the dayah salafi, the subject is dealt with in the section on standardisation of kitab teaching in chapter three; this is where the Department of Religious Affairs sets out its suggested scheme for pesantren salafiyah or dayah salafi development. The Department talks of mastery learning in this section, and would like to suggest that pondok pesantren and similar institutions should have a standard competence in kitab teaching, which means teaching the standard kitab that must be mastered by students of dayah or pondok pesantren. Competency standards are usually reflected in the use of the kitab in sequence from easy to difficult: from thin kitab to kitab that is multi-volume. The kitab used are usually called the kitab kuning (literally meaning yellow book), or kitab salaf (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. 50). In this section on standardisation of kitab, the subjects and their associated kitab are listed starting from the basic level up until high level. It seems to the researcher that the highest level is similar to university level which is now commonly called Ma‘had Aly. The lists
of kitab are not much different to what has been already described as found in the official letter, except for a highest level, which is not mentioned in the official letter. So the letter may be seen as a more focussed version of what was in the handbook already. Probably, the department will forward more information to the dayah salafi or pesantren salafiyah that are willing to participate in its standardisation program by providing this handbook itself. In relation to the kitab listed in the handbook, there is some flexibility, indicated by the statement that “the above levels scheme has not become mandatory in terms of its implementation in pondok pesantren (including dayah salafi)” (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. 56).

Besides dealing with curriculum standardisation, the handbook also has, as noted above, a discussion on Wajar Dikdas, the Compulsory Basic Education program, which is found in chapter five of the handbook. Wajar Dikdas is also prominently mentioned in the official letter as a key part of the educational program to provide equality of recognition at standard levels for the graduates of dayah salafi and similar institutions. The nine-year Compulsory Basic Education program was launched by the government in 1994. This education program was structured in order to provide greater opportunities for Indonesian citizens to acquire basic
education and it was directed that it be followed by all Indonesia citizens whose ages are 7-12 years (for primary school and equivalent institutions), and 13-15 years (for junior high schools and equivalent institutions) (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, pp. 71-72).

The aim of the Compulsory Basic Education program in pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) is to enlist and increase the participation of pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) in organizing the nine-year Compulsory Basic Education program for their students, so that their students can have equivalent capability and the same opportunities to pursue their studies to the higher levels of education (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. 79). The target of the program is the students aged 7-15 years that are enrolled in those pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) which do not operate a formal education program similar to school-based education (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. 80).

In regard to financing, the operational costs of the pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) in relation to the provision of the compulsory nine-year basic education program will be the responsibility of the pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) themselves,
just as before. But the handbook notes that pesantren salafiyah (including dayah salafi) are entitled to obtain help from the government and also remain eligible to receive assistance from agencies or private organizations which are interested in the development of pesantren salafiyah or dayah salafi (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2003, p. 81).

3. Governor’s Decree

An important related step in this chain of events sending messages about dayah education throughout Indonesia, and in particular throughout Aceh province, is the Governor of Aceh’s regulation called The Governor’s Decree Number 47 of 2010 on Dayah Education in Aceh. Overall, this decree contained sixteen chapters. These chapters start from general provisions, principles, functions and objectives, moving on to discuss levels of dayah education and length of study, and the dayah curriculum, then dealing with the workforce, dayah leadership, dayah students (thalabah), the improvement of human resources, the facilities and infrastructure, issues of evaluation and graduation, and the certificate given (syahadah/ijazah), and finally dealing with management, with an accreditation body for dayah in Aceh, with funding and any other remaining matters.

Particularly relevant to this research are chapters
three and four of this decree, which are related to levels of dayah education and length of study, and the dayah curriculum. In the chapter three of this decree four levels of dayah education are recognised. These are Ibtidaiyah (primary level), Tsanawiyah (junior high school level), ‘Aliyah (senior high school level) and Ma‘had Aly (university level). The length of study for each level is specified as follows: six years for Ibtidaiyah, three years for Tsanawiyah, three years for ‘Aliyah and four years for Ma‘had Aly. In regard to the dayah curriculum that is dealt with in chapter four of this decree, besides acknowledging that the curriculum will typically be a dayah-based curriculum, it is also stated that the dayah curriculum should also add material based on both local curriculum schemes and national curriculum schemes. The suggested dayah-based curriculum given appears very much the same as the list from the Department of Religious Affairs handbook and the official letter, except that it has some additions.

