

# THE GAYO PEOPLE PHILOSOPHY: *GENAP-MUPAKAT* AND SOCIAL HARMONIZATION IN CENTRAL ACEH

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**Abstract:** Gayo people construct collective deliberation called *Genap-Mupakat*, a dynamic social harmony entity as proof of local wisdom in Central Aceh. However, many people consider *Genap-Mupakat* a boring and time-consuming activity. Therefore, this study aimed to examine *Genap-Mupakat's* importance and significant influence on oneself and others. Data were collected qualitatively through in-depth interviews. The findings showed that Gayo people's philosophy of *Genap-Mupakat* fosters togetherness and justice. The system had Islamic philosophical values and was laden with knowledge, norms, rules, and laws as a reference in collective deliberation and behaviour to realize social harmony. The people must adhere to these principles to avoid conflicts and hostilities. The system stated that Gayo people have the characteristics of a republic, free, and democratic society. Therefore, the philosophy promoted orderliness in collective deliberation. The Gayo adage "*tertib bermajelis, umet bermulie*" means that orderliness in a meeting is a prerequisite for nobility.

**Keywords:** Philosophy; Gayo people; *Genap-Mupakat*; Social Harmony.

## Introduction

Human life is founded on values and philosophies in every nation, society, tribe, and family as a collective guide. Values and norms interpreted as philosophies stem from religion, culture, law, and science, serving as a basis for action and socialization by a nation, society, tribe, and family. Indonesian society's diverse

values and philosophies rely on feelings or myths, not rationality. Therefore, the basis is religion, culture, law, and science.<sup>1</sup>

Human life's noble values and philosophies originate from religion, culture, law, and science from nations, tribes, and families.<sup>2</sup> A nation or tribe has noble values as a reference and philosophy of life to form an ideal human figure with good moral character. In Indonesia, Gayo is one of the tribes that inhabit the central Aceh region, divided into several regencies. These regencies include Central Aceh, Southeast Aceh, Gayo Lues, and Bener Meriah. The tribe also inhabits Aceh Tamiang around the Lukup Serbejadi area.<sup>3</sup> However, this study was only conducted in Central Aceh Regency.

The people of Aceh are a tribe that has a long history in the past. The term "Aceh Tribe" (*suku Aceh*) is addressed to the indigenous people of Aceh who live in the Aceh Province, a province located at the northernmost tip of Sumatra Island. Most of the Acehnese population is Muslim and has a diverse cultural wealth. The cultures are full of Islamic values and local customs. The Aceh tribe has a very long history. The ancestors of the Aceh tribe came from various regions outside Indonesia, namely Arabia, Malay, Peninsular Malaysia, and India. Each particular period has distinctive cultural characteristics from different ancestors. This condition happened because the Aceh region became one of the most frequently visited stopovers for traders worldwide.

Before Islam came, the majority of Acehnese people embraced Hinduism. This can be proven by several Acehnese cultures that still have elements of Hinduism and Indian culture. But after Islam came, Acehnese culture changed and adapted to Islamic culture. So since then, the majority of the Aceh tribe has been Muslim. Acehnese cultures are still preserved until now. Some Acehnese cultures are quite famous and are still icons that appear when people in other regions remember Aceh.

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<sup>1</sup> Mariam Rawan Abdulla, "Culture, Region, and Freedom of Religion or Belief," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2018), 106-107.

<sup>2</sup> Fajar Syarif, "Managing Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Intergroup Relations Issues: Multiculturalism Islamic Education," *Jurnal Mudarrisuna*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2020), 92-128.

<sup>3</sup> Arfiansyah, "Islam dan Budaya Masyarakat Gayo, Provinsi Aceh: Kajian Sejarah dan Sosial," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2020), 1-31.

The characteristics of Aceh culture cannot be separated from history, customs, and Islam. Here are some types of culture owned by the Aceh tribe: the traditional house owned by the Aceh tribe called Krong Bade. The characteristic of this house is that it is on stilts with a floor distance of 2.5-3 meters from the ground. In Takengon, Central Aceh, it is called Umah Pitu. This building space uses wood, from the roof and floor to some ornaments decorated on the walls. At the same time, the roof is made of woven palm leaves. The uniqueness of this Aceh traditional house is in terms of its function. The underbelly of the house (a large space between the stages) functions as a place to store food supplies. Many more Acehnese cultures have existed in Acehnese society until now.

The Urang Gayo in Central Aceh region has been familiar with and understands the *Peri Mestike* philosophy used in education and socialization. Gayo culture is rich in local wisdom, values, arts, customs, and education. *Peri Mestike* (PM) philosophy is a traditional language with a high local wisdom value because it is used in communication, education, traditional ceremonies, and social conflict resolution. The philosophy has existed since ancient times and has been passed down orally (*babah*) from Gayo ancestors to their generations.<sup>4</sup> This is part of the formation of culture and local wisdom. In line with this, Yunus<sup>5</sup> identified several elements that form local insight. These elements include humans as cultural actors, ideas with good value, and truths handed down through tradition and recognized by the community.

Gayo philosophy is contained in *Peri Mestike*, which is their traditional language. As social creatures, humans cannot rely on other humans and creatures to fulfil their needs. Furthermore, humans must socialize and rely on good reasoning, a statement included in Gayo philosophy "*akal kin pangkal kekire ken belenye*." Therefore, it will achieve "*murip kanung edet mate kanung bumi, murip benar mate suci*."

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<sup>4</sup> Indra, Al Rasyidin, and Sukiman, "Internalization of Falsafah 'Perih Mestike Gayo' as an effort to Developing Students' Characters Based on Local Authority in SMA 1 Takengon Aceh Central District," *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (2019), 817-822.

