The Ritual Economy of Death: An Analysis of the *Tulak Breuh* Tradition and *Fidyat al-Salāh* in Acehnese Society, Indonesia

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Abstract

This article examines the practice of *fidyat* 'ransom' for prayer (*al-ṣalāh*) for the deceased in North Aceh through the lens of vernacularizing *fiqh*, explaining how textual norms are translated into socially legitimate local practices. Employing a qualitative design—library research on Shāfiʿī *fiqh* and cross-madhhab comparison, combined with fieldwork (observation, in-depth interviews, documentation) across several sub-districts—the study maps operational definitions, normative bases, and modes of implementation, including the *tulak breuh* tradition (a rotation of rice-based almsgiving). Findings show that what is locally called "*fidyat al-ṣalāh*" operates primarily as almsgiving/*ihdāʾ al-thawāb* and, in specific cases, via the Ḥanafī route contingent on *waṣiyya* (valued at *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* and drawn from one-third of the estate); practices are non-coercive and prioritize eligible recipients. Clerical reasoning clusters into three types: first, tradition-solidarity (communal almsgiving), second, *iḥtiyāṭ* within Shāfiʿī (*qawl ḍaʿīf*; one *mudd*= 650–700 grams of rice; per missed prayer) as a personal charity, and third the Ḥanafī position requiring a valid will. *Tulak breuh* functions as a socio-economic infrastructure that renders the practice feasible (cost-sharing) and legitimate (local authority, ʿurf). The article contributes by refining the operational-normative framework of *fidyah*/*kaffārah* for prayer, proposing a model of *fiqh* vernacularization for bodily acts of worship, and offering practical implications: terminological education, enforcement of *waṣiyya* and one-third limits, recipient prioritization, operational measures, and basic record-keeping.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh, at the western tip of Sumatra, is widely recognized as one of the most deeply Islamized regions of Indonesia, where the historical transmission of Islam through political entities such as *Peureulak*, Samudera Pasai, and the Aceh Sultanate has left a profound imprint on law, ritual, and everyday life (Azra, 2004; Reid, 2005). The local aphorism */adat ngon hukom lagee zat ngon sifeut/* 'custom and law are like substance and attribute' encapsulates the long-standing fusion of Islamic normativity and customary practice, reproduced through *dayah* (traditional *pesantren*), ulema networks, and, in recent decades, the formalization of *qānūn* sharīʿa at the provincial level (Feener, 2013; Siegel, 1979). The interlacing of Islamic law, local custom, and state regulation makes Aceh a highly fertile context for examining how *fiqh* is interpreted, negotiated, and instantiated in concrete socio-religious practices such as mortuary rituals and traditions of charitable giving.

In everyday religious life, *fidyah* or *kafarat* for missed prayers on behalf of the deceased continues to be found relatively widely across several subdistricts in North Aceh, including Seunuddon, Tanah Jambo Aye, Baktiya, Baktiya Barat, Lhoksukon, Cot Girek, and Matangkuli (Abdul Wahab, 2025; Jamaluddin, 2025). Not all families perform it, yet it persists as a socially recognized and legitimate option within the broader constellation of mortuary rites. Its performance is typically situated around the funeral process—immediately after the funeral prayer, before or shortly after burial, or on specific post-death days such as the 3rd, 5th, or 7th day (Nawawi Marhaban & Fadil, 2021). In many cases, *fidyah* for prayers is combined with *fidyah* for fasting or *kafarat* for oaths, while local ulema calculate the obligations (the measure of *mudd* ≈ 650–700

grams of rice) and identify priority recipients (Hakim, 2021). Thus, the practice is framed as a legitimate and honorable form of charity within Aceh's socio-religious ecology, consistent with previous observations on almsgiving and the role of *dayah* authority in Acehnese society (Nurdin, 2016; Maulina, 2020).

From a socio-religious standpoint, this practice raises several issues that underscore the urgency of scholarly inquiry. Some lay community members interpret *fidyah* for missed prayers as a moral obligation for families who are financially capable, such that those who do not perform it risk being viewed as less devoted or even "stingy" (Ahmad Nidarlin Ibrahim, 2025). On the other hand, some ulema and younger educated Muslims emphasize that prayer, as an *ibadah badaniyah mahdhah*, cannot be substituted with *fidyah*, and therefore the practice must be carefully situated within the realm of charity and *iḥdāʾ al-thawāb*, rather than as a replacement for prayer (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001). The high material value of *fidyah* may also constitute a financial burden for low-income families, especially when subtle social pressures encourage them to "follow" prevailing ritual expectations. At the same time, the expansion of higher education, wider access to global *fiqh* discourses, and the penetration of digital media have produced a generation more critical of inherited traditions, making *fidyah* for missed prayers—including the practice of *tulak breuh*—a site of negotiation between textual authority, local ulema, and shifting social dynamics in North Aceh (Feener, 2013; Zuhayli, 1985).

Existing scholarship on Acehnese Muslim religious traditions is relatively rich, yet several important gaps remain. The study by Nawawi Marhaban and Muhammad Reza Fadil (2021) describes the *tulak breuh* tradition in the funeral rites of Manyak Payed primarily from the perspective of hadith studies and local practice, without systematically elaborating the *khilāfiyyah* across madhhabs concerning *fidyah* for missed prayers or the typology of arguments used by local ulema. Other studies focus on different religious traditions—*peusijuek*, *kenduri*, and *maulod*—as expressions of religious–cultural integration in Aceh (Usman, 2021; Maulina, 2020; Nurdin, 2016). Meanwhile, works on *sharīʿa* formalization and the economy of almsgiving in Indonesia tend to highlight institutional and macro-discursive developments (Feener, 2013; Najib & Slama, 2019), rather than the detailed practice of *fidyah* for prayers at the village (*gampong*) level. Consequently, no study to date has specifically examined *fidyah* for prayers in North Aceh through three simultaneous lenses: (1) mapping the practice and its variations (including *tulak breuh*), (2) a structured analysis of madhhab *khilāfiyyah* and the ways local ulema navigate it, and (3) a socio-religious reading through the framework of the vernacularization of *fiqh* to explain how non-dominant opinions are legitimized and operationalized within local systems of charity.