With this new regulation that represents a third governmental step towards requiring some defined organization of dayah, particularly in terms of the education levels, the length of study in the dayah and the dayah curriculum, the question might be raised by the researcher whether dayah are in danger of losing their teaching tradition that focuses on mastery learning from
each kitab. It would seem that the teaching of kitab would be likely to be affected by the boundaries of levels and time being imposed, while the curriculum content would become more crowded if the dayah applied programs the way this decree and its regulations suggest.

Overall, through this decree from the Governor, there runs a clear tendency to formalize dayah salafi educational institutions which previously had been known as non-formal institutions. It seems to the researcher that the decree reflects the local government’s desire for uniformity in the dayah salafi organizing pattern, which in turn flows from and reflects the general policy plan and specific instruction contained in the Handbook and the Official Letter generated by the Department of Religious Affairs.

4. **Handbook of Badan Dayah**

Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah Aceh was established by government of Aceh based on Bylaw (Qanun) Number 5 of 2007. This indicates that this institution is rather new in handling the dayah matters. The purpose of this institution is to improve the quality of dayah education. It has a vision to improve the quality of dayah graduates in order to have significant role in the community and its mission is to make the dayah a favorite
institution in the community. The Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah Aceh (Board of Founding for Dayah Education, in Aceh Province), which is usually simply called Badan Dayah, was also publishing a handbook (which was still in the draft format at the time the researcher obtained a copy during field work in 2011). This version of the handbook is entitled Draft buku pedoman kurikulum dayah (Draft of a guidance book for dayah curriculum). As it is a draft, the researcher assumes that this book will be sent to every dayah salafi to gain feedback in order to revise it. This handbook contains five chapters and it only has eighteen pages which itself indicates that this is meant as a draft. There are also “opening remarks” from the Governor of Aceh, dated November 2010, revealing that this draft was being prepared after the Governor’s decree of 2010. The chapters consist of an introductory chapter, a chapter on “juridical basis”, a chapter on dayah curriculum, a chapter on the “academic calendar” and a chapter in conclusion.

In the chapter on dayah curriculum in this handbook, beside dayah salafi, the integrated dayah, or modern dayah, is mentioned as well, although the focus of this handbook is on dayah salafi curriculum. The integrated dayah or modern dayah is described here as a religious educational institution that integrates a school/madrasah-based education with
dayah/pesantren-based education (p. 12), while dayah salafi is described as religious educational institution which specifically provides Islamic religious teaching for its students (who live in the dayah) by applying Islamic classical Arabic texts (p. 10).

There is a clear statement mentioning that this draft of the dayah salafi curriculum has referred to The Governor’s Decree Number 47 of 2010 on the Dayah Education in Aceh. Therefore the level of dayah salafi education and the length of study in dayah salafi mentioned in this handbook exactly follow the scheme in the Governor’s decree (p. 13-16). The levels from the start are Ibtidaiyah(ula)for six years, Tsanawiyah(wustha) for three years, ‘Aliyah for three years, and Ma’had ‘Aly for four years. The dayah salafi curriculum suggested in this handbook also follows the scheme listed in the Governor’s decree regarding the dayah salafi curriculum. It also has the suggestion to add school-based curriculum subjects for each level of Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah, and ‘Aliyah, and the suggestion to add university-based curriculum subjects for Ma’had ‘Aly level, both of which are already mentioned in the Governor’s decree.