<sup>5</sup> Abd. Rahim Yunus, "Nilai-Nilai Islam dalam Budaya dan Kearifan Lokal; Konteks Budaya Bugis," *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2015), 1-12.

Gayo's philosophy of life refers to "*akal kin pangkal kekire ken belenye*," meaning that human beings must use their mind in all actions. The mind must be knowledgeable to achieve that goodness. This philosophy identifies knowledge with "*kekire kin belenye*" or "the mind used as a living capital in socializing." Meanwhile, "*murip kanung edet mate kanung bumi*" or 'living in the customs and dying in the earth,' means that every action taken in socializing activities should use cultural values to guide life. "*Murip benar mate suci*" means that in living life, one must be righteous and follow Islamic rules and local customs. Therefore, any conclusion is inseparable from Islamic principles, culture, and good local traditions.

*Genap-Mupakat* is a local wisdom formed as a cultural advantage of the Gayo Aceh Tengah community, emphasizing the principle of deliberation in accommodating and channelling opinions or aspirations of the community in governance, implementing regional development, and community development. With *Genap-Mupakat*, problems can be solved, harmony can be established easily and can be accepted by all parties. *Genap-Mupakat* can also uphold togetherness, unity, and unity; all parties can obtain the resulting decisions. Decisions in *Genap-Mupakat* must be obeyed and adhered to because they are made for common interests and goals. The decision in *Genap-Mupakat* aims to create order, harmony, peace, and goodness in the life of the Central Aceh Gayo community in Aceh Province, Indonesia.

The *Genap-Mupakat* system in Gayo philosophy is called deliberation, where *Genap* and *Mupakat* mean enough and consultation, respectively. In this case, deliberation refers to advice, brainstorming, consideration of agreement, or talk in decision-making. Additionally, it could be interpreted as mutual consultation between Caliph and the people.<sup>6</sup>

Previous research related to this research is Zulkarnain and Eliyyil Akbar's research, which revealed that even consensus (RGM) is an element of *sarak opat* whose members are elected by deliberation by the local village community consisting of aspects of the clergy, local community leaders including youth and women,

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<sup>6</sup> Hasan Basri and Muhsin Efendi, "Ethics Political Communication Using Gayo Cultural Sytem Approach (*Edet Gayo*)," *Indonesian Political Science Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2021), 247-264.

traditional leaders and intellectuals in the village who function to protect customs and traditions, make village qanuns, accommodate and channel the aspirations of the local community and carry out effective supervision of the implementation of village government.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Bohari Muslim's research revealed that Rayat Genab Mupakat, or by another name, played an important role in implementing government at the village level. Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the central government gives the broadest authority to regulate and administer a government and manage all matters following the aspirations and wishes of the people. Rayat Genab Mupakat (RGM) generally has 4 (four) main functions, namely: (1) accommodating community aspirations, (2) making village regulations, (3) supervising, and (4) resolving community disputes, both disputes between communities with the community and disputes in the village government.<sup>8</sup>

Another study by Gani Dwisatria Setiyatwan et al. reveals that *Genap-Mupakat*, or sacred *Mupakat*, concerns the embodiment of social harmony. *Genap-Mupakat* cultural values implement the principle of deliberation to find solutions best. The Gayo community uses deliberation as an important part of life to decide issues that concern the community's interests. *Alang-tulung*, means the attitude of helping each other. As social beings, humans certainly need social interaction with other people so they cannot live alone.

Furthermore, Al Musanna's research also revealed that *Genap-mupakat* is a Gayo cultural value for realizing social harmony. The complete agreement embodies the principle of deliberation to find the best solution. The Gayo people have characteristics of republicans who are free and dare to express their opinions without being too bound by the hierarchy of power, as was the case in feudal society. From the perspective of the Gayo

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<sup>7</sup> Zulkarnain and Eliyyil Akbar, "MAANGO: Pendidikan Masyarakat Negeri Gayo dalam Khazanah Syariat Islam dan Adat," *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2018), 391-412.

<sup>8</sup> Bohari Muslim, "Peranan Rakyat Genap Mupakat dalam Pembentukan Qanun Kampung di Kampung Jerata Kecamatan Ketol Kabupaten Aceh Tengah," *Resam Jurnal Hukum*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2018), 45-58.

community, the use of deliberation is an important part of deciding issues concerning public life.<sup>9</sup>

In Gayo land, *Genap-Mupakat* system or consultation is conducted through four pillars of deliberation called “*Sarakopat*” consisting of *reje* (king), *Imem* (religious leader), *petue* (elder), and *rayat* (people). These four officials are a container for the *Gelong Preje* Government Apparatus, Subdistrict, and Village Government to conduct deliberation. *Sarakopat* accommodates and channels the community’s opinions in government, development, and community building. Furthermore, *Sarakopat* settles disputes based on customary law within three months, creating a harmonious and democratic relationship. It also uses an objective approach to solving problems. Gayo’s philosophy regarding *Genap-Mupakat* in the *Sarakopat* government apparatus was born from the thoughts of Gayo Muslim philosophers and is very appropriate in realizing social harmony.<sup>10</sup> *Genap-Mupakat* is a local wisdom based on the values of Islamic philosophy. Therefore, the philosophy should be re-examined systematically concerning modern thinking.

No one studies *Genap-Mupakat* regarding its relation to social harmonization in Central Aceh. Therefore, this research wants to show clearly and deeply how the philosophy of the Gayo community (*Genap-Mupakat*) contributes to creating social harmonization in the Central Aceh region. In addition, this paper also provides a new understanding of how this philosophy impacts the daily life of the Gayo people.