From a socio-religious standpoint, the practice of *fidyah* for missed prayers in North Aceh is not without its potential complications. On one hand, some lay community members perceive *fidyah*—including the *tulak breuh* tradition—as an obligation that "must" be fulfilled by families who are financially capable, such that those who do not perform it may be deemed stingy or insufficiently devoted. On the other hand, there is a latent tension between textual *fiqh* interpretations that emphasize the Shāfiʿī principle of non-substitution in prayer and the *dayah*/NU-oriented religious practices that are more accommodating of *gharīb* opinions or references to other madhhabs. The high economic cost of *fidyah* packages can also increase funeral expenses, which—within the context of economically vulnerable households—may lead to financial pressure and internal family conflict. In the contemporary Acehnese landscape, where *sharīʿa* formalization and the economy of almsgiving have expanded rapidly, the ways communities interpret *fidyah*, charity, and ritual obligations become crucial issues that influence configurations of religious authority, practices of solidarity, and local resource governance (Feener, 2013; Najib & Slama, 2019; Qodir, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of how *fidyah* for missed prayers—together with the practice of *tulak breuh*—is performed, understood, and legitimized in North Aceh within the framework of *fiqh* and local socio-religious dynamics. Specifically, this article seeks to: (1) map the forms and variations of *fidyah* practice across several

subdistricts in North Aceh, including the mechanisms of *tulak breuh* and its distribution patterns; (2) systematically examine the *khilāfiyyah* across madhhabs and the *fiqh* arguments used by ulema and community leaders to justify or limit the practice; and (3) interpret *fidyah* practices through the framework of the vernacularization of *fiqh* to understand how non-dominant views are operationalized in the governance of charity and mortuary traditions. Accordingly, this study explicitly addresses the following research questions: (1) what are the concrete forms and variations of *fidyah* practice, including *tulak breuh*, in North Aceh? (2) what *fiqh* arguments are cited by ulema and community leaders in positioning *fidyah* within the field of madhhab *khilāfiyyah*? and (3) how does the process of vernacularizing *fiqh* explain the social legitimacy of the practice without negating the principle of non-substitution in prayer?

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach that combines textual analysis with fieldwork conducted in several districts of North Aceh, namely Seunuddon, Baktiya, Tanah Jambo Aye, Lhoksukon, Cot Girek, and Matangkuli (Meleong, 2017). The literature review focuses on Shāfiʿī *fiqh* texts, Aceh's primary legal-religious reference, alongside relevant works from other *madhāhib* that discuss *fidyah* and expiatory practices related to missed prayers. In the field component, informants were selected purposively and expanded through snowball sampling, including *dayah* ulema (Abon and senior teachers), members of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), customary and village leaders, and family members who had previously performed *fidyah* for deceased relatives. This combination of informant categories enabled the study to capture both the normative dimension (*fiqh* reasoning) and the practical-social dimension (how the tradition is enacted and interpreted at the community level).

Field data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in Indonesian and Acehnese, guided by questions concerning informants' understanding of *fidyah* for missed prayers, the textual and madhhab-based references they rely on, the procedures of carrying out *fidyah* and the *tulak breuh* tradition, criteria for recipients, and how they interpret the obligatory or voluntary character of the practice. Observation involved attending prayer recitations and rice-offering ceremonies, documenting the sequence of ritual handovers, the role of ulema and family members, and the overall ritual atmosphere. Documentation included recording the amount and units of rice distributed, recipient lists (where available), the prayer texts recited, and *fiqh* books shown by ulema as their reference. These textual and field materials were then prepared for thematic analysis in the subsequent phase.

Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were first transcribed verbatim, then repeatedly reviewed to identify meaning units related to four main clusters: (1) conceptual understandings of *fidyah* and *kafārat al-ṣalāh,* (2) procedural practices and the operational logic of *tulak breuh*, (3) *fiqh* arguments cited by informants, and (4) the socio-religious functions and boundaries of permissibility articulated by ulema and local leaders. Meaning units were coded, grouped into categories, and synthesized into analytical themes, which were then compared with findings from the cross-madhhab textual review. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (comparing accounts from *ulema*, customary leaders, and families), methodological triangulation (interviews, observations, and documents), and informal member checking, conducted by reconfirming the researcher's interpretive summaries with several key informants after interviews and during follow-up visits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Practice of *Fidyat al-Ṣalāh* in North Aceh

At the level of practice, residents of North Aceh often use the terms "*fidyah al-ṣalāh*" and "*kaffārah ṣalāh*" interchangeably to denote a redemption for missed prayers believed to remain as a liability upon the deceased. For juridical consistency, this article adopts the following operational

definitions: *fidyah* as *iṭʿām*/a material redemption for obligations not fulfilled due to a valid excuse, and *kaffārah* as a redemption for specific violations (e.g., oaths, *ẓihār,* intercourse during Ramaḍān daylight). This distinction is well known in the *fiqh* literature; however, in the field, such terminological blending does not hinder practice—since what families prioritize is the intention of charity for the deceased and the fulfillment of the duty as they understand it (al-Zuhayli, 1985; Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

Timing of performance shows two prominent patterns: (1) immediately after the funeral prayer or just before/right after burial, as an expression of "discharging the duty" without delay; and (2) on designated days after burial—such as the third, fifth, or seventh day—often aligned with the family's readiness of rice/funds and the momentum of a prayer feast (*kenduri doa*). The second pattern accords with the rhythm of local commemorations and religious feasting (*kenduri/aruah*) documented in studies of Acehnese culture, and is also visible in descriptions of *tulak breuh* during funeral management.