In addition there is a statement that reflects the hope of the Aceh government, including the government at district and municipality levels in Aceh, to have a
standard and uniform curriculum for the entire dayah salafi operations in Aceh (p. 13). And there is also a suggestion that dayah salafi prepare in a set way their allocation of time and determination of their educational calendar in regard to teaching and learning activities (p. 17). From this point of view, the researcher observes two tendencies that are likely to become more evident. The first is the tendency to conform the dayah salafi as closely as possible with the integrated dayah or modern dayah, which would certainly affect the character of dayah salafi. The second is the tendency to still preserve the dayah salafi-based curriculum while adding elements of school-based curriculum, which could have implications in terms of an overloading of subjects that must be studied by dayah salafi students. This situation could create a great burden for the dayah salafi students, because they would have to study the school-based curriculum, besides focusing on the classical Arabic text which are characteristic of the dayah salafi.
In the first instance schema notions can be applied to the dayah salafi quite simply. When students in the dayah learn and use Arabic, they build memory schemas, from basic activity where the student must memorize certain theoretical rules of morphology and syntax which are part of Arabic language. These rules become their schemas, and when students in using the language find the relevant corresponding patterns, they use the schemas by recalling from their memory correct rules. This is in line with the view that “Schemas represent categorical knowledge” which is the concept of schema as pointed out by Anderson (2005, p. 158). As categorizing, a schema can typically be formulated or defined, perhaps in the form of a rule. Some schemas remain largely abstract formulations or rules.

So a study of the Acehnese dayah salafi, seen as an institution of religious teaching or education, can take
into account the “useful framework which is provided by the concept of schema” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 401). This can be done by noting the schemas that are narrowly stated and defined for particular learning, as with rules of language use. The well-learned Arabic kitab texts can also be seen as somewhat less narrowly defined schemas to guide continuing learning and teaching. Like the Arabic language schemas, to which they are closely related, the kitab schemas, as they are built up, operate in conditions of clear formulation and definition. But for kitab, their use in learner and teacher activity is also of vital importance.

In addition, the dayah schemas may of course be defined more broadly, when regarding overall characteristics of the operations there. It is characteristic of broad basic schemas that they ultimately link to many things. A very broad key schema that is involved in religious education is typically that it is a teaching of a revelation, which is very broad, even comprehensive. Thus in Islamic education “the revelation of the existing spiritual doctrine usually provides a theoretical foundation, which describes the structure of Reality and the structure of human consciousness, the ontological status of the world and of all creatures, including human beings, and describes the way in which this reality is
experienced by means of spiritual training” (Sharifi, 1979, p. 80). Stated in such terms, it is clear that, while the schema may have many links to what is abstract, there is also much about it that is crucially practical. There is explicit identification in this statement of a theoretical and defined schema component as a kind of key, but the actual overall purpose is activity of training and a way of doing things.

Learning in the dayah, as an essentially religious education, is not just a matter of learning merely verbal schemas of religious teaching: “it should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man’s spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses” (Husain & Ashraf, 1979, p. 44). The most significant relatively recent detailed commentary on life in Aceh has come from the anthropologist James T. Siegel in his text ‘The Rope of God’ (Siegel, 1969, 2000). Siegel suggests that the current situation of the dayah must be seen within historical developments of community consciousness. His work was first published in the 1960s, but in subsequent additions in a second edition of his book, he has not significantly changed his view.

Siegel is able to discuss pre-colonial Aceh, the period of Dutch intervention, the period of Japanese
intervention and the subsequent complicated and contested incorporation of Aceh within the Indonesian Republic. His overall view is that the message of ulama, founders and leaders of dayah salafi education, has been increasingly effective at a time of great social and economic change, possibly from being founded on their experience as respected teachers of a universal religious message. Siegel comments that local customs and preoccupations can give way to the underlying sense of a common Muslim identity as uniting people in a common religious task aimed at the improvement of society as a whole, even where the task in hand is quite specific and local. This is a matter both of personal identity and of practical task. Siegel argues that ulama have given the recalling to practical consciousness of this long-standing element of tradition some priority in modern Aceh. This is part of making a new pattern against the outside forces so prominent in this region in the last century.

Such a religious identity and its task and sub-tasks may be seen as a key overall broad schema, and it is mainly a schema-in-action, emphasizing and expressing the community’s self-consciousness, but not without some link to a more universal abstract notion. This schema can be used to understand the wider role of ulama who are in the first instance main leaders in the
dayah salafi. An ulama can play an important role in raising people’s consciousness of universal Muslim identity and in encouraging them to take part in certain tasks, by convincing them that the work that would benefit the community is properly their religious work, part of *ibadah*. Ibadah is thus not only composed of praying and reading al-Quran. It is a good example of the personal and practical context in which the schemas of religion are used and enacted. The formulations of prayer and of the holy books here come to life, whatever the project, in a schema-in-action of Muslim identity.

This is the idea which is pointed out by Siegel when he describes the role of ulama in awakening the consciousness of Muslim people (Siegel, 2000, pp. 56-67). It is noteworthy that the ulama have taken part in historic educational reform in Aceh by establishing Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA, All-Aceh Union of Religious Scholars) in the late 1930s. The aim of PUSA has been partly to introduce and standardize the ‘Western-style religious school curricula’ (Siegel, 2000, pp. 95-97). Thus, far from merely confirming traditional patterns, the establishment of PUSA carried with it an important message relating to timely change and progress, as well as messages about unity and education. To make progress, people, especially the youth, get the message that they should ‘follow the footsteps of the
ulama in the inner sense’ (Siegel, 2000, p. 129). This indicates the using of the past to rouse the spirit, particularly ‘the spirit of unity’, as a result of change which was promoted through PUSA (Siegel, 2000, p. 126).

Unity itself is seen as ‘a product of consciousness’ which can be gained through an education process that can be developed through establishing more ‘religious schools and printing press’ (Siegel, 2000, pp. 126-127). Through these messages of progress, unity, and education, it is hoped a certain consciousness will arise among people. Furthermore, the concept of unity is explained by Siegel by referring to an address about pilgrimage from one prominent ulama in Aceh. Siegel concludes with some points from the speech which exhort people to cultivate a three-fold sense of unity: “firstly, the notion of the necessity of establishing connections between God and man and between man and man; secondly, the description of people in the process of coming together and performing as the larger unit; and thirdly, the image of unity achieved when there is no more distinction between the rich and the poor” (Siegel, 2000, p. 269). Siegel found the apt metaphor for the religious unity of Acehnese people in the idea that they are bound by ‘the rope of God’.
According to Siegel, such teaching of ulama has raised consciousness in and for action in terms of a universal rather than a local viewpoint. And this is in accord with the important role of universal education in the universal message of Islam. In Islamic history and in Islamic societies one can find both expressed and enacted the imperative to seek knowledge as an educational task principle. The thirst for knowledge is a clear force for development in what has occurred already in Acehnese education, in institutions other than the dayah salafi. Considering the operation of this ‘spirit of education’ should help therefore in understanding the dayah salafi and its curriculum. For the dayah salafi not only educates the student to understand the kitab, but also to absorb the spirit of the dayah salafi and hence of Muslim education.

The notion of the ‘dayah spirit’ adds another element to this sketch of a framework. It arises in the unity discussed above, but emphasizes the ‘inner sense’, thus balancing the Muslim identity schema born in community practice or practicality with a schema that is more personal. Catching the spirit of education may be like having a motivating vision of what you can be, and are asked to be.

Recent research based upon students’ perspectives
has particularly identified the transmission of this ‘spirit of education’ in institutions similar to dayah salafi (Nilan, 2009). Students who studied in pesantren in Makassar as young students were reported as becoming inspired to further their education, as a result of the spirit that they absorbed from the pesantren. Nilan focused particularly on one female student who continued her studies abroad. The paper discusses the new opportunity which is offered by education and the role of this driving spirit in the gaining of new knowledge and bringing about change in the student. A crucial part of this notion is that it is a religious ‘becoming’ that is in view, not just the following of a personal ambition. The interior state is most important.

The Islamic ‘spirit of education’ as an educational task scheme-in-action could be seen as not dissimilar to the more abstract schematizing dynamic principle of openness and experiment perhaps (see above), but the crucial difference is that it is based upon personal context not upon abstract science. It is a source of motivation, newness and change, but it is mainly internal to both student and institution.

In overall conclusion, arguably from the above discussion can be derived a simple basic framework, which contrasts the abstract and theoretical schema
with the personal and practical schema in action, and what is scientific with what is communal, and what is personal. While educational research tends to rely on what is abstract and theoretical, religious education may best be dealt with by considering equally the personal and practical. It is a matter of degree, however, rather than of alternatives. Every schema has its use.
This study started with the government letter that emphasized prescribed regulations for the standardizing of dayah curriculum. Some general background on Aceh was explained and supported by some statistical data. Some recent developments in education, in the Indonesian context and in Aceh in particular, were then briefly discussed. General background on the dayah was then given, related to its history, its general character and operation, the kitab, the ulama, its teaching practices, the dayah students and the interaction of the dayah with the community.

It is seen that the researcher steps into a moving picture, with interest in giving some account of it. That it is moving is not unusual. There has always been change in these institutions, for example with the rise of new ulama, and with
ulama returning to the sources of inspiration again for renewal or reform. Religious traditions may be ancient and continuous, but they have generally all had periods of dramatic change. Equally there has always been response and accommodation to local influence external to the tradition. In the present case such influence is now in the form of the national religious education department seeking to standardize things in accord with the national educational scheme. Whatever is moving, however, there are at the centre of things important personal and communal stabilizers of the dayah salafi tradition. There is the personal loyalty of students and teachers to their ulama, whose way is embodied in the teaching practices and kitab used. And there is the ulama as one who speaks to the community in an authoritative and autonomous voice serving their common guiding tradition.

In this study the researcher reviewed the literature related to a brief overview of the history of Aceh, its conversion to Islam, and the spreading of Islamic teaching, to shed some light on the development of Islamic teaching in Aceh, in the light of such development in other parts of the Islamic world in Islamic history. The character of
the dayah salafi as an institution peculiar to Aceh was thus explored. Some comparison with other education institutions similar to the dayah salafi, particularly in Indonesia, was then undertaken, after which the current situation in the dayah salafi and of its curriculum, involving the kitab, was presented.

It emerges that the dayah in Aceh serves as a link in an unbroken chain coming from the historical and geographical beginnings of Islam. There has been effort to maintain this, and it is a continuing process. There are also some grounds for seeing the Acehnese dayah as unique, and in some ways different from the pesantren found in other regions. This research, however, cannot set out to comment on this issue. It is clearly seen also that the dayah changes over time, as do pesantren generally. Recent records show developments and modifications either from changed times or circumstances, or from the efforts of innovators, which can spread. An important point is that the ulama who lead the dayah are key figures in community action, and in more recent times (since the end of the nineteenth century) particularly have fostered Acehnese unity as a religious matter.
against outside influences.

Regarding government influence, in Aceh specifically there were found some relevant current documentary works that related to the current development of dayah salafi. These documents were a decree of the Governor of Aceh, and a draft handbook from the Badan Dayah coordinating body, both being promulgated in 2010 and providing suggestions for guidance and regulation relating to the dayah salafi curriculum and organization. But these documents mostly, it was found, simply reflected earlier messages contained in the 2008 Official Letter of Instruction and in the general handbook for pesantren produced in 2003, both from the Department of Religious Affairs in Jakarta. These documents were summarized and some quotations from some key passages were given, together with some concise background of each document. They are central to the official activity of the Department of Religious Affairs in relation to dayah salafi. There was finally a discussion of a developing analytic framework based on four key concepts, namely Schema, Religious Identity, Open and Abstract Educational Schematization, and Islamic Educational Spirit.
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