This study used a qualitative descriptive research method by which data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews with *Genap-Mupakat* practitioners. Observations were made in Takengon, Central Aceh, and interviews were conducted with Joni on 10 January 2023. In addition, a historical approach was used to analyze the philosophical system of the *Genap-Mupakat* and social harmony in Takengon, Central Aceh.

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<sup>9</sup> Al Musanna, “Rasionalitas dan Aktualitas Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Basis Pendidikan Karakter,” *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, Vol. 17, No. 6 (2011), 588-598.

<sup>10</sup> Dri Santoso, Wahyu Abdul Jafar, Muhammad Nasrudin, Musda Asmara, and Fauzan, “Harmony of Religion and Culture: *Fiqih Munakahat* Perspective on the Gayo Marriage Custom,” *Ijtihad*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2022), 199-218.

## A Brief History of Gayo People

Gayo first appeared in Malay literature in the Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai. The saga contains stories about the kings of Aceh from 1280 to 1400. According to the rumour, a group refused to convert to Islam by envoys from Mecca. The group then ran with the current Peusangan River upstream and called Gayo. The word "Gayo" is believed to be a modification of the word from ethnic Acehnese, which comes from the word "ka yo," meaning fear. The Gayo people are a group who are afraid to convert to Islam and then flee to the highlands. They became Muslims later on. Gayo is also mentioned in Hikayat Aceh, another Malay literature written almost close to the leadership of Sultan Iskandar Muda in the 17th century. The literature states that the Gayo people knew the Sultan and became Muslims before the arrival of the Sultan to the area.

Recent archaeological research in Central Aceh provides a more detailed explanation of the indigenous Gayo people as the first inhabitants of Aceh province and the island of Sumatra in general. A study conducted in 2009-2016 found that Aceh Province was inhabited for the first time by immigrants who brought culture from the Mesolithic period. The culture at that time was marked by the discovery of hunting methods with various technologies made of stone, such as stone axes in multiple shapes. This technology was first developed in Vietnam around 1580 BC. This archaeological research indicates that the immigrant communities living in Gayo are the original people of Aceh province. Ketut Wiradnyana, the head of the study, believes that these migrants are the ancestors of all the Gayo people and may also be the ancestors of the Batak people in North Sumatra.<sup>11</sup>

Gayo people are an ethnic group inhabiting the central or interior part of Aceh Province. The group originated from Gayo Highlands, comprising Central Aceh, Bener Meriah, and Gayo Lues Regencies. The people often refer to their original homeland as *Tanoh Gayo*, which means Gayo territorial region because most of its native inhabitants are Gayo people. Prehistoric communities have inhabited Gayo Highlands since approximately 7400 years ago. This is linked to the discovery of prehistoric human skulls in

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<sup>11</sup> Arfiansyah, "The Contemporary Changes and Uses of Adat in Gayo Society, Indonesia," *International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2021), 36-67.

Loyang Ujung Karang and Mendale, Kebayakan Sub-district, Central Aceh. The area is part of the Bukit Barisan mountain range stretchings across Sumatra Island. The hilly natural environment has caused Gayo people to be divided into groups.<sup>12</sup>

Gayo ethnic groups residing in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah Regencies are usually called Gayo Lut. In contrast, those in some parts of Central Aceh are called Gayo Deret. The natural environment in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah is 400-2600 meters above sea level. The residence of Gayo tribe could be divided into (1) Gayo residing in Central Aceh Regency currently split into Central Aceh and Bener Meriah regencies, (2) Gayo Alas residing in Southeast Aceh Regency, (3) *Tamiang (Teumiang) Gayo Seumamah* and *Gayo Kalul* living in East Aceh Regency, (4) *Aneuk jamee (Jamu) Singkil* and *Kluet* residing in South Aceh Regency, and (5) Semeulu residing in West Aceh Regency.<sup>13</sup>

Islam has influenced Aceh and Gayo cultures since it arrived in Aceh. The two communities have a close relationship because the Gayo people live in an area under the jurisdiction of the Islam Kingdom of Aceh. The people embracing Islam live side by side and seldom have disputes. Therefore, they influence each other in developing the culture and customs of Aceh. Further studies showed that Gayo originated from Old Malay. Therefore, there are still differences between Gayo and Aceh, such as language, culture, and customs. The spread of Islamic education and development has made most manuscripts, letters, and other documents be written in Malay using Arabic script and in Aceh and Gayo languages.<sup>14</sup>

Gayo people who call themselves “*Urang Gayo*” are followers of the Islamic faith seen in their settlement patterns, with *Mersab* and *Joyab* buildings for men and women and Mesegit mosques. Islamic beliefs and principles are the main references for the

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<sup>12</sup> Zulkarnain, Ardian Al Hidayat, and Eliyyil Akbar, “Sumang: Norm of Gayo Community Within the Framework of Islamic Education,” *Al-Tabir*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2019), 53-69.

<sup>13</sup> Agung Suryo Setyantoro, Setiadi, and Nur Rosyid, “Pemuda, Belah dan Solidaritas: Kajian Model Solidaritas Anak Muda Gayo,” *Patrawidya*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2019), 171-186.