Distribution of *fidyah* generally prioritizes the poor and needy, in line with Qurʾānic guidance on almsgiving; in many local cases, recipients also include *ʿulamāʾ/Teungku, dayah* students, and respected community figures who are deemed to meet need criteria and have a reputation for piety. Beyond material need, religious norms and moral reputation shape family decisions—consistent with findings on the ecology of almsgiving in Indonesia, where networks of religious authority and social values influence the direction of charitable distribution (Kailani et al., 2019).

Funding for prayer *fidyah* generally comes from heirs with financial means; in some cases it is triggered by the deceased's bequest (*waṣiyya*) explicitly requesting *fidyah* (especially for fasting, and—according to some madhhabs—extended to prayer). In *fiqh* terms, the Ḥanafīs allow prayer *fidyah* when there is a *waṣiyya*, disbursed from one-third of the estate (*al-thuluth*) and valued at *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer; whereas within Shāfiʿī *fiqh*, the absence of an explicit text for prayer *fidyah* places the heirs' initiative more as charity whose reward is gifted to the deceased than as a substitutive obligation (al-Marghinani, 1326; al-Sarakhsi, 1993; al-Nawawi, n.d.). Field practice also shows bundled packages—prayer/fasting *fidyah* and other forms of *kaffārah*—coordinated by the family with local leaders as a single sequence of ṣadaqah for the deceased.

The unit commonly used by informants is one *mudd* per prayer; classically, a *mudd* is estimated at about 0.51–0.75 liters of staple grain, which in local practice is often set at ≈650–700 grams of rice for operational ease. The total is calculated by multiplying the number of missed prayers (often estimated as five per day × a given number of years) by the per-prayer measure; some families add a buffer for *iḥtiyāṭ* (precaution).

The *tulak breuh* practice works as a rapid, repeated rotation of rice handovers: rice prepared by the heirs is given to a recipient (often an *ʿālim/teungku*), then returned and passed on to the next designated recipient with the intention of *fidyah* charity for the deceased; the sequence is accompanied by brief formulaic handovers until the targeted *fidyah* quantum is reached. This pattern is understood as *taʿāwun* (mutual assistance) and communal charity that breaks down a large material burden into manageable transactions, while broadening social participation and the sense of blessing. While some modern jurists critique any substitutive approach for prayer due to its status as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah*, local documentation shows that *tulak breuh* is understood and enacted primarily as charity for the deceased—not as a change to normative rules—legitimized by local authority and custom.

Implementation is generally family-centered yet orchestrated by *ʿulamāʾ/teungku* or customary leaders who act as religious arbiters—from estimating liability (missed prayers×per-prayer measure) and selecting priority recipients to leading the closing supplication. In more structured cases, families prepare simple records (number/weight of sacks, recipient lists, handover notes), while *teungku* or *dayah* administrators help ensure the handover flow matches the declared *fidyah*-charity intention. Communication is typically semi-public—announced within the *gampong* or via *dayah* networks—facilitating participation and social oversight.

Overall, the practice of *fidyah* in North Aceh exhibits shared core features—the charitable intention for the deceased, a *mudd*-based measure, priority for the poor and needy, and coordination by *ʿulamāʾ*—while varying in details (timing, breadth of social networks, level of documentation, and intensity of *tulak breuh*). These variations can be read as operational adaptations under local custom and religious authority, without altering the normative contours outlined earlier.
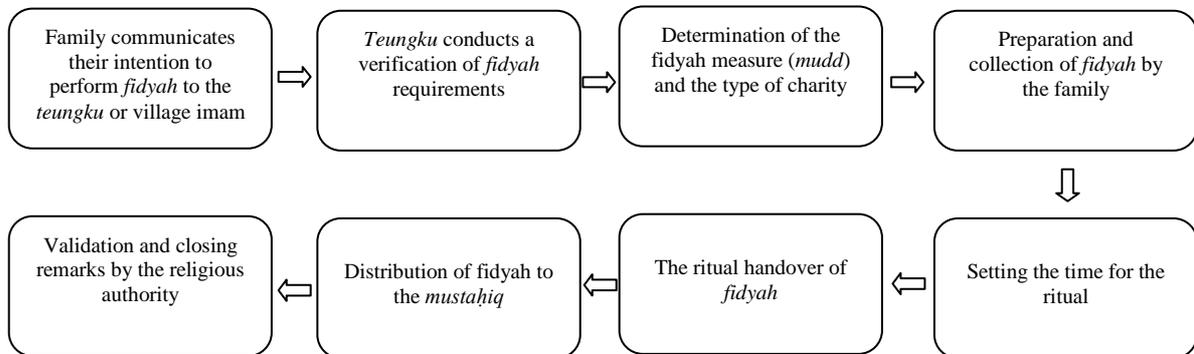
Family communicates their intention to perform *fidyah* to the *teungku* or village imam	*Teungku* conducts a verification of *fidyah* requirements	Determination of the fidyah measure (*mudd*) and the type of charity	Preparation and collection of *fidyah* by the family
Validation and closing remarks by the religious authority	Distribution of fidyah to the *mustaḥiq*	The ritual handover of *fidyah*	Setting the time for the ritual

Figure 1. *Fidyat al-Ṣalāh* Process Flow

Patterns of Legitimacy Construction in the Local Practice of *Fidyat al-Ṣalāh*

Field findings indicate that the legitimacy of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh does not derive solely from textual *fiqh* references, but is produced through mutually reinforcing social, cultural, and religious processes at the community level (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In village contexts, the validity of a religious practice is shaped not only by authoritative doctrines or legal opinions, but also by how the practice is framed, enacted, and verified within networks of local actors who possess moral authority (Bowen, 1993). This is reflected in *Teungku* Zakariya's assertion that *"this fidyah tradition has long taken root in the village, inherited from the elders,"* showing how local interpretive frameworks shape ritual legitimacy. Thus, legitimacy does not emerge as something imposed from outside but is gradually constructed through the roles of ulema, village social structures, Acehnese cultural norms, and solidarity mechanisms such as *tulak breuh*, which together enable the ritual to be performed properly and sustainably. This section maps these patterns as empirical findings that explain why *fidyah* for missed prayers becomes widely accepted and maintained in the religious life of North Aceh communities.

One of the most prominent sources of legitimacy for *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh is the authority of local ulema—particularly *teungku dayah* and village imams—who serve as primary references for families when determining the number of *fidyah*, the measure of *mudd*, and eligible recipients (Bowen, 1993; Geertz, 1973). Informants consistently reported that *fidyah* is considered valid only after passing through their verification. As Abon Cempedak explained, *"The argument for this practice is weak in the Shāfiʿī school, but it may still be practiced personally (amal binafsihi), especially since the Ḥanafī school strengthens its permissibility."* Similarly, *Teungku* Rizwan of the North Aceh MPU affirmed that *"This is a voluntary act; both Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī texts provide bases for it, and in our villages it is already widely accepted."* These statements illustrate that ulema provide not only technical instruction but also 'symbolic validation,' reinforcing the confidence of families that their *fidyah* aligns with locally authorized religious norms. Legitimacy thus emerges not merely from textual precedent but from trust-based relationships between communities and ulema who translate religious obligations into actionable ritual practice.

Beyond the authority of ulema, the legitimacy of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* is reinforced by village social structures that function as coordinators and technical managers of the ritual. Informants described the involvement of hamlet heads, *tuha peut*, and customary leaders in organizing rice collection, disseminating information to villagers, and ensuring orderly and equitable distribution. This aligns

with *Teungku* Jamaluddin's observation that, *"Many ordinary villagers regard it as obligatory for those who are financially able, and consider those who abstain as stingy,"* highlighting the normative pressure that shapes communal expectations. Through such mechanisms of social oversight, *fidyah* becomes viewed not only as a family initiative but as a communal activity under the supervision of respected local figures (Scott, 1998). Legitimacy therefore rests not only on religious authorization but also on structural consensus sustained by active village governance that safeguards order, transparency, and distributive fairness.

Legitimacy also grows out of Acehnese cultural norms that integrate charity and communal care as core components of religious identity. Informants noted that *fidyah* aligns with the principle of *adat bak syara', syara' bak kitabullah*, which holds that customary practices gain strength when not in conflict with Islamic values (Bowen, 1993). *Teungku* Ahmad Nidarlin emphasized that *"This has become a long-standing tradition; senior ulema have never opposed it,"* underscoring how the convergence of *adat* and *syara'* provides moral grounding for the ritual. Cultural norms such as *peumulia jamee* (honoring guests), mutual aid traditions, and the high esteem placed on almsgiving enhance the perception that *fidyah* is not an optional addition but part of an established communal ethic (Geertz, 1960). Thus, ritual legitimacy is bolstered not only by religious authority but also by cultural plausibility, which ensures the intergenerational continuity of the practice.

Alongside the roles of ulema, village structures, and cultural norms, the economic-solidarity mechanism of *tulak breuh* plays a decisive role in rendering *fidyat al-ṣalāh* feasible and legitimate for households across socioeconomic strata. Informants described *tulak breuh* as a rotating support system enabling families with limited resources to fulfill *fidyah* obligations through contributions from neighbors, relatives, and social networks. As *Teungku* Zakariya explained, *"This push-and-pull of rice is a shared form of charity, ensuring the needed amount is complete."* Likewise, *Teungku* Ahmad Nidarlin noted that *"it is done so that the large number of missed prayers can be fully covered."* Such communal participation generates a sense of collective ownership over the ritual, transforming *fidyah* from a private burden into a shared moral project (Scott, 1976; Humphrey & Laidlaw, 1994). Because the practice is backed by long-standing support networks, the community perceives *fidyah* as reasonable, executable, and not financially oppressive. This embedded economic infrastructure ultimately strengthens the ritual's legitimacy, both materially and socially.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that the legitimacy of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh emerges through the interaction of religious authority, village social organization, Acehnese cultural norms, and solidaristic economic mechanisms such as *tulak breuh*. These four elements operate synergistically: ulema provide guidance and symbolic authorization; village actors ensure order and equitable distribution; local culture supplies the moral landscape that renders the practice "natural"; and *tulak breuh* furnishes the material means for its enactment, even in conditions of economic constraint. *Teungku* Abdul Wahab encapsulated this dynamic, stating, *"This fidyah may be practiced personally; it must not be imposed, but over time it has become a communal aid tradition."* Legitimacy thus does not rest on a single source but is produced through a layered socio-religious construction that enables the practice to persist, be accepted, and be transmitted across generations in North Aceh. These patterns underscore the theoretical contribution of this study in demonstrating how *fiqh* norms are vernacularized within local contexts—revealing the dynamic interplay between texts, tradition, and communal life (Merry, 2006; Sartori, 2020).

Vernacularizing *Fiqh* through Ritual Economy: The Socio-Religious Logic of *Tulak Breuh*

The practice of *tulak breuh* accompanying the implementation of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh emerges as the most distinctive finding demonstrating how *fiqh* norms are translated into the socio-economic language of the community. Field findings show that *fidyah* is understood not only as a religious act but also as part of a long-established ecology of assistance and redistribution in Acehnese communal life. Accordingly, this subsection connects the framework of vernacularizing *fiqh*—namely the process by which textual norms are processed, negotiated, and adapted to local

contexts—with the concept of ritual economy in the anthropology of religion as discussed by Robbins (2004), Mayblin (2017), and Humphrey & Laidlaw (1994), who view ritual as a means through which communities manage resources while producing moral value. By focusing on *tulak breuh*, this section shows that the practice of *fidyah* becomes feasible, acceptable, and enduring precisely because it is operationalized through mechanisms of economic-communal solidarity that integrate *fiqh* prescriptions with the social needs of Acehnese society (*Teungku* Zakariya, Seunuddon, 2025).

In the context of North Aceh, *fiqh* functions as a normative framework that sets theoretical boundaries regarding what may and may not be done concerning *fidyah* for missed prayers. However, *fiqh* texts do not provide operational mechanisms for how the practice should be carried out within the social realities of the community. It is here that local ulema assume an important role as mediators between *syar'i* norms and communal needs. They translate abstract concepts from the classical texts into simpler and more practicable guidance, such as determining *fidyah* in the form of almsgiving to *mustaḥiq* or as the execution of *waṣiyyah* following the Ḥanafī route. Through this process, *fiqh* norms are not altered but made applicable so that they align with the social, economic, and cultural conditions of Acehnese society. As *Teungku* Ahmad Nidarlin (Matang Kuli) explained, this practice *"Has long been a tradition; senior ulema have never opposed it,"* showing how legitimacy emerges through the translation of *fiqh* norms into well-established social practices at the local level.

The translation of *fiqh* norms into local practice always involves adjusting to the community's economic capacity, simplifying terminology, and creating boundaries so that the practice remains within the Syafi'i school or other accepted alternatives, such as the Ḥanafī-style *waṣiyyah*. The ulema do not merely issue *fatwas* but restructure *fiqh* concepts into culturally resonant forms—for example, framing *fidyah* as part of almsgiving or *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* rather than as a substitution for prayer. This process aligns with Sally Merry's (2006) idea of how global or abstract norms are translated into culturally resonant forms that are acceptable to local communities. At the same time, this pattern reflects Paolo Sartori's (2020) analysis of the circulation of *fiqh* authority: ulema serve as connectors between text and practice, ensuring that *fiqh* norms remain respected but are operationalized through Acehnese social language. Thus, what occurs is not the abandonment of *fiqh* but its vernacularization—namely the process of making *fiqh* norms alive in everyday life through social practices that are understood and enacted communally.

Within the framework of the anthropology of religion, *tulak breuh* cannot be understood merely as an individual act of almsgiving but as a form of ritual economy—a system of exchange and rotation of resources that regulates the flow of rice within the community, strengthens social relations, and shapes the moral economy of society (Robbins, 2004; Mayblin, 2017; Humphrey & Laidlaw, 1994). Field informants described *tulak breuh* as an institutionalized network of reciprocity: when a family performs *fidyah*, neighbors and relatives help increase the amount of rice; and when another family faces a similar situation, the assistance circulates back. This aligns with *Teungku* Zakariya's statement that "the push-and-pull of rice is a shared form of charity to ensure the amount is sufficient." Through this rotational mechanism, *tulak breuh* becomes a ritual infrastructure that maintains social cohesion while supplying the resources needed to fulfill *fidyah*. In this context, ritual is not merely symbolic action but also an economic device that organizes the distribution of charity and binds the community through shared moral obligations.

The existence of *tulak breuh* shows that *fiqh* norms can only be implemented when there is a supporting socio-economic mechanism. *Fiqh* sets the measure of *fidyah*—one *mudd*, one portion of food, or an equivalent value—but does not explain how communities with varied economic capacities can meet these requirements. In practice, *tulak breuh* fills this gap: it provides material support so that *fidyah* remains feasible even for families without sufficient rice. When the community participates in collecting and rotating rice, the religious act gains legitimacy because it is built upon collective solidarity that links spiritual obligations with economic capacities (interview with *Teungku* Ahmad Nidarlin, Matang Kuli). Thus, *fidyah* endures not only because ulema permit

it, but because it is supported by an economic-communal system that ensures the practice can be carried out without burdening any single party. In other words, *tulak breuh* functions as a bridge between *fiqh* rules and social reality, transforming abstract norms into rituals that can be lived by ordinary people.

In practice, *tulak breuh* serves as a mechanism of negotiation that mediates the demands of *fiqh*—particularly the principle of non-substitution in prayer—with forms of local piety and the economic capacities of the community. Since *fidyah* in Aceh is not understood as a replacement for prayer but as a channel of almsgiving or *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*, the ritual remains within the boundaries of the Syafi'i school. However, its broad acceptance does not rely solely on conformity to *fiqh* but on the alignment of the practice with Aceh's moral economy, which emphasizes sharing, mutual aid, and *peumulia jamee*. Through *tulak breuh*, the community can perform a form of worship believed to bring blessings to the deceased while strengthening social solidarity. Thus, *tulak breuh* becomes a point of convergence between *fiqh* texts, Acehnese custom, and communal support structures, enabling *fidyah* to be not only religiously valid but also meaningful and executable within the socio-economic realities of the community.

The socio-religious logic that makes *tulak breuh* "make sense" to Acehnese communities lies in its ability to unite dimensions of piety, moral economy, and religious authority into a single practice that is easily performed. *Fidyah* is understood as a form of piety rooted in almsgiving—a fusion of *fiqh* norms and local culture—so it is accepted as a devotional act bringing benefit to both the deceased and the community. Through the rotation of rice, this practice also acts as a system of economic redistribution that channels assistance directly to *mustaḥiq*, especially poor families and *santri dayah*. Moreover, *tulak breuh* strengthens social bonds because the ritual is organized and carried out collectively, deepening the sense of togetherness and neighborly cohesion. The validation provided by ulema offers religious legitimacy linking *fiqh* norms with everyday practice, while the structure of *tulak breuh* itself provides the most practical means for families to perform *fidyah* without excessive economic pressure. Thus, *tulak breuh* is not merely an administrative component of *fidyah*, but a socio-religious ecology that animates *fiqh* norms within the dynamics of everyday communal life.

From the above explanation, it is evident that the process of vernacularizing *fiqh* in Aceh cannot be understood without placing *tulak breuh* as the ritual-economic mechanism enabling *fiqh* norms to operate within the community's social life. Through a solidarity system that unites almsgiving, resource redistribution, and ulema validation, the practice of *fidyah* becomes executable and communally meaningful. These findings show that *fiqh* texts are not only normatively adhered to but are "brought to life" through local socio-economic structures that interpret and operationalize them in accordance with community realities (Merry, 2006; Sartori, 2020). Thus, this study offers an important theoretical contribution to the anthropology of religion, regarding the relationship between ritual and moral economy, to studies of local *fiqh* that illuminate the dynamics of authority between text and practice, and to the broader field of Nusantara religious studies. *Tulak breuh* demonstrates that the continuation of a religious practice depends not only on the scriptural arguments that permit it but also on the social ecology that renders it alive, logical, and accepted by the community.

Fidyah al-Ṣalāh within the Framework of *Fiqh* and Intra-Madhhab Disagreement

To understand the dynamics of prayer *fidyah al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh, it is first necessary to outline the *fiqh* framework that underpins it. This section discusses prayer *fidyah* from the perspective of *fiqh* and *khilāfiyya* (inter-madhhab disagreement), by examining the conceptual boundary between *fidyah* and *kaffārah*, the *uṣūl* 'principles' that govern substitution for bodily acts of worship, and the divergent views of scholars across madhhabs regarding the permissibility of *fidyah* for missed prayers. This review serves as the normative groundwork for the subsequent analysis that focuses on the practice's implementation and social legitimacy.

In this article, *kaffārah* is understood as a redemption for specific violations of the sharīʿa (e.g., oaths, *ẓihār*, intercourse during daylight in Ramaḍān), while *fidyah* refers to a material redemption/*iṭʿām* (feeding) that substitutes for an obligation not fulfilled due to a valid excuse (primarily fasting). Operationally, the bounds are set as follows: fasting has an explicit basis for *fidyah* (Q. 2:184), whereas *ṣalāh* is placed among personal bodily acts of worship that, in principle, are not replaced by *fidyah*; the primary scriptural bases for *kaffārah* include Qur'an 5:89 (oaths), Qur'an 4:92 (unintentional killing), and Qur'an 58:3–4 (*ẓihār*) (al-Zuhayli, 1985).

Within *uṣūl al-fiqh*, prayer is categorized as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah maḥḍah* (a purely bodily obligation attached to the legally responsible person), and thus cannot be delegated or substituted by payment; this is the *muʿtamād* position in the Shāfiʿī madhhab. Al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) affirms that no valid *qiyās* exists to transfer the obligation of prayer to a food/monetary redemption and that analogy with fasting is unfounded because the *ʿillah* differs; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) reinforces this line. A frequently cited ḥadīth is the report from ʿĀʾishah—*"We were commanded to make up the fasts, not the prayers"*—which underscores the non-substitutability of prayer once its time has passed (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; al-Hajjaj, n.d.).

Even so, the *fiqh* corpus records limited channels that are sometimes referenced: (a) within some intra-Shāfiʿī texts there is a *qaul ḍaʿīf* (weak view) that opens space for *iḥtiyāṭ/ʿamal binafsihi* in the form of *iṭʿām* of one *mudd* per missed prayer (treated as charity whose reward is gifted to the deceased), as noted by Zayn al-Dīn al-Mālibārī (d. 987/1579) in *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* and explained in the marginalia of al-Dimyāṭī's *Iʿānat al-Ṭālibīn*; (b) in the Ḥanafī madhhab, *fidyah al-ṣalāh* is possible if there is a *waṣiyya* (bequest) from the deceased, with a valuation equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer, drawn from one-third (*al-thuluth*) of the estate in accordance with bequest rules. The details of (b) can be traced in al-Sarakhsī's *al-Mabsūṭ* and al-Marghīnānī's *al-Hidāyah*, which align prayer *fidyah* with fasting (*ṣawm*) *fidyah* within defined limits (al-Malibari, 1350; al-Dimyati, n.d.; al-Sarakhsi, 1993; al-Marghinani, 1326).

Comparatively, the Shāfiʿīs maintain the *muʿtamād* line that prayer, as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah maḥḍah*, is not replaced by *fidyah*—there is no valid analogy from fasting to prayer, nor can a bequest transfer this bodily duty to wealth. The Ḥanafīs open a space for prayer *fidyah* when there is a *waṣiyya* from the deceased, with the amount equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer and taken from the one-third of the estate (if sufficient), on the basis of analogy with fasting *fidyah* and the principle of using the estate to fulfill the "rights of God." The Mālikīs generally do not accept *fidyat al-ṣalāh*, except in very limited readings (e.g., forms of charity whose reward is gifted rather than *fidyah* as substitution), emphasizing the personal character of prayer and the lack of explicit texts. The Ḥanbalīs likewise reject *fidyat al-ṣalāh* as a substitute, though some discuss *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* (gifting the reward of charity/recitation) to the deceased, which is conceptually distinct from substitutive *fidyah* (al-Nawawī, n.d.; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, 2001; al-Sarakhsī, 1993; al-Marghīnānī, 1326 H; al-Dardīr, n.d.; al-Khurashī, n.d.; Ibn Qudāmah, 1997; Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

The Shāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī rationale stresses the irreplaceability of prayer (a bodily-presential duty) and the absence of an explicit proof for *fidyah al-ṣalāh*; thus, ḥadīths about making up fasts cannot be extended to prayer. By contrast, the Ḥanafī rationale relies on *waṣiyya* as a trigger to shift a "right of God" to the estate and on *qiyās* with fasting *fidyah*, while the Mālikī reading is highly cautious and separates the domain of charity (whose reward may be gifted) from substitutive *fidyah*. Within Shāfiʿī literature, the non-dominant door appears as a *qawl ḍaʿīf* permitting *iṭʿām* of one *mudd* per prayer within an *iḥtiyāṭ/ʿamal binafsih* framework (charity intended for the deceased), without altering the general rule that prayer is not substituted. Hence, the comparative conclusion is: (1) the *muʿtamād* position in Shāfiʿī communities—including Aceh—continues to close *fidyat al-ṣalāh*; (2) *fidyah* practices emerge through narrow channels (the intra-Shāfiʿī *qawl ḍaʿīf* as charity, or the Ḥanafī route with the *waṣiyya* condition); and (3) discussions of *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* must be distinguished from substitutive *fidyah* (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; al-Sarahksi, 1993; al-Marghinani, 1326; al-Zuhayli, 1985).

From the foregoing comparison, three key points can be underlined. First, the non-substitution axiom for prayer as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah maḥḍah* is the starting presumption of the Shāfiʿīs (also reinforced by the Ḥanbalīs), so analogy from fasting is invalid because the *ʿillah* differs. Second, limited permissive channels appear in two forms: (a) the intra-Shāfiʿī *qawl ḍaʿīf* that frames *iṭʿām* of one *mudd* per prayer as charity/*iḥtiyāṭ* (a personal act whose reward is gifted, not a substitutive obligation), and (b) the Ḥanafī opinion that requires a *waṣiyya* from the deceased; the usual measure is equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer, disbursed from the one-third of the estate. Third, a clear distinction must be maintained between substitutive *fidyah* (replacing an obligation) and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* (gifting the reward of charity/acts)—two conceptual domains that are not identical in the *fiqh* literature (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; al-Sarahksi, 1993; al-Marghinani, 1326; Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

Building on this framework, the article adopts the following normative starting points as analytical tools for reading the data: (1) the hierarchy of proofs places the Shāfiʿī *muʿtamād* (non-substitution of prayer) as the baseline; (2) any claim of permissibility is weighed through two gates: *iḥtiyāṭ*/personal charity within Shāfiʿism (not an obligation) or the Ḥanafī route based on *waṣiyya* (with the one-third limit and a unit value equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer); (3) claims of *fidyah* without *waṣiyya* are not read as an heir's obligation, but as voluntary charity whose reward is gifted to the deceased; and (4) any reference to "replacing" prayer is verified so as not to blur the boundaries among *qaḍāʾ*, substitutive *fidyah*, and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*. These principles form the evaluative baseline for assessing the textual arguments and modes of theoretical justification in the sections that follow (al-Malibari, 1350; al-Dimyati, n.d.; Ibn Abidin, 2000; al-Zuhayli, 1985).

Views of *ʿUlamāʾ* and Community Leaders

The interviews indicate broad support for the practice of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* as charity/*iḥtiyāṭ* for the deceased, not as a substitutive obligation binding on everyone. Scholars stress that the practice originates from the family's intention—especially among those with means—to "discharge" what is believed to be outstanding, while ensuring it is not coerced and not overly publicized. This non-coercive emphasis aligns with the *muʿtamād* Shāfiʿī position that prayer, as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah*, is not substituted; thus what families do is understood within the domain of charity and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*, not *qaḍāʾ* or substitutive *fidyah* in the strict sense (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

The informants' *fiqh* arguments move along two channels. First, intra-Shāfiʿī: some classical texts record a *qawl ḍaʿīf* that opens space for *iṭʿām* of one *mudd* per prayer within an *iḥtiyāṭ*/*ʿamal binafsih* framework—i.e., charity whose reward is gifted to the deceased—without changing the non-substitution rule; this appears, for example, in *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* (al-Mālibārī, 1350) and *Iʿānat al-Ṭālibīn* (al-Dimyāṭī, n.d.). Second, Ḥanafī: permissibility of prayer *fidyah* if there is a *waṣiyya* from the deceased, with a value equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer and drawn from one-third of the estate (al-thuluth); standard references include *al-Mabsūṭ* (al-Sarakhṣī, 1993), *al-Hidāyah* (al-Marghīnānī, 1326), and *Radd al-Muḥtār* (Ibn ʿĀbidīn, 2000).

Beyond *fiqh* rationales, community figures highlight social-religious dimensions: prayer *fidyah* is framed as communal charity and *taʿāwun* to ease the family's burden and "gift" reward to the deceased; this framing strengthens public acceptance without claiming the practice as an obligation. This pattern accords with findings on Indonesia's ecology of almsgiving—where ulema, *dayah*, and community networks mediate the direction of charity and render religious practices more feasible and socially legitimate. At this point, the distinction between substitutive *fidyah* and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* is reiterated, following *fiqh* literature that separates the domain of charity (reward transfer) from any claim to replace a bodily act of worship (Kailani et al., 2019; Ibn Qudamah, 1997; Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

Scholars emphasize that prayer *fidyah* must not be forced, depends on the family's capacity, and—without *waṣiyya*—belongs to the domain of charity/*ihdāʾ al-thawāb*. *Teungku* Abdul Wahab, Alue Bili Rayeuk, states, *"This is a weak view that may be practiced personally; it should not be*

promoted widely, let alone imposed." He also stresses recipient criteria, *"The poor and needy and the devout"* (Alue Bili Rayeuk, 2024). This emphasis is consistent with the priority of *mustaḥiq* in almsgiving (Qur'an 9:60) and differentiates substitutive *fidyah* from charity whose reward is gifted (Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983).

Several informants underline caution in public communication so that the practice is not perceived as a universal obligation. *Teungku* Ahmad Nidarlin Ibrahim, Matang Kuli, notes, *"Most of those who carry it out are people with means—sometimes due to a bequest, sometimes due to family initiative; some younger academic circles reject it"* (Matang Kuli, 2024). *Teungku* Jamaluddin, Matang Baroh, adds, *"This is a long-standing tradition with strong arguments from classical texts, but the public should not consider it obligatory for those who can afford it, nor label those who do not perform it as 'stingy'"* (Matang Baroh, 2024). Thus, terminological education (*fidyah*, *kaffārah, ihdāʾ al-thawāb*) and limiting claims to what the evidence truly supports are ethical measures emphasized by the scholars.

From the interviews, three lines of argument emerge. Type I (tradition–solidarity): *Teungku* Zakariya and *Teungku* Jazri, Seunuddon, describe *fidyat ṣalāh* as an entrenched tradition performed by those who are able and knowledgeable; *"The push-and-pass process of rice is charity and collective assistance to fulfill a large fidyah amount"* (Seunddon, 2024). Type II (non-dominant intra-Shāfiʿī): Abon Cempedak/Abdul Wahab and *Teungku* H. Aburrani, Baktiya, *"The Shāfiʿī evidence is weak, but it may be practiced as a personal act (iḥtiyāṭ)."* Type III (Ḥanafī based on *waṣiyya*), *"If there is a bequest, its permissibility is strong; the push-and-pass of rice helps families with limited rice; this aligns with pesantren/NU practice"* (Baktiya, 2024). This typology explains when each argument is activated: Type I for communal charity (without *waṣiyya*), Type II for personal precaution, Type III when there is a *waṣiyya* and sufficient assets.

As a benchmark, the *muʿtamād* Shāfiʿī position (non-substitution of prayer) remains the baseline; the practice observed is read as charity/*ihdāʾ al-thawāb* or—under specific conditions—Ḥanafī *fidyah* with waṣiyya. *Teungku* Rizwan Batee XII (MPU North Aceh) summarizes, *"Fidyat al-ṣalāh is a voluntary act, an initiative of the heirs; I support it for families who can afford it. The evidences are clear in Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī texts, and this tradition is accepted here"* (Cot Girek, 2024). With this baseline, the next analysis evaluates modes of legitimation and limits of permissibility consistently, without blurring the differences among *qaḍāʾ*, substitutive *fidyah*, and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*.

Comprehensive Analysis and Implications

Field findings indicate that the practice of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh operates primarily as charity/*ihdāʾ al-thawāb* for the deceased and—under certain conditions—through the Ḥanafī route based on *waṣiyya*. Neither pathway negates the Shāfiʿī *muʿtamād* baseline that prayer, as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah maḥḍah*, is not substituted. Accordingly, the term "*fidyat al-ṣalāh*" in local practice functions as a channel of beneficence (voluntary charity or the lawful execution of a bequest) rather than a claim to replace the obligation itself. A clear distinction between substitutive *fidyah* and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* is crucial for *fiqh* coherence: the former requires explicit textual proof and a clear *ʿillah* (which do not exist for prayer), whereas the latter belongs to the realm of voluntary acts whose reward is gifted (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; Wizarat al-Awqf, 1983).

Normatively, local scholars employ two entry points. First, intra-Shāfiʿī: some classical texts record a *qawl ḍaʿīf* allowing *iṭʿām* of one *mudd* per prayer as *iḥtiyāṭ/ʿamal binafsih* (charity whose reward is gifted), without altering the non-substitution rule; this is seen in *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* and *Iʿānat al-Ṭālibīn*. Second, Ḥanafī: permissibility of prayer *fidyah* with a waṣiyya, valued *at ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer and taken from one-third of the estate (*al-thuluth*), by analogy with fasting *fidyah* as detailed in *al-Mabsūṭ*, *al-Hidāyah*, and *Radd al-Muḥtār*. As for *ḥadīth mauqūf* references (e.g., reports on *iṭʿām*), they serve as limited justifications for *faḍīlat al-ʿamal*—not as universal obligations—so the *muʿtamād* position remains the benchmark (al-Malibari, 1350; al-Dimyati, n.d.; al-Sarahksi, 1993; al-Marghinani, 1326; Ibn Abidin, 2000; al-Zuhayli, 1985).

The acceptance of this practice can be explained through the lens of vernacularizing *fiqh*: norms from authoritative texts are translated by local authorities into the community's socio-economic idiom, rendering them feasible and legitimate without changing the general rule. Theoretically, the notion of "vernacularization" (Sally Engle Merry) clarifies how authoritative norms are processed in local contexts; in Islamic legal studies, Paolo Sartori shows how *fiqh* authority circulates between text and practice. In Aceh, ulema–*dayah* networks and the ecology of almsgiving function as social infrastructure that enables non-dominant views (intra-Shāfiʿī *iḥtiyāṭ* or the Ḥanafī *waṣiyya* route) to operate as accepted communal acts. In this way, *fidyat al-ṣalāh* does not negate the non-substitution principle; rather, it provides a charitable channel aligned with *maqāṣid* of welfare and a local culture of sharing (Merry, 2006; Sartori, 2020; Kailani et al., 2019).

Social-religiously, *fidyat al-ṣalāh*—including the rotational giving pattern in *tulak breuh*—serves as bereavement support, burden-sharing, and community cohesion, while delivering direct aid to *mustaḥiq* (the poor, *dayah* students) consistent with local almsgiving ethos. These multidimensional functions explain why the practice is accepted without positioning it as a substitute for prayer; it is read as a channel of charity/*ihdāʾ al-thawāb* that strengthens ulema–*dayah* networks and mutual-aid values. Framed this way, field data on *tulak breuh* align with Indonesia's almsgiving ecology (need, social proximity, local authority) and remain within the priority of *mustaḥiