



**Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture**  
ISSN: 2442-3289 (p); 2442-8285 (e)  
Vol. 30 No.1, June 2022, pp. 103-131

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## **Living Sunnah in Gayo Poetry Art: A Study of Abdurrahim Daudy's Poems**

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### **Abstract**

Religion and cultural customs coexist in the daily lives of Gayo people, including in the art of poetry. It is essential to know how Islamic values, as the religion of the majority of the population, play a role in shaping social behavior. This article aims to reveal the living sunnah side of Gayo poetry and how the traditions of the Prophet have been mentioned in a poem. The poetic works of Abdurrahim Daudy are the main focus of this paper. Since Daudy is a clerical and traditional figure in Gayo who has an artistic spirit in this modern era, it has become the main

Received: 14 May 2021, Accepted: 2 Jan 2022, Published: 25 Jun 2022



DOI: 10.19105/karsa.v30i1.4667

consideration why his poetic works are the focus of study in this paper. The data collection is done by library research and field research; namely, analyzing related literature, especially Daudy's works, and conducting observations and interviews with several Gayo people. Using an anthropological approach and functionalism theory, all elements of culture are valuable parts of the society in which these elements are located. This study found that Syair, part of Gayo culture, has an essential role in shaping the behavior of the Gayo people themselves. However, in its development, the art of Gayo poetry has shifted in terms of lyrics and performance ethics which are increasingly superficial. However, the value of living the Prophet's sunnah still seems to color Gayo's poems, regardless of the motive of the person behind it, both as a poet and a listener.

[Agama dan adat budaya hidup berdampingan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Gayo, termasuk dalam seni puisi. Hal tersebut penting untuk diketahui bagaimana nilai-nilai Islam, sebagai agama mayoritas penduduk, berperan dalam membentuk perilaku sosial. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan *living sunnah* pada seni sya'ir Gayo Aceh, dalam mengumpulkan data dilakukan *library research* dan *field research*; yakni penelaahan terhadap literatur-literatur terkait serta melakukan observasi dan wawancara dengan masyarakat Gayo. Artikel ini menggunakan pendekatan antropologi dengan teori *fungsionalisme*, yaitu bahwa semua unsur kebudayaan merupakan bagian-bagian yang berguna bagi masyarakat tempat unsur-unsur tersebut berada. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Sya'ir Gayo yang merupakan bagian kebudayaan memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk perilaku masyarakat Gayo. Dalam perkembangannya sya'ir Gayo mengalami transformasi nilai baik dari segi lirik maupun etika pertunjukan, namun bagaimanapun nilai *living sunnah* Nabi masih tetap mewarnai sya'ir-sya'ir Gayo terlepas dari motif seseorang baik pencipta maupun penikmat seni sya'ir di balik itu.]

Keywords: *living sunnah*; *hadith* in Gayo poetry; Abdurrahim Daudy

## Introduction

*Living sunnah* is the actualization of values sourced from the Prophet, who lives in a society in a religious tradition. Fazlur Rahman, the initiator of the living sunnah, explains that when the *sunnah* is verbalized, formalized, or formulated into the Prophet's hadith, the term



DOI: 10.19105/karsa.v30i1.4667

*living hadith* is also implicitly an alive *sunnah*. The Prophet Muhammad, whether in his attitude, making policies, or determining a decision, often answered various problems that arose at that time; the movements of the Prophet became an example for the companions until after the Prophet died, the *sunnah* or *hadith* continued to live until now, although with various forms of interpretation and application. Suryadi said that the *hadith* must be re-positioned as a *living sunnah* because it is the result and reflection of a *living sunnah* that is always interpreted and undergoes advanced formulations of the Prophet's *sunnah*.

Since the *sunnah* is dynamic and progressive, the *hadith* must be interpreted situationally and adapted to today's current situation. In this way, the *hadith* will always remain *shālih li kulli zamān wa makān* as the companions understood the Prophet's behavior as a *living sunnah*.<sup>1</sup> In Indonesia, which has a literary culture, it is not only the case that the *hadith* is transformed into *pantun*, as Ahmad Lutfi Fathullah did, when his composition is demonstrated and expressed like the Betawi culture. But also the conversion into poetry, including Gayo poetry.<sup>2</sup> Generally, there are three variations of the *living sunnah* model in society: written tradition, oral tradition, and practical tradition. The art of Gayo poetry can be categorized into these three models.

Gayo poets initially delivered poems (Gayo: *Saer*) orally, and some wrote them down on simple sheets of paper with their handwriting; by people who came later, the poems were documented by being printed and published.<sup>3</sup> There are several reasons why this study is interesting to research, namely, *first*, *Syair*, since centuries ago, has been a form of *syi'ar* Islamic values and has had a strategic role in the spread of Islam

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<sup>1</sup> Suryadi, *Dari Living Sunnah ke Living Hadis*, dalam *metode Penelitian Living Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007), 99-100.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, *Ilmu Living Qur'an-Hadis; Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi* (Banten: Darus Sunnah, 2019), 186.

<sup>3</sup> The poets of today are more dominant in delivering poetry in written form. That is why *gayo* poetry can be categorized into oral and written traditions. While in practice, it can also be seen in the lives of some of its people who carry out specific *sunnah* values in their daily lives. Therefore, it is crucial to reveal the phenomenon of poetry art in the Gayo region by focusing on religious poems, in this case, limited to the Aceh Tengah district.



in the Gayo area. *Secondly*, Gayo is one of the oldest ethnic groups in Aceh, with the number of minorities having a distinctive culture that is less touched by scientific studies. Ali Murtadha M. Arifin BA has conducted previous research with the title "Saer Gayo Sebagai Media Dakwah di Aceh Tengah" (1982); this thesis discusses gayo poetry which has *da'wah* values or spreading Islamic values in Central Aceh but does not focus on the study of *living sunnah* contained in the art of poetry itself.<sup>4</sup> *Third*, there has been a transformation of values and interests in Gay's poetry history discourse until now. This article's problems are formulated into three things: *First*, sunnah values in Gayo poetry. *Second*, value transformation in the creation and performance of Gayo poetry. *Third*, the motives for creating, performing, and supporting the existence of Gayo poetry.

### **Gayo Society: Islam and Poetry**

The Gayo tribe is one of the oldest ethnic groups in Aceh<sup>5</sup>, located in the high mountains with cool air and rich agricultural<sup>6</sup> products, inhabiting inland areas or located in the central part of the Aceh region. They live on the sidelines of the Bukit Barisan mountain range that straddles the island of Sumatra. Today, the group's home

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<sup>4</sup> Ali Murtadha and M. Arifin, *Saer Gayo Sebagai Media Dakwah di Aceh Tengah* (Banda Aceh: Thesis IAIN Ar-Raniry, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> The word Gayo comes from the word *pegayon*, meaning a place of clear water. Suhaidy, *Rona Perkawinan di Tanah Gayo* (Banda Aceh: NAD Provincial Library Board, 2006), 8. Aceh is a province located on the island of Sumatra and is the westernmost province in Indonesia. It is explained that ureueng Aceh is one of the sub-ethnic groups in Aceh with the largest population. In addition to the Aceh sub-ethnicity, there are also seven other sub-ethnicities in this area: Alas, Aneuk Jamee, Gayo, Kluet, Simeulu, Singkil, and Tamiang. These eight sub-ethnicities have different histories of origin and culture, but they have come to be known as Acehnese. Rusdi Sufi and Agus Budi Wibowo, *Pendidikan di Aceh dari Masa ke Masa* (Banda Aceh: Provincial Archives and Library of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2009), 11.

<sup>6</sup> The climate is very cool because it is located at an altitude of 100-2000 meters above sea level. There is a lake called Lake Laut Tawar, this area has become one of the attractions for tourism and recreation. A. Hasjmy, et al. *Lima Puluh Tahun Aceh Membangun* (Medan: Bali Printing, 1995), 369.



region is part of four districts: Central Aceh Regency, Bener Meriah Regency, Gayo Lues Regency, and part of Aceh Tamiang Regency. Members of the Gayo ethnic group call themselves *Urang Gayo*. They also call their home region *Tanoh Gayo* or Negeri Antara. The group can still be divided into three subgroups, which are characterized by dialectal variations in language, artistic variations, and certain customary elements. These variations were probably formed by the natural isolation that separated these Gayo subgroups over a relatively long period.<sup>7</sup> One type of literature in Gayo is poetry. Generally, they contain religious advice on various matters that are indicated to be sourced from the Qur'an and sunnah. Therefore, talking about Gayo religious poetry cannot be separated from the history of the entry of Islam into the Gayo area.

The Gayo people are followers of Islam. Outwardly, this can be seen in the pattern of villages with *mersah*, *joyah*, and mosque (*mesegit*) buildings. For the Gayo people, Islam, with its creed and all its rules, is the primary reference for behavior that goes hand in hand with traditional values and norms.<sup>8</sup> Islam entered the Gayo area in 416 AH-1025 AD, and Islamic culture began to be built here, even then Islam became something inherent in the lives of the people, as seen from the popular jargon in Gayo society *Ukum orom edet*, *Lagu Jet Orom Sipet* (Islamic law and customary law are like substances with properties), in another expression mentioned *Edet Iberet Peger*, *Hukum Iberet Senuen* (Custom is a fence and Islamic law as a plant).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Gayo subgroups are: Gayo Lut, Gayo Deret, Gayo Lues, and Gayo Serbejadi. The Gayo Lut and Gayo Deret subgroups originate in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah districts; the Gayo Luwes subgroup, also known as Gayo Belang, originates in the Gayo Luwes district; and the Gayo Serbejadi subgroup occupies part of Aceh Tamiang district. M. Junus Melalatoa, "Memahami Aceh Sebuah Perspektif Budaya," in *Aceh Kembali ke Masa Depan*, edited by A.D. Pirous et al. (Jakarta: IKJ Press, 2006), 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> M. Saleh Suhaidy, *Rona Perkawinan...*, 9. Another version states that since the 17th century the gayo people have embraced Islam, Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, *Kamus Sejarah Indonesia*, original title: *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2012), 144. M.J. Melalatoa quotes from Kadir's explanation, that



Syair is not a foreign language to the Gayo community, and it is used in everyday life.<sup>10</sup> Syair uses the gayo language; a language believed to be closely related to the ancient Malay language. It is explained that the gayo people have a habit of chatting around the *musholla (mersah)* and discussing various matters, and often, they bring up verses and hadith to strengthen their arguments.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it is natural that Gayo produces figures skilled in poetry. There are several types of gayo oral literature besides poetry (religious songs), namely; *kekitiken* (riddles), *kekeberen* (folklore), *melengkan* (traditional speech), *guru-didong*, *didong*, and *saman*.<sup>12</sup> The various presentations of oral literature are usually performed in two forms, namely indirect performances (tapes) or live performances (*life performances*).<sup>13</sup> Before Islam entered the Gayo region, the art of *kekeberen* literature was already known in the community, which has an important position, especially in the family environment. After Islam entered and began to develop in this area, poetry gradually replaced the role of *kekeberen*.<sup>14</sup> As for the saman

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the exact time when the belief system of Islam entered the Gayo area is still uncertain. M.J. Melalatoa, *Kebudayaan Gayo* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982), 144.

<sup>10</sup> The Gayo people in particular and Acehnese in general, according to Prof. Dr. Aboebakar Atjeh; like the Arabs, are a tribe of poets, who have a disposition, more able to feel rhyming words, rather than speech in the usual arrangement of sentences. Therefore, the similarity between these two nations is that both the Arabs of the jahiliyah and the Acehnese before knowing the Arabic letters, expressed their feelings in rhymed words, so smoothly, like they spoke normally. Aboebakar Atjeh, *Aceh dalam Sejarah ...*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> M.Junus Melalatoa, *Didong Pentas Kreativitas Gayo* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2001), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra Lisan Gayo* (Jakarta: Language Development Center, Department of Education and Culture, 1985), 3. M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra...*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra...*, 11. In the past, almost every Gayo home had a fireplace in one of the rooms of the house, where they would gather around the fireplace to keep warm while enjoying a drink of coffee that they usually grew themselves. This gathering habit may also have led to the need for entertainment (unlike today's technology-enabled entertainment), and the *kekeberen* that was prevalent in the early years of Islam was replaced with religious poetry.



DOI: 10.19105/karsa.v30i1.4667

dance, which also uses the gayo language, it is usually performed at important events or events in the adat, including when commemorating the birth of the Prophet.<sup>15</sup>

The word *Syair* comes from the Arabic *Syu'ur*, which means feeling. From the word *syair* comes the word *syi'ru*, which means poetry in the general sense. The verse form consists of four duplicate lines with a unified meaning with rhymes a/a/a/a and a/b/a/b/, and the most popular is a/a/a/a. Each line consists of between 8 and 12 syllables.<sup>16</sup> When *bersyair* is mentioned, it can mean composing a poem or reciting a poem.<sup>17</sup> The word poem in the gayo dialect is called *syar'er* or *saer*, is one of the forms of literature and art in Gayo. In the form of verses and interrelated words that are sung by saer artists, appeals in the form of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, which are full of references to the Qur'an and hadith dominate gayo poetry; and each poem is given a title according to the theme conveyed. Among the pieces of Gayo's poetry are the relationship between man and God, the stories of the Prophets, the relationship between parents and children, and the relationship between husband and wife. Advice or messages are conveyed with a series of words that have artistic value and not infrequently also in the form of insinuations to soften the way of delivery so that it sounds smooth to the listener. Aboebakar Atjeh, writing:

“Art is an impulse born by the mind in an exquisite form and employing language and arrangement of words poured out in a form, which not only by the author or poet but also by others can be accepted as something beautiful.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Fitria Ratnawati, *Gayo Sang Pemikat*, last modified January 2021, [https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/GAYO\\_SANG\\_PEMIKAT/rXxOEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=0](https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/GAYO_SANG_PEMIKAT/rXxOEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=0).

<sup>16</sup> Hermansyah and Zulkhairi, *Transformasi Syair Jauharat at-Tauhid di Nusantara* (Bali: Pustaka Larasan, 2014), 30.

<sup>17</sup> W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* 3rd ed. (Jakarta: P.T. Intan Pariwara, 2011), 1170.

<sup>18</sup> Aboebakar Atjeh, *Aceh dalam Sejarah Kebudayaan Sastra dan Kesenian* (Bandung: PT.Al-Ma'arif, 1970), 78.



A group of gayo scholars led by Tgk. Yahya invented Syair, a new genre of oral tradition. Syair was initially used for teaching religious texts as well as learning the Quran for students, which was chanted in various mosques or museums and Islamic schools. Tgk. Yahya and his colleagues promoted tafsir also as an attempt to avoid contradictions in religious understanding. In the hands of Tgk. Abdurrahman Daudy, poetry became a medium for social criticism.<sup>19</sup> In the 1950s the art of poetry in Gayo reached its golden age with several poet figures such as Tgk. Yahya bin Rasyid, Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy, Tgk. Chalidin, Tgk. Chatib Bensus, Tgk. H. Harun Rasyid, Tgk. H. Sulaiman, Tgk. H. Geucik Mongal, Tgk. Abd. Jalil Bahagia, Tgk. Ashaluddin, and others. Based on the analysis of the poems they wrote, the *Gayo syai'r* can be divided into several types: historical, religious, and exhortatory.<sup>20</sup> However, all of these types of poems have a deep meaning of good messages, and historical poems are usually accompanied by messages to take lessons from the past, while advice poems are accompanied by messages to uphold ethics, carry out rights and obligations towards themselves, others and the natural environment.

One of those poets who is intense with religious poetry is Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy.<sup>21</sup> His poems are full of exemplary messages about

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<sup>19</sup> John R. Bowen, "A Modernist Muslim Poetic: Irony and Social Critique in Gayo Islamic Verse," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 3 (1993): 632–33. See: Arfiansyah, "Islam dan Budaya Masyarakat Gayo, Provinsi Aceh: Kajian Sejarah dan Sosial," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia* 1, no.1 (2020): 1-31, <https://journal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/jsai>.

<sup>20</sup> Mirzan Fuadi, in L.K.Ara, *Anthology of Gayo Poetry* (Banda Aceh: PeNA Foundation, 2009), in Subagio Sastrowardoyo, A. Kasim Achmad, *Anthology of ASEAN Literatures; The Islamic period in Indonesian literature*, (ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, 1989), 2.

<sup>21</sup> Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy also known as Tgk. Mudekala, was born in Kebayakan in 1911 (there is also a mention of 1910). He studied at Nangka Kebayakan Vervolk School and Gele Gantung Islamic Boarding School led by Tgk. Muhammad Shaleh (Tgk. Pulo Kitun). At the age of 27, he produced a Gayo tafsir book published in Egypt. L.K.Ara, *Antologi Syair Gayo* (Banda Aceh: Yayasan PeNa, 2009), 123. Tgk. Mudekala studied poetry with Tengku Yahye and Arabic with Tengku Jali at the





the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. He was a prolific figure in writing poetry.<sup>22</sup> He published a collection of poems with some of his contemporaries entitled “Tafsir Gayo” (1938). In this book, there are poems by authors Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy, Tgk. Yahya bin Rasib, Tgk. Chatib Benu, Tgk. Aman Srikuli and others. Later generations of poets also recorded their poems in a book entitled “Serangkum Saer Gayo” (1971). This book contains the works of poets Aman Hasan, Geucik Mongal, Syeh Midin, Tengku Abd. Jalil Bahagia and others.<sup>23</sup>

## Methods

This study is essential to understand the phenomenon of *living sunnah* in Gayo poetry literature. This study is qualitative and conducted *field research* with data collection methods of interviews and *library research* by examining various literature related to this research. The review is limited to written poems only because it is more accountable and more accessible in the research process. Furthermore, to be more effective and focused on this study, the *sampling* method is carried out by examining the poems of Abdurrahim Daudy as a poet who existed during the golden era of Gayo Syair (the 1950s).

However, in the process, it still does not leave the examination of poems by other poets as a comparison. The functionalism in anthropological *studies* states that all cultural elements are valuable parts of society.<sup>24</sup> *The historical-sociological* analysis is needed to examine the emergence and development of poetry in Gayo, and to pay

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Islamic Education school, John R. Bowen, *Muslims Through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 68.

<sup>22</sup> One of Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy's works is *Sejarah Daerah dan Suku Gayo*, originally published in stencil form by L.K.Ara Documentation. The first volume consisting of 295 stanzas of poetry was published in 1971 and the second volume consisting of 359 stanzas of poetry was published in 1972. The original manuscript before publication was found from R. Ahmad Banta and Aman Patriakala. See: Introduction in Abdurrahim Daudy, *Sejarah daerah dan Suku Gayo* (Jakarta: Indonesian and Regional Literature and Reading Book Publishing Project, 1979), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Harun Rasjid, *Alam Kubur; Saer-Saer Gayo* (Jakarta: P.T Balai Pustaka, 1994), 4.

<sup>24</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Group and The Individual in Functional Analysis,” *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 6 (1939): 938-964, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/218181>.



attention to the behavioral patterns of Gayo society in building the poetry tradition together.

The Gayo people have their language, the Gayo language (*basa Gayo*). This language is divided into two dialects: *Gayo Lut* and *Gayo Luwes*. Speakers of the Gayo Lut dialect are Gayo people who live in Central Aceh District and Bener Meriah District. In contrast, speakers of the Gayo Luwes dialect are Gayo people who live in Gayo Luwes District and Serbejadi people in Tamiang District.<sup>25</sup> In this article, Syair, because it is closely related to speech and to avoid differences in the meaning of the poem, focuses only on the address of the *Gayo Lut* dialect.

## Results

### Gayo Poetry Lyrics and Performance Art

Many stanzas of poetry by Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy contain the values of hadith references, such as in the poem entitled *Haram ku Kaum Ibu*: First stanza; *Sahan-sahan ko kaum istri* (whoever the wives are), *Ku atas suami we putetiro* (who begs her husband), *Muniro talak ku atas suami* (asking for divorce from husband), *Enta sana kuli gere itoho* (I do not know what the problem is). Second stanza; *Keta haram ku kaum ibu* (so it is forbidden for mothers), *Nise mudemu beuni serge* (They have the odor of heaven), *Patut ipikir ku kaum istri* (Wives should think), *Cerakni nabi oyale mulo* (that's what the Prophet said). Third stanza; *Kati beta cerakni Nabi* (that's why the Prophet said this), *Nge ara terjadi ara nge contoh* (Has already happened, and there are examples), *Seba tebi'et ni jema banan* (some traits of women), *Nise perceraan gere bertaso* (loose talk that doesn't hold back). Fourth stanza; *Urum si rawan baring sana cerak*, *Nge ujunge talak nise itiro*, *Sentan mudemu gere ara len*, *Turah iceren aku besilo*. Fifth stanza; *Jema si rawan dabuh-dabuh silep*, *Kerna tiep-tiep hampir jep lo*, *Male mungadu gere ara Langkah*, *Sebeb nefekah gere gantung*. Sixth stanza; *Udah kati ara beta nise buet*, *Jema i deret udah ara mungaco*, *Macam akal jema munaduk*, *Kenemni kuduk we iango*. Seventh stanza; *Banan*

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<sup>25</sup> M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 15.



*oya pe nge galak orok, Sebeb muggedok isine puro, Meh kemokotne jeme we cere, Sebeb sabi-sabi ipasung.* Eighth stanza; *Kediken beta buet ni Istri, Geh kene Nabi payahle mayo, Enti mulo serge nise mudehu, Sedangkan beu nise belayam lanyo.*

Another poem by Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy that contains hadith values is found in the stanzas of the poem entitled *Ike Ibetehko*, in stanza 21; *Musyrik ku Tuhen gere berpiuh* (*syirik* to god never ends), *Gere mera teduh atewe sangkut* (won't stop his heart from tugging), *We sembahyang nguk parin sungguh* (he can pray properly), *Ketape dabuh syirik ikedut* (but the *syirik* that is -prioritized-). In stanza 22; *Dele pedi ilen pekara mungkar* (there are still many evils), *Gere meh iseder secara lanyut* (not fully mentioned), *Oya kati Nabi ara berunger* (that is why the Prophet mentioned), *Kedik seseger si gatine mongot* (laugh occasionally and cry more).

In the poem titled *Adab Minum*, at least four stanzas related to the prophet's hadith are also found: In the first stanza; *Wan sara hadis rawahud Dailami* (in a hadith narrated by Dailami), *Ara icecari perkara adab* (there is mention of Adab), *Sungune nge berkata Rasulullah* (the messenger of Allah said), *Iterangne tegah ku bene umet* (which he explained to all people). Continued in the second stanza; *Minum mudegot mucampur kuyu* (drink one sip mixed with the wind), *Weisni labu tangkuh mulumpet* (gourd water gushes out), *Buet lagu noya ara kite cube* (things like that we try to do), *Selagu kite ulak ari buet* (when we come homework); and the third stanza: *Minum mudegot munyakiti jantung* (drinking at the same time makes the heart hurt), *Ate mugulung rasae pedet* (the heart feels solidly rolled up), *Gelah ipatih cerakni Rasulullah* (The Prophet's words should be applied), *Gere iosah minum mudegot* (not allowed to drink all at once). Then the fourth stanza: *Ari kerna gerahan gere ipeduli* (because it is hot, no longer cared for), *Cerakni Nabi gere ne kite inget* (we no longer remember the Prophet's words), *Kin penyakit jantung gere ne terih* (no longer afraid of heart disease), *Perin tulenni weih nge salah dolot* (this bone says that the water has been mis-sipped).

Another poem entitled *Mukale*, in this poem only a few stanzas are found that contain hadith reference values, in the first stanza: *Wan sara hadis berkata Rasulullah* (in one *hadith* the Prophet said),



*Munerangan tuahni jema si mukale* (explains the luck of the longing), *Jema mukale urum si kalei* (the one who longs and the one who is longed for), *Nabi Berjanji sara wa tempat* (The Prophet promised to be placed in one place).

In addition, there is also a poem entitled *Dunie Akherat Turah Tepang*. Namely in the first stanza; *Nabi Muhammad nge mularang* (Prophet Muhammad has forbidden), *Gere iosae timpang turahe tepat* (no lame allowed but must be balanced), *Lingni hadis si patut itimang*, (the content of this hadith is worth considering), *Kin pemanangni kite ummet* (to be a reference for people). Second stanza; *Gere Jeroh ko munaringen denie* (it is not good for you to leave the world), *Karena seje sebab akherat* (because of the things of the afterlife), *Itarengen akherat karena denie* (the hereafter is forsaken for the world), *Oyape gere nguk iperbuat* (even then, it should not be done). Ninth stanza; *Oya bewene perkara denie* (it is all a matter of the world), *Kin jelente beluh ku akherat* (as a path to the afterlife), *Olok pedi bengis Nabi munyerapa* (The Prophet was very angry), *Ku atani jema tubuhe sehat* (in people with healthy bodies). Tenth stanza; *Tentang ni muripe berpangung ku jema* (whose life is dependent on others), *Baring sana-sana ku jema terberat* (whatever it is that burdens people), *Bening-bening berengot seje* (just staying silent), *Lagu manusi jema si cacat* (like a deformed human being).

From the performance side, in addition to solo performances, Gayo poetry is also performed in groups. Solo performances are unidirectional performances in which verses are delivered without any response from the other party, so they are only limited to providing verses to be heard or listened to by the listener. Another type of poetry performance is a unidirectional performance (reciprocal poetry), where poems are delivered to be attended to by other parties and then get answers or replies in the form of poems from other poets. The art of poetry is also competed by either person or group; they perform to



represent a specific social unit. In a Gayo poetry performance, the *ceh*.<sup>26</sup> The *Saer* usually begins with the *basmalah* and continues by reciting a verse from the Holy Qur'an or a Prophet's hadith. Sometimes the verse is not entirely recited because *ilach* (so on) is said at the end. After that, the poetry begins. During the performance of Syair Gayo, all participants try to live up to the poetry performed by the *ceh saer*. The beautiful song performed by the melodious-voiced *ceh* is then followed in chorus by the participants in the group. In addition to completing the voice, sometimes the performers move their limbs, shoulders, head, and others to the song's rhythm.<sup>27</sup>

One group sits in a circle and chants typical lyrics with religious messages without clapping. This type of poetry was previously underdeveloped due to a different kind of literary art in Gayo, namely *didong*. *Didong* has an essential place in the history of the Gayo people; some say it came after the Linge kingdom in Aceh, to perfect the previous religions and tribes that had settled in Gayo. So the Linge kingdom filled the art by changing the poetic pattern to a more Islamic one with religious advice and drumming.<sup>28</sup> However, it was explained that during the DI/TII upheaval in Aceh, generally in Gayo around the last period of the 1950s, the art of *didong* became stagnant because *didong* was banned by the DI. They looked for other ways to channel it and started 'playing' *saer*.<sup>29</sup>

The art of *didong* is a configuration of sound, literature, and dance, consisting of about 15-20 men. It consists of several main artists (*ceh*), and the rest are accompanists (*penunung* or *penyur*). The *ceh didong* sits in the middle of the accompanists are tasked to moving their

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<sup>26</sup> Ceh is a poet with extensive knowledge and a melodious voice. Ceh can be male or female, Gayo female *ceh* like Tgk Siti Jeriah, she often sings poems created by Tgk. Yahya bin Rasyid. In the course of her life, she met and married Abdurrahim Daudy.

<sup>27</sup> LK.Ara. "Syair Gayo Sastra Bernafas Islam," last modified March 3, 2018, <https://lkara.wordpress.com/2008/08/11/syair-gayo-sastra-bernafas-islam/>.

<sup>28</sup> Junaidi. "Komparasi Syair Didong Jalu antara Klub Arita Mude dan Klub Biak Cacak dalam Etika Komunikasi Islam," (Thesis UIN Ar-Raniry, 2017), 34.

<sup>29</sup> M.J. Melalatoa, *Didong, Kesenian Tradisional Gayo* (Jakarta: Jakarta Cultural Media Project, Directorate General of Culture, Department of Education and Culture, 1981), 36.



bodies forward and the other sides while clapping their hands or patting pillows to a certain rhythm. During the performance, the performer will chant verses in the Gayo language. The verses can include religious preaching, social issues, or development. The lyrics are created by the *ceh*, some of which must be formed spontaneously in front of the audience.<sup>30</sup> The *ceh saer* are generally people with a deep religious knowledge or ulama background. When *didong* was banned, poetry performances returned, although only for about two-three years (1957-1959). Around 1960, the ban on *didong* began to be lifted as security conditions recovered, and *didong* performances began to flourish again.

The literary art of Gayo poetry is specifically performed without hand clapping and is more dominant in religious advice. However, poetic lyrics are also sometimes found in the art of *didong*, but in *didong* the lyrics conveyed are more varied, usually have a thicker motive for a particular interest, and it is not uncommon for the art of *didong* to be performed during political campaigns. According to the records of *didong* art researchers, from 1937-1942 to 1977, there were 89 *didong* groups, the names of the groups included *ujung gele*, *sipi-sipi*, *linge*, *munte*, and so on.<sup>31</sup> The art of *didong* is generally performed at weddings, holidays, and other traditional ceremonies. *Didong* is also committed to entertaining and honoring guests. In later developments, *didong* art was held for the public and organized by a committee, for example for the construction of mosques, schools, etc., which was held several nights.<sup>32</sup> Although poetry in the Gayo community of Central Aceh still exists today, its development has experienced ups and downs. Not many generations are capable of becoming *ceh saer*, because creating poetry is not an easy thing. It takes science, knowledge, a high artistic spirit, and a creative side. Alex Sobur writes:

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<sup>30</sup> M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 20. See also: Yusuf and Toet, *Indonesia punya cerita: kebudayaan dan kebiasaan unik di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Cerdas Interaktif, 2012), 121. Another instrument that can be used to accompany *didong* is the accordion (usually used by to'et in his solo performances).

<sup>31</sup> Abdul Rani Usman and C. Harun Al Rashid, *Budaya Aceh*, (Banda Aceh: Aceh Provincial Government, Aceh Culture and Tourism Office, 2009), 115.

<sup>32</sup> Abdul Rani Usman, and C. Harun Al Rasyid, *Budaya Aceh*, 115.



“Art can be said to be a skill, expertise, and action to produce something that is not just born with high creativity. Creativity, in this sense, is spiritual or mental work that can develop and utilize the theory it has mastered in dealing with various problems in its field. Those who are only knowledgeable and skilled but lack creativity will become “craftsmen” who are different from the arts.”<sup>33</sup>

The extensive knowledge, and the high creativity possessed by each poet, illustrate the level of understanding and aesthetic value of a poet; even towards an object, the poets differ in their knowledge and lyrics. They make essays in their minds and then sing them in the form of the rhymed saga. Therefore, it sometimes happens that the same hikayat has different verses if two or three other people sing it back.<sup>34</sup>

Some gayo poems are delivered orally, and some are written down. Oral delivery is generally not documented except on a few occasions, such as during poetry performances, whether contested or not. Documentation can take the form of voice recording, video recording, or writing down what has been recorded. This last activity is one of the contributions to the preservation of poetry from the oral type into writing (written). Conversely, poetry delivered orally but not documented will most likely disappear along with the poet's death.<sup>35</sup> As for the types of poetry that are written, some of them have been collected

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<sup>33</sup> Alex Sobur, in *Ensiklopedia Komunikasi*, ed. Nunik Siti Nurbaya (Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media, 2014), 719.

<sup>34</sup> Aboebakar Atjeh, *Aceh dalam Sejarah...*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> The results of an interview (2015) conducted by *Lintasgayo.Co* with Abdul Kadir To'et (w.2015) gayo poet who has a melodious voice, despite only completing education up to grade 6 elementary school only, he is a productive poet, he explained that the idea of making poetry can be from anywhere, sometimes the idea is from the newspapers he reads and processes it with his own mind. For him, making poetry is not an easy thing to teach because he is inspired naturally, he has created about a hundred poems and he does not have a record, everything is in his memorization. Fikar W. Eda “To'et; seperti Wartawan, Penyair adalah Pencatat,” last modified February 27, 2018, <https://lintasgayo.co/2015/07/10/toet-seperti-wartawan-penyair-adalah-pencatat/>.



and published so that they can become a treasure of gayo poetry that can still be enjoyed today. Besides that, nowadays, gayo poets generally introduce their poetry to the public by writing it down. It takes skill to deliver verses, especially since poems given orally are usually spontaneous and adjust to the theme of the conversation that is going on at that time. However, this does not mean that poetry delivered in writing is easier to create. Each stanza of poetry contains high values and must be interrelated with one another.

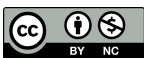
After the death of poets who lived during the golden era such as Abdurrahim Daudy, the art of poetry has declined, not only the art of poetry but also other arts in general in Aceh (including Gayo) have become increasingly rare, M.J. Melalatoa states that some oral traditions in Gayo have begun to fade towards extinction. The art of didong is the only one that is likely to survive and thrive.<sup>36</sup> However, there were government efforts to promote Gayo poetry again. In 1971, a competition for the creation of Gayo poetry was held by the Head of Culture at the Office of the Department of Education and Culture of Central Aceh District together with the local Islamic Holiday Committee in order to celebrate *Eid al-Adha*. At that time, the committee set two titles, *Eid al-Adha* and *History of the Slaughter of Ismail*. This contest received a warm welcome, marked by the number of contest participants including the participation of famous poets such as Tgk. Abdul Jalil Bahagia, Tgk. H. Geucik Mongal, Tgk. Syeh Midin. As a result of the competition, several quality *Syaer Gayo* poems were collected. In 1971 the selected texts were published under the title “*Serangkum Syaer Gayo*” by L.K.Ara Documentation’ in stencil form with a limited number of copies. The competition was discontinued, and the art of saer languished again. That is how Gayo *saer* art stayed quiet for around 20 years.<sup>37</sup>

The Gayo people are followers of Islam. Outwardly, this can be seen in the pattern of villages with *mersah*, *joyah*, and mosque (*mesegit*) buildings. For the Gayo people, Islam, with its creed and all its rules, is the primary reference for behavior that goes hand in hand with

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<sup>36</sup> M.Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 16.

<sup>37</sup> LK.Ara. “Syair Gayo Sastra Bernafas Islam,” [lkara.wordpress.com](http://lkara.wordpress.com) (blog).





traditional values and norms.<sup>38</sup> Islam entered the Gayo area in 416 AH-1025 AD, and Islamic culture began to be built here, even then Islam became something inherent in the lives of the people, as seen from the popular jargon in Gayo society “*Ukum orom edet, Lagu Jet Orom Sipet*” (Islamic law and customary law are like substances with properties), in another expression mentioned “*Edet Iberet Peger, Hukum Iberet Senuen*” (Custom is a fence and Islamic law as a plant).<sup>39</sup>

There are several types of gayo oral literature besides poetry (religious songs), namely; *kekitiken* (riddles), *kekeberen* (folklore), *melengkan* (traditional speech), *guru-didong*, *didong*, and *saman*.<sup>40</sup> The various presentations of oral literature are usually performed in two forms, namely indirect performances (tapes) or live performances (*live performances*).<sup>41</sup> Before Islam entered the Gayo region, the art of *kekeberen* literature was already known in the community, which has an important position, especially in the family environment. After Islam entered and began to develop in this area, poetry gradually replaced the role of *kekeberen*.<sup>42</sup> As for the saman dance, which also uses the Gayo

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<sup>38</sup> M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> M. Saleh Suhaidy, *Rona Perkawinan...*, 9. Another version states that since the 17th century the gayo people have embraced Islam, Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, *Kamus Sejarah Indonesia*, original title: *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2012), 144. M.J. Melalatoa quotes from Kadir's explanation, that the exact time when the belief system of Islam entered the Gayo area is still uncertain. M.J. Melalatoa, *Kebudayaan Gayo* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982), 144.

<sup>40</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra Lisan Gayo* (Jakarta: Language Development Center, Department of Education and Culture, 1985), 3. M. Junus Melalatoa, *Memahami Aceh...*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra...*, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Sulaiman Hanafiah, *Sastra...*, 11. In the past, almost every Gayo home had a fireplace in one of the rooms of the house, where they would gather around the fireplace to keep warm while enjoying a drink of coffee that they usually grew themselves. This gathering habit may also have led to the need for entertainment (unlike today's technology-enabled entertainment), and the *kekeberen* that was prevalent in the early years of Islam was replaced with religious poetry.



language, it is usually performed at important events or events in the adat, including when commemorating the birth of the Prophet.<sup>43</sup>

## Discussion

### Sunnah Values, Transformation and Performer Motifs

Based on several stanzas of the poem, the poem entitled Haram ku Kaum Ibu tells the story of a wife who is not ideal in terms of behaviour, often asking for divorce from her husband for no apparent reason, saying bad words to her husband even though maintenance has been fulfilled, so that her husband gets angry and there is an argument. The possibility that the wife is also influenced by a third party who has bad intentions so that the household is destroyed or disharmonious, so that anything can become a problem that triggers a quarrel. To wives with this character, the poet wants to convey that for them, as the Prophet's hadith, they will not be able to smell heaven, let alone enter it. Other aspects to note, there are words adapted from Arabic, such as *talak* (thalaq), *haram*, *nefekah* (nafkah), *nabi*, *rasul*, *anbiya'*, *amanah*, *musyirik* (polytheists) and *tekdir* (destiny).<sup>44</sup> These terms show that Gayo religious poetry is full of Islamic advice or values. Even so, the influence of Hindu remnants still seems to find a place in Gayo poetry, albeit very little, as seen in the popularity of the word *sembahyang* (Gayo: *semiang*) - meaning *prayer*<sup>45</sup> - used by Gayo people rather than the word *prayer*, as in stanza 21 of Daudy's poem *Ike ibetehko*.

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<sup>43</sup> Fitria Ratnawati, *Gayo Sang Pemikat*, last modified January 2021, [https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/GAYO\\_SANG\\_PEMIKAT/rXxOEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=0](https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/GAYO_SANG_PEMIKAT/rXxOEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=0).

<sup>44</sup> The word *tekdir* is usually followed by the word *ni ilahi*, *ni Allah* or *ni tuhen*. Which can be interpreted to mean: Divine Destiny, God's Destiny or God's Destiny.

<sup>45</sup> *Sembahyang* comes from the Old Javanese language. From the word *sembah* it means respect, submission, servitude, supplication. The word *hyang* means god, goddess, holy. So the word *sembahyang* means to honor or submit and plead to the God or to the holy. So worship here has a fairly broad meaning. Doing homage to the gods or God Almighty or to something holy. See: Ketut Wiana, *Sembahyang menurut Hindu* (Jakarta: Dharma Naradha Foundation, 1992), 1. In the daily language of the Gayo people, they use the word *sembahyang* or *semiang* for the word *prayer*. R. Thantawy et al., *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia-Gayo II* (Jakarta: Language Development



The advice in the poem is clearly referenced from the Prophet, such as; “*Nabi Muhammad telah berkata, ”cerakni Nabi gelah kite selidiki*” (the Prophet’s words should be investigated), “*Nabi ara berunger*” (the Prophet has said), “*Nge berkata Rasulullah*” (the Prophet has said), “*wan sara hadis berkata Rasulullah*” (Rasulullah said in a *hadith*), “*Nabi Muhammad nge mularang*” (the Prophet Muhammad forbade), “*Kite penge perini Muhammad*” (we listen to what Muhammad said), “*olok pedi bengis Nabi munyerapa*” (the Prophet was very angry), “*gelah ipatih cerakni Rasulullah*” (it is better to take the words of the Messenger of Allah to heart). Although the sentence that references the hadith is different in the redaction, the substance is the same, namely that “the Messenger of Allah has said”, so the word should be considered and applied.

Poems that refer to the hadith, are often motivated by the poet’s anxiety about the crisis of values afflicting the community. The advice is also socially critical-sensitive. As in the words *jema i deret udah ara mungaco* (people outside the household may be there to disturb the atmosphere). And the themes raised are those that are rampant in social reality. Such the habit of some women who quickly ask for a divorce and lead to quarrels can be seen in the words *nge ujunge talak nise tiro* (in the end, she asked for a divorce), *jema si prone dabuh-dabuh silep* (the husband also became mistaken). In the poem “*Haram ku Kaum Ibu,*” Abdurrahim Daudy describes the moral crisis of wives who cannot sort out good words for their husbands. It can be seen in stanza three.

In the poem entitled *Adab drinking*, it is also mentioned that the attitude of drinking in one gulp is also practiced in society. It is a concern

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Center, 1996), 193. The Hindu-Buddhist period also bequeathed a form of vocabulary absorption from Sanskrit, the absorption of vocabulary related to the need to accommodate new concepts introduced from contact with India, both through Hinduism and Buddhism. These words proved to have enriched the ancient Javanese language, which was the most widely used language in official texts during the Hindu-Buddhist period. The ancient Javanese language was also used in the writing of inscriptions and literary works in its day, and therefore had a continuing influence on subsequent ages. Taufik Abdullah et al., *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah* (Jakarta: PT. Ihtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 2012), 328.



for the poet, and by referring to the hadith<sup>46</sup> Sometimes the message of the hadith is presented first, and then the reference from the Prophet is stated, while other times, the connection from the Prophet is displayed first, and then the message of the hadith is included. From the series of verses to further emphasize the importance of applying the values of the hadith/sunnah, the poet often gives advice and consists of the impact or threat if the values are not implemented.

The hadith is generally conveyed in the form of the matan meaning only, as in the poem. Still, some are accompanied by other explanations, such as the narrator's name or mukharrij of the hadith. For example the first stanza of Abdurrahim Daudy's poem entitled *Adab Minum*. The manners of drinking in the poem refer to the hadith narrated by Dailami, but it is not the full text of the hadith or a fragment of it, but only the meaning that the poet has translated. The narrator's name strongly indicates that the poems refer to the sunnah or traditions of the Prophet. Some of the traditions that Abdurrahim Daudy allegedly refers to in his poems are not accompanied by an explanation of the quality of the practices, whether they are *sahih*, *hasan* or *dha'if*. Still, they can be categorized as popular traditions. These traditions are:

- a. The poem titled "*Ike ibetehko*" seems to refer to the hadith about the noble traits and behaviors of the Prophet that should be followed, one of which is not to laugh too much. It is particularly evident in the last stanza (22).<sup>47</sup>
- b. In the poem entitled *Haram ku Kaum Ibu*, it seems to refer to the hadith about wives who will not be able to smell the fragrance of heaven because they ask their husbands for divorce without a clear reason. This can be seen from the first and second stanzas.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The hadith that is allegedly referenced in this poem is: "*When you drink, drink little by little, do not drink in one gulp, for that will cause liver (kidney and spleen) disease.*" (Hadith Dailami).

<sup>47</sup> Hadith: وَلَا تُكْثِرُ الضَّحْكَ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الضَّحْكَ تُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ "Don't laugh often because frequent laughter is deadly to the heart." (At-Tirmidzi no. 2227).

<sup>48</sup> Hadith: أَيُّمَا امْرَأة سَأَلَتْ زَوْجَهَا طَلَاقًا فِي غَيْرِ مَا بَأْسٍ، فَحَرَامٌ عَلَيْهَا رَائِحَةُ الْجَنَّةِ "Any woman who asks her husband for a divorce without a justifiable reason will have the smell of Paradise forbidden to her." (Abu Daud no.2226; At-Tirmidzi no.1187).



- c. In the poem titled “*Adab Minum*”, it seems to refer to the hadith about drinking etiquette. This can be seen in the third stanza.<sup>49</sup>
- d. The poem entitled ‘*Mukale*’, seems to refer to the hadith about longing that brings benefits. It can be seen from especially the first stanza.<sup>50</sup>
- e. The poem entitled ‘*Dunie Akherat Turah Tepang*’ seems to refer to the hadith about the balance between the world and the hereafter. It can be seen especially in the first and second stanzas.<sup>51</sup> In this poem, Abdurrahman Daudy also emphasizes the importance of being diligent in working, not lazy, and relying on others. It appears in the ninth and tenth stanzas.

In Gayo poetry, in addition to using regular rhymes, there are also poems that are irregular in rhyme but usually have similar sounds (vocals). for example, in the poem *Haram Ku Kaum Ibu*, it consists of 32 lines grouped with 4 lines each in 8 stanzas. Some of them have a/b/a/b rhyme (stanza 1), and the rest have irregular rhymes.<sup>52</sup> There is also a rhyme of a/b/c/b (in *Dunie Akherat Turah Tepang* stanza 9 and 10). However, for the gayo people themselves, the art of gayo poetry (including *didong*) has undergone a moral/aesthetic transformation both in terms of lyrics and delivery; poetry is now perceived to be increasingly shallow from the essence of advice and ignores the values of rhetorical subtlety. One of the poet performers stated:

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<sup>49</sup> Hadith: “*When you drink, drink little by little, do not drink it in one gulp, for that will cause liver (kidney and spleen) disease.*” (Ad-Dailami).

<sup>50</sup> Hadith: أَنْتَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ “*You will be with the one you love*”. (Muslim, no.2639).

<sup>51</sup> “*Is not the best among you the one who leaves the interests of the world to pursue the Hereafter or leaves the Hereafter to pursue the world so as to combine the two. Indeed, the life of this world leads you to the life of the hereafter. Do not be a burden to others*” (Hadith ‘Asakir and Anas).

<sup>52</sup> Abdurrahim Daudy's poems have a variety of rhymes. If the poem above is dominated by irregular rhymes, then in his poem entitled *Ike ibetehko*, out of 22 stanzas, 20 of them are poems with regular rhymes a/b/a/b.



“Didong seni olok pedeh kasar nge, ibarat e nge munyaci sesabe diri, ati dele jema tue si murip ari tun 1990-an ku tuyuh gere suka dan gere senang nengon didong seni.”<sup>53</sup>

(*Didong* now is too rude; it’s like they’re criticizing each other, that’s why a lot of older people who lived from the 1990s onwards don’t like to see *didong* nowadays.)

It is said that the subtle language is that the verses conveyed are not directly conveyed to the point, but the *ceh* will convey polite language and say good and other speech words conveyed by the *ceh* through their verses, likening something to a feeling and not offending others. Whereas it is said to be rude is the opposite, making *ceh* hurt by words that are not in accordance with the true nature of *didong*. In the sense that the *didong* delivered was *uken teridah usi* (delivered directly and not using figures of speech).<sup>54</sup> *Saer Gayo* still exists although it is not as popular as *didong* in its performances. Some *gayo* people who create poetry today include Fikar W.EDA, Bahtiar, Pitkawari Cobat, Amalah Ari Kenawat, Tungal Belang, Ecek Suku Aleckave Bersah, and Pitkawari Cobat. Their poetry has been classified and written on their social media pages, such as Facebook, rather than religion. There is a desire and effort from these poets to book the poems they write, as expressed by Bahtiar.<sup>55</sup>

Many of today’s young *Gayo* generation no longer understand the old *Gayo* languages. So that the ancient *Gayo* language, especially *Gayo* poetry, was considered foreign and can even be said to be endangered. In general, professor Aboebakar Atjeh put forward several proposals for the preservation of *Acehnese* art.<sup>56</sup> whose substance can

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<sup>53</sup> Someone. 2017. (One of the *ceh* Arika). Interview by Junaidi. January 2017. In Junaidi, “*Komparasi Syair Didong Jalu...*,” 35-36.

<sup>54</sup> Someone. 2017. (One of the *ceh* Arika). Interview by Junaidi. January 2017. In Junaidi, “*Komparasi Syair Didong Jalu...*,” 35.

<sup>55</sup> Bahtiar (*Gayo* Poet), Interview by Ruhama Wazna, March 11, 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Some of the proposals are: 1. Studying the authenticity of *Acehnese* arts, for which there should be *Acehnese* language teaching in all levels of education, especially universities. The language taught is not the local dialect but the standard one; 2.



also be applied to Gayo saer art, namely: There should be gayo language teaching in all levels of education, especially universities; Occasionally a writing competition is held in Gayo; Availability of gayo literature, such as *saer-saer*, *kekeberen*, and so on; Discussions and polemics about the Gayo language are channeled through magazines (publishing cultural magazines), occasionally decided in cultural sessions; There needs to be a park to train saer art under the leadership of the expertise of the Aceh Cultural Institute. However, efforts to enliven poetry have begun, such as the Bener Meriah regional government which held a poetry competition in 2021, and plans to make it an annual agenda of the regional government through the Gayo Customary Council.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the verses of Tgk. Abdurrahim Daudy have also been revived by contemporary preachers in Aceh, especially by Tgk. Irwansyah who in his preaching material quotes many of the verses of the cleric. Irwansyah is often invited to give lectures in various districts and cities in Aceh.<sup>58</sup>

Now the poets are generally no longer among the scholars but lovers of literary arts who do not criticize the science of religious education in particular; among them, some work as farmers, journalists, and so on. The *living sunnah* in the poems they create is vaguer because it does not mention the reference from the Prophet even though it contains the values of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. Among the Gayo community, some create poems to preach Islam, preserve customs or

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Occasionally a writing competition is held in the Acehnese language; 3. The availability of literature of hikayat-hikayat, haba-haba etc; 4. Discussions and polemics about the Acehnese language are channeled through magazines (publishing cultural magazines), occasionally decided in cultural sessions; 5. There needs to be a park to train the arts in each region centered in Banda Aceh under the leadership of the expertise of the Aceh Cultural Institute. Aboebakar atjeh, *Aceh Dalam Sejarah...*, 85-88.

<sup>57</sup> Budi Fatria, "Pemkab Bener Meriah Gelar Lomba Melengkan dan Syair Gayo, Hakim Tungul Naru Juara Umum, Ini Rincian," last modified April 11, 2021, <https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2021/04/11/pemkab-bener-meriah-gelarlomba-melengkan-dan-syair-gayo-hakim-tungul-naru-juara-umum-ini-rincian>.

<sup>58</sup> WD and Zuhra R., "Irwansyah, Da'i Pelantun Syair Mude Kala," last modified November 13, 2020, <https://lintasgayo.co/2020/11/13/irwansyah-dai-pelantun-syair-mude-kala/>.



instill *akhlakul karimah*. Still, some watch and provide support, and some have interests behind it. It means that Gayo people have different ways of responding to poetry; some are idealists or just participants and some are opportunists. Each has other characteristics regarding the actors, their primary orientation, and the direct achievements obtained. The following details are presented in tabular form:

### Gayo Classification of Poetry (*Saer*)

<b>Subject</b>		
<b>Idealistic</b>	<b>Idealist</b>	<b>Opportunist</b>
Author and ceh saer from Ulama; Saer Gayo Lovers;	Ceh saer; performance members; viewers; reader	Sponsor events; political figures; community groups; Pemerintah; young men and women
<b>Main orientation</b>		
Spreading / syi'ar of Islam; Preserving customs; Instilling <i>al-Karimah</i> morals.	To showcase talent; to be famous; to understand the saer message; to be involved in preserving the saer tradition.	In order to get the attention of many people to the product that is being held; To promote political figures to be better known by the public; to raise the self-esteem of a community group; to spread the





		nation's ideology; to meet new people.
<b>Direct Outcomes</b>		
Earning works of Gayo saer; The existence of Gayo saer until now.	earning income; obtaining entertainment	a product that is recognized, demanded, and supported by many people. For example, building a mosque; Winning a political competition; Gaining recognition of the social status of divisions/clans; for the Gayo people to love Indonesia; Finding new friends or even a soul mate.

### Conclusion

In the art of Gayo poetry, there are values of *living sunnah*, both in oral and written poetry. Some poets openly express their reference to the Prophet's hadith. However, they do not report the *matan* or the meaning of the hadith completely and clearly, and some poets contain sunnah values but only vaguely. Generally, poets are scholars or people who have undergone religious education. In addition to the poet's artistic spirit, the syi'ar of Islam through poetry in the Gayo community is considered to be able to make an impression on the community. In



addition to being attracted by the poet's beautifully composed lyrics, the geographical influence of Gayo's excellent nature may also have influenced the early interest in this type of literature.

However, there has been a value shift in the creation and performance of Gayo poetry. The poets are generally no longer clerics, as they were in the 1950s and earlier, but lovers of literature who have never received a specialized religious education. As a result, poetry is now more characterized by general advice, and even if it is related to Islamic values, it is difficult to find direct references to the Qur'an or hadith. The verses of sunnah value are only delivered by a few preachers, and even then they are not creating new verses but repeating verses created by previous scholars. The motives for creating or performing Gayo poetry also vary. The letter is likely to exist in the present, ranging from the ideological or just the opportunistic participant to shifting moral values that now prioritize economic and political factors over preserving the *Saer* tradition.

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