<sup>14</sup> Bambang Arif Rahman, “Islamic Revival and Cultural Diversity: *Pesantren*’s Configuration in Centemporary,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2022), 201-229.



people's behaviour intertwined with customary norms. The connection between religion (*Millah*) and customs is expressed in the phrase “*Edet mungenal bukuni rniibeza*” or “*Edet Peger ni Agama*.” The word “*Edet Peger ni Agama*” has many interpretations, but one of the strongest meanings is that the Gayo community protects Islam.<sup>15</sup>

The Gayo tribe is an ethnic group that inhabits the Gayo highlands in Aceh, the majority of which are in Central Aceh, Bener Meriah, Gayo Lues, and Southeast Aceh districts, where the majority are Muslims. Gayo people are very passionate about Islam, so their customs, culture, and education system are based on Islam. The Gayo tribe uses an everyday language called the Gayo language, which differs from the Acehnese. The cultural system of the Gayo people is filled with knowledge, beliefs, values, religion, norms, rules, and laws, which become a reference for behaviour in people's lives. Therefore, Gayo customary law is rules or actions based on Islamic law that are obeyed, glorified, adhered to, and implemented consistently (*istiqamah*) and thoroughly (*kaffah*) to build Gayo society. From an Islamic perspective, development has been a problem throughout human history. Humans continue to develop to achieve a more perfect level of life.<sup>16</sup> Researchers believe Gayo's traditional culture needs to be preserved because the arts contained in Gayo culture are unique and can unite the nation. In addition, Gayo custom needs to be maintained because it is one of the legacies of the ancestors of the Gayo tribe and greatly benefits the community.

### ***Genap-Mupakat* in Gayo Society**

*Genap-Mupakat* philosophy was born from the thoughts of Gayo Muslim philosophers, meaning deliberation. M. Quraish Shihab stated that “deliberation” comes from the Arabic “*shāwara*.” This word is rooted in *shāwara*, *yushāwiru*, meaning to explain or declare. Meanwhile, *shūrā* refers to starting, showing, and expanding something or taking honey out of the beehive.

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<sup>15</sup> Hermawansyah, Nirzalin, and Alwi, “Motivasi Bertani pada Masyarakat Gayo di Kampung Cemparam Lama Kecamatan Mesidah Kabupaten Bener Meriah,” *Community*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2022), 78-92.

<sup>16</sup> Arfiansyah, “The Contemporary Changes.”

*Genap-Mupakat* reflects the Pancasila philosophy of the fourth principle, whose values include decisions based on consensus, the majority vote, democracy, wisdom, deliberation, and representation. Therefore, these values are deeply embedded in the Gayo people in Central Aceh.<sup>17</sup> An interview with Dr. Joni, M.Pd. revealed that *Genap-Mupakat* system relates to conferring or descending as a joint effort with a humble attitude to solve problems fairly.<sup>18</sup> According to Johansyah, *Genap-Mupakat* activities are crucial in solving problems involving the interests of many people (*jema dele*), including social harmony. Therefore, the goal is to reach a consensus with numerous benefits. These include problems that could be resolved immediately, togetherness and justice, seeking truth and policy, and maintaining self-esteem (*kemel*) from errors and mistakes.

Gayo society uses *Genap-Mupakat* system to maintain social harmony in marriage arrangements through three meetings. First, “*Rapat saraine*” is a deliberation of one family called “*begenap*.” This is a meeting of close family members, including the father, mother, siblings, and cousins. Second, “*Rapat Sudere*” is a family meeting with neighbours and close and distant relatives to welcome the bride and groom. Third, “*Rapat Sarak opat*” is a village, district, and regional assembly comprising four pillars. The pillars include *reje* (king), *imem* (religious leader), *petue* (elder), and *rayat* (people). This assembly serves as a traditional Gayo forum for resolving various community issues.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Tria Ayu Dini, Udi Utomo, and Triyanto, “The Reflection of Cultural Identity of Gayo Society, Central Aceh Regency in Tawar Sedenge Song,” *Catharsis*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2018), 189-198.

<sup>18</sup> Joni, *Interview*, 10 January 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Arfiansyah, “The Contemporary Changes.”



**Figure 1.** Gayo people deliberate on welcoming the bride and groom (*Rapat Sudere*).



**Figure 2.** Gayo people deliberate on solving social problems (*Rapat Sarakopat*).

In 2002, the Regional Government of Central Aceh District issued a Qanun, Number: 10 of 2002, concerning Gayo Customary Law. As for the basic considerations for giving this Qanun, Customary Law is the values and socio-cultural norms that live and develop in the Gayo community of Central Aceh, and it needs to be developed in the social order of people's lives. Another consideration in organizing the speciality of Aceh is the need to collect customary law, customs, and habits to be used as a guide and guide for people's lives.

In the past, the government system in Gayo was centred on division. Each side has government implementing elements consisting of *Sarak Opat*, namely *Reje* (pengulu), *imem*, *petue*, and

*rayat (sudere)*. Each element has a role that is no less important than the other elements. Between them, there is a clear division of labour with a clear nature of tasks that can be seen in the following description:

1. *Reje* (pengulu), head of the customary law community, holds the ultimate power in managing people's lives. In carrying out his capacity, he always has to be a *mumuket sipet* in the sense of always trying to uphold justice, truth, and compassion between his members. He also always has to be pure (wash) or clean from negative traits to purify life in the society he leads. In making a decision, a king must always be fair and wise, and use one measure in solving the same problem. He must weigh equally and be able to imagine all the consequences of his decision. Therefore, *reje* must be wise and prudent and have broad insights and future reach. In addition to the *sipet musuket* as mentioned above, the *reje* must perform its role properly according to customary norms stored in various Gayo traditional expressions.
2. *Imem* has a certain role which in Gayo custom is called *muperlu sunet*. This traditional expression clearly shows what an *imem* must do in the life of the people he divides. He is obliged to uphold religious (Islamic) norms. His method is to teach his members. The Islamic laws symbolized by Necessity and Sunet originate from the words Fardhu and Sunnat in the five categories of Islamic Law called *al-ahkām khamsah*. Apart from spreading Islamic teachings, the *imem* must also ensure that Islamic religious norms are not violated in any actions committed by its members and decisions made by *reje* or *pengulu*.
3. *Petue*, in carrying out its role, must be a *musidik sasat*. What is meant by this traditional expression is that a *petue* must always observe, investigate and (even) know all the developments that occur on his side. He must immediately respond and resolve disputes between the members of his side and directly convey what he knows and the problems he cannot solve to *reje*. *Reje*, as mentioned above, is obliged to resolve every problem, no matter how difficult it is, wisely, fairly, and correctly.
4. The role of the people is *Genap-Mupakat*. This role is carried out in various tasks assigned by the customary law community

to the top of each division member, including assessing the running of government and social life. This role is carried out through deliberative institutions. In addition, the community members also have a role in supervising the three elements of *Sarak Opat*, whether they carry out their respective roles in harmony with and following Gayo customary norms.<sup>20</sup>

As stated above, each element of government in the split must carry out its role based on predetermined customary norms. In reality, there may be elements of *Sarak Opat* who do not carry out their roles as they should, resulting in deviations from the prevailing customary norms. If a *reje*, for example, does not *musuket sipet*, performs a function that deviates from the pattern set by traditional means, the concerned community members who are sure that there has been a deviation from the rules used to measure the behaviour of the *reje* hold a deliberation to impose sanctions *adat* towards the relevant fortune. *Reje* that deviates is called Taksir, meaning it does not carry out what must be carried out as it should

### ***Genap-Mupakat* in Islamic Philosophy**

Islamic philosophy emphasizes *Genap-Mupakat* (deliberation) system in achieving social harmony in Gayo Central Aceh society. This philosophy is considered an important aspect of religion, nationhood, and statehood. Furthermore, it is vital in family and community life and fostering social harmony. The high attention given by Islamic philosophy to *Genap-Mupakat* system has motivated studies on its ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects.<sup>21</sup> Reflections from an ontological perspective could present various Qur'an and Hadith texts and literature related to *Genap-Mupakat* system and social harmony. An epistemological perspective connects the concept of *Genap-Mupakat* within Islamic philosophy. Meanwhile, an axiological view examines the philosophy's practical and dynamic implementation

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<sup>20</sup> Darmawan, "Peranan Sarak Opat dalam Masyarakat Gayo," *Kanun*, Vol. 5, No. 50 (April 2010), 88-107.

<sup>21</sup> Muh Barid Nizarudin Wajdi, "Philosophy of Islamic Education in the Context of Pesantren; an Analytical Study," *Journal of Education and Technology*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2022), 556-568.

in achieving social harmony. It is applied in every functional activity in the community's daily life.<sup>22</sup>

*Genap-Mupakat* is only used for urgent and good things by exchanging ideas or negotiating regarding a collective problem or action. This ensures that the intended activity is performed smoothly and perfectly without hindrances. Furthermore, *Genap-Mupakat* system has a noble and important value and practice. Participants must always consider ethics, manners, and attitudes while relying on God. The importance of *Genap-Mupakat* in social life is a solution to various problems Gayo people face, including building social harmony. This is because Gayo people are always confronted with life needs that require solutions through *Genap-Mupakat* process. All problems or issues in Gayo people must be returned to the community's will by asking individuals, through representation or *Genap-Mupakat* decisions that must not be violated. In this case, breaking *Genap-Mupakat* decisions attracts sanctions from Gayo customary law. These include *taksir*, *tinggel*, *laman*, or *salah* as sanctions for the king, elders, religious leaders, and the people, respectively. Additionally, there are *parak* or *jeret naru* sanctions for exclusion or expulsion from the community.<sup>23</sup>

In the opinion of researchers about *Genap-Mupakat* in Islamic Philosophy is that in Islam it has given instructions to its people to hold good deliberations in individual, family, community, and state life. Thus, referring deliberation for consensus aims to discuss something, argue with each other, debate, issue ideas because of differences of opinion, and then, in the end, reach an agreement for all parties. *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy can bind the social harmony of the Gayo people because it is related to dignity (*'iffah*) in moral philosophy. This concept refers to avoiding sinful thoughts and actions that diminish dignity, self-worth, and status. Bad reviews and actions harm efforts to create community harmony.

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<sup>22</sup> Marhamah, "Pola Komunikasi dan Stratifikasi dalam Budaya Tutar Masyarakat Gayo," *El Harakah*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2014), 255-270.

<sup>23</sup> Arfiansyah, "The Contemporary Changes."

## ***Genap-Mupakat* as the Embodiment of Social Harmonization**

In the Gayo community in Central Aceh, social harmony is a state of balance in life. It refers to the community's interconnectedness achieved through mutual respect, love, and integration among family members. Integration means aligning cooperation among family and community members in daily life. This meaning is consistent with the Oxford Dictionary, which defines integration as combining and making something a part of something else. Therefore, integration is achieved when various parts fit well together.<sup>24</sup> The integration of *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy (Keramat Mupakat) is a Gayo community cultural value that relates to social harmony realized through deliberation. The use of deliberation is an important part of deciding issues related to public welfare. *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy is a value to learn, actualize, and build social harmony. At least six efforts must support the realization of *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy, including:<sup>25</sup>

### *Bersiturinen (Know each other)*

Not all Gayo people have a close relationship with different tribes, clients, or ethnic groups. Living close becomes risky without knowing each other (*bersiturinen*) or having social and cultural acquaintances (*ta'aruf*). The role of *Genap-Mupakat* also becomes ineffective, and social harmony is easily affected by divisive issues promoted by other parties with specific targets. Therefore, the people must have social and cultural acquaintances through *Genap-Mupakat* to become a multicultural society in Aceh and Indonesia. This is reflected in al-Hujurāt [49]: 13. That verse means it is important to know each other between individuals and social groups. Through social-cultural introductions, we can broaden our understanding of other people's backgrounds, values, customs, and traditions. By getting to know each other, we can build closeness, tolerance, and better cooperation in society.

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<sup>24</sup> Sufandi Iswandi, Muhammad Haikal, and Ramazan, "Adat Sumang dalam Masyarakat Gayo di Kabupaten Aceh Tengah," *Rivayat: Educational Journal of History and Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2019), 1-16.

<sup>25</sup> Syukri, "Budaya Sumang dan Implementasinya Terhadap Restorasi Karakter Masyarakat Gayo di Aceh," *Miqot*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2017), 407-427.

### Bersibetih (Understand each other)

After achieving social harmony through *bersiturinen* and *ta'aruf* that support the realization of *Genap-Mupakat*, Gayo people must strive to understand others (*bersibetih*) or empathize with others (*tafāhum*). The demand for mutual understanding is an essential need and principle of *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy. Mutual understanding is necessary for friendship, social harmony, and peaceful living within families, neighbourhoods, and communities.

### Semayang-Gemasih (Love each other)

Gayo must build social harmony supporting *Genap-Mupakat* by loving each other (*Semanyang-Gemasih*, Arabic: *tarāhum*). After the people know and understand each other (*tafāhum*), they must also have *Semanyang-Gemasih* or mutual love. Gayo should not harbour hatred, negative prejudices, or grudges and must not be socially isolated. In the Gayo language, *Semayang-Gemasih* means to love and affection, as the Gayo proverb states: “*Kasih enti lanih, sayang enti lelang.*” This means one must be wholehearted, sincere, and full of love and affection when helping others. Therefore, strong and perfect social harmony is achieved through *Semanyang-Gemasih* in the Gayo community in Central Aceh.

### Alang Tulung, Beret bebantu (Mutual help)

“*Alang*” means to lie down or rest, and “*tulung*” means help. “*Beret*” means heavy, and “*bebantu*” means to assist. Therefore, “*alang tulung, beret bebantu*” means mutual assistance (*ta'awun*) and helping each other in big and small matters. Every Gayo person is obligated to achieve social harmony and support the principles of *Genap-Mupakat* in Central Aceh. In addition, Allah SWT emphasizes helping one another in good deeds and righteousness, as stated in al-Mā'idah [5]: 2, which means that it invites mankind to help each other in doing good deeds. This underscores the importance of cooperation and collaboration in doing good in society. When individuals and groups come together to benefit others, they can create greater positive societal change.

In the Sumang cultural system, the term “*alang tulung, beret bebantu*” contains the principle of carrying out activities in cooperation. *Alang* means lying down (sleep), *ku alang, an mulo ku umah rinung so* (I just put myself to sleep in that room). So, reed is



when a very heavy job is done together, so the heavy burden feels light and easy. Meanwhile, *tulung* (please) means expecting help from others, so a heavy-duty feel light, for example. Oya Ne's son Ngured Tulung (the child has been able to lighten the load) and Muniro Tulung (asked for help). So, Alang Tulung Seriously helps in helping out with hard work, so it feels easy to do.<sup>26</sup>

Alang-Tulung means help. This character is reflected in the expression of the *alang-tulung* heavy-assisted, which emphasizes that everyone needs social interaction that allows giving and receiving. The social system in Gayo society is bound by group solidarity or is called *sara kekemelen* (unity of self-esteem). That is, if someone in the clan commits an action that lowers the dignity of the split, the impact is collective. This bond of togetherness is built not only based on blood ties (family) but also on domicile.

#### Mukemel (*Having shame*)

Gayo people's philosophy regarding *Genap-Mupakat* system is important in achieving social harmony in Central Aceh. This customary principle concerns the dignity that must be maintained, practiced, enforced, and defended by relatives, household members (*sara umah*), clients, factions, and larger groups. The *mukemel* customary value is implemented in restoring the character of the Gayo community. This ensures the preservation of a sense of shame (*al-haya'*) and social harmony in each group. The Qur'an, al-Qaṣṣaṣ [28]: 25 and an Ḥadīth of al-Bukhārī (NH. 3483, 3484, 6120) explain the concept of shame. These verses and hadith mean that *mukemel/al-haya'* (shame) in the *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy can bind the social harmony of the Gayo people because it is related to dignity. This concept refers to avoiding sinful thoughts and actions that diminish dignity, self-worth, and status. Bad reviews and activities harm efforts to create community harmony. Therefore, the maintenance of this dignity is reflected in the traditional expression "*ike kemel mate*," which means that death is fine for maintaining self-respect (*kemel*).

Mukemel's value is related to self-esteem. Kemel means shame in common sense, but in other contexts, Kemel means self-esteem. The customary phrase (*perimustike*) states, "*ike kemel mate*," meaning

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<sup>26</sup> Syukri, "Budaya Sumang."

that death is faced if a person feels his self-interest has been tainted. Mukemel refers to a person's ability to keep himself from falling into actions that can lead to a loss of self-esteem. That 'shame' has been cultivated since his childhood. These values of 'shame' are stored in language or sayings, or words that are always turned on and passed on from one generation to the next, for example, through stories (*kekeberen*). Four customary restrictions, or *opat kemalun ni edet*, measure whether a person already has and lives the value of *mukemel*.<sup>27</sup>

In the Gayo community, a value system can anticipate these actions. They call it "*mukemel*" or what is known today as "shame." "*Mukemel*," in terms of etymology, comes from the Gayo language, which is interpreted literally as 'shame', but 'shame', which originates from the Gayo language and culture, has a different meaning from the cultural value of shame that the current government is promoting. Even those from the Gayo language (*mukemel*) are realized based on cultural values and have customary norms based on religious (Islamic) concepts. The Gayo culture always reacts based on religious (Islamic) values, as contained in the Peri Mestike (PM) they have, namely "*edet menukum bersifat ujud hokum munukum musifet kalam. Edet sifetni resam-resam itinyo edet*" which means that customary actions must be tangible or proven, and religious issues are written in the Qur'an, because "*agama urum edet lagu jet urum sipel*" or 'religion and customs are like jat with characteristics', namely not separable. The purpose of Peri Mestike's statement is to function as a guide for interaction; that is, in conveying something or a religious concept, it is recommended that it should be in a manner that has the value of adab.<sup>28</sup>

Mukemel refers to a person's ability to protect himself from falling into actions that can cause a loss of self-esteem. Gayo people consider 'shame' to be good because people who do not have 'shame' mean they have no self-esteem. The sense of 'shame' has been cultivated since childhood. This 'shame' cultural value is stored in language, proverbs, or words that are always lived and passed on from one generation to the next, for example, through

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<sup>27</sup> Basri and Efendi, "Ethics Political Communication."

<sup>28</sup> Sofyan Abdi, "Konsep Nilai Islam dalam Nilai Mukemel dalam Sistem Budaya Suku Gayo," *Tabdzib Al-Akhlāq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2019), 1-9.

stories (*kekeberen*). Four customary taboos or *opat kemalun ni edet* measure whether a person already has and lives up to *mukemel* values. The traditional principles (*pemalun ni edet*) are summarized in the expression: *Malu tertawan bela mutan negeri terpancang nama teraku* means a sister who was rushed by another person's defense because someone else killed her brother, another person prevented the defense in the end the defence did not take place, the village that was disturbed by other people we defend it, if someone insults another person that person does not have good offspring, has no dignity. If there are customary taboos, strict action must be taken immediately). Denie is rooted in self-esteem regarding territorial rights. Nahma confessed concerning self-respect regarding a position that was legitimately taken unfairly. Mutant defence is related to disturbed self-esteem because group members are hurt or killed. Shame captivated illustrates the disturbance of self-esteem when women are concerned, rushed, or slandered. Mukemel motivates people or groups to do commendable things and compete to show their best achievements. This value reflects a personal and communal ethos. This value is the main value, while to become a complete *Mukemel* value, there are several supporting values.<sup>29</sup>

Hasan Basri and Muhsin Efendi explained that the first supporting value to realize the main value (*mukemel*) is *tertip*. Discipline relates to caution, so actions are carried out according to the context. A Gayo saying states, "*tertip bermejelis, umet bermulie*" (order in social interaction is a prerequisite for shared glory). Self-placement in life together determines whether a person has self-esteem or not. The importance of orderly values is manifested in the expression "*warus bernwajib, ringen berberat*." The phrase shows the importance of putting something in its place. Ignoring regular values results in assessing that person as lacking in reason. Understanding the time, place and person encountered is the key to manifesting the highest importance. There are several customary expressions related to tertiary values: "*Bercerak enti sergak, remalan enti begerdak, mujurah enti munyintak, mujangko enti*

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<sup>29</sup> Marhamah, "Verbal Symbols of Islamic Communication Ethics at Gayo Ethnic in Central Aceh, Indonesia," *IOSR (Journal of Humanities and Social Science)*, Vol. 22, No. 11 (2017), 20-32.

*munulak*” (say do not be greedy, walking is expected to be polite, giving must be sincere).<sup>30</sup>

The second is *Setie* which means having a commitment or firm stance. This word refers to the attitude of not easily giving up fighting for the truth. The value of *setie* is manifested in the determination to maintain the sustainability of the agreements built together. A *perimustike* states, “*setie murip, gemasih papa,*” emphasizing the importance of loyalty to be grown in a person. This value encourages a person to commit to fighting for shared principles that are believed to be true. The *setie* value symbolizes a firm stance based on knowledge, not loyalty based on momentary interests. The importance of the value of loyalty is summarized in the following expression: “*patal terlis tauhi uren//aku gere rejen betudung tetemi//bier murensé tubuh ôrôm beden//aku gere rejen munubah janyi.*” This expression means: the rice fields are drenched in rain//I am not willing to wear a veil. straw//even though the bodies are destroyed//I will not change my promise. *Setie* means to have a commitment or firm establishment. This word refers to the attitude of not giving up easily when fighting for the truth. *Setie* value is manifested in the steadfastness of keeping the agreements built together to maintain sustainability.

Third, *Semayang-gemasih* means affection. The term *semayang* means sincere respect. In the beginning, the term “*semayang*” was identified with the character of a mother who loves her child wholeheartedly. Meanwhile, “*gemasih*” reflects the personality of someone generous or generous (as opposed to miserly or curmudgeonly). Cheers must be balanced with a fair attitude or the ability to place affection proportionally. A *perimustike*, “*kasih enti lanih, sayang enti lelang,*” means ‘if you love, do not be late, do not be half-hearted.’<sup>31</sup> Affection that is not accompanied by knowledge can be destructive.

### Murip Berapit (*live together*)

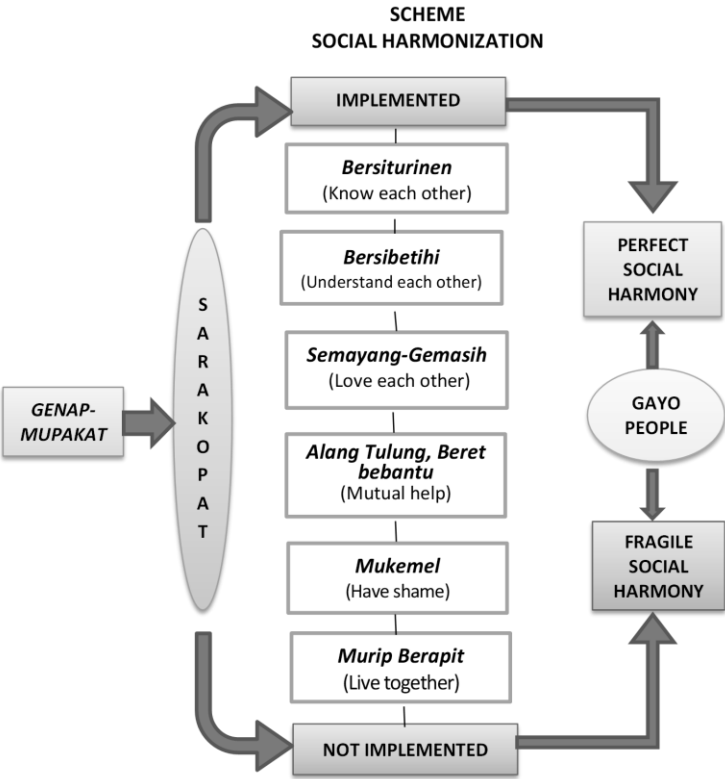
The most important aspect of social harmony in Gayo families and people is *Murip berapit*, or *ta'yus* in Islam, which means to live together peacefully. In this principle, *Murip berapit* builds solidarity

<sup>30</sup> Basri and Efendi, “Ethics Political Communication.”

<sup>31</sup> A.R. Hakim Aman Pinan, *1001 Pepatah Petitih Gayo* (Takengon: Panitia Penerbitan Buku Adat dan Budaya Gayo, 1993), 68.

(*tadbanun*) between individuals. Therefore, Gayo people must live in groups and coexist harmoniously without conflicts. *Murip berapit* is the realization of a cultural and social model that has been running since ancient times.

Correct implementation of the six efforts of *Genap-Mupakat* would lead to a strong and complete (*mersik*) social harmony in the Gayo community. On the contrary, ineffective implantation would weaken social harmony (*lemek*), and even loss (*mosop*).



**Figure 3.** Scheme of Social Harmonization in Gayo Community

Figure 3 shows that the social harmony of the Gayo people is crucial in supporting *Genap-Mupakat*. In this case, *Genap-Mupakat* must be implemented by the *sarak opat* as a deliberation

institution.<sup>32</sup> The scheme illustrates *reje musuket sifet* (the king should weigh things fairly and justly), *imem muperlu sunet* (the religious leader is responsible for Islamic sharia), *petue musidik sasat* (the elder is responsible for investigating people's conditions), and *rayat genap-mupakat* are truly implemented and realized. This supports the realization of strong and perfect social harmony for the Gayo people. The main goal of the *sarak opat* institution is to help the Gayo people achieve peace. According to Ikmal, the *sarak opat* creates harmonious, democratic, and objective relationships in solving problems to achieve strong social harmony. The *sarak opat* is also a forum for the *Gelong Pereje* Government Apparatus, Sub-district, and Village Government to deliberate on orderly social harmony. Orderliness in the Gayo language is related to cautiousness. Actions and behaviours must align with Gayo's customary rules of "*tertib bermejelis, umet bermelie*," This means that rules in deliberation and communal living are a dignity of the community. Gayo customary rule emphasizes that order is necessary to achieve social harmony in a community of diverse ethnicities, skills, professions, talents, and age differences. The Islamic philosophical values in Gayo customs guide behaviour, speech, and action in life aspects such as kinship, leadership, livelihood, arts, and culture as efforts to realize social harmony.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

Gayo's philosophy regarding *Genap-Mupakat* or *Keramat-Mupakat Behu Berdedele* is that consensus-based deliberation (*musyawarah mupakat*) is a strength and democracy in achieving social harmony. *Genap-Mupakat* is a manifestation of the deliberation principle to solve social problems. So, it can be concluded that the *Genap-Mupakat* philosophy of the Gayo people fosters togetherness and justice. The system has Islamic philosophical values and is loaded with knowledge, norms, rules, and laws as a reference in deliberations and joint behaviour to create social harmony. People must adhere to these principles to

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<sup>32</sup> Suhartini and Achmad Surya, "The Role of the Sarak Opat in Resolving Minor Crimes," *Jurnal Media Hukum*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2022), 146-159.

<sup>33</sup> Addahri Hafidz Awlawi, Nur Hidayah, and Sunaryono, "Degradation of Gayo Land Sumang Values and Youth Moral Decandencies," *Atlantis Press*, Volume 501 (2020), 79-84.

avoid conflict and hatred. The system states that the Gayo people have the characteristics of a republican, free, and democratic society. Therefore, this philosophy emphasizes order in collective deliberations. The Gayo saying “*tertib bermejelis, umet bermulie*” means that meeting orderliness is a condition for nobility.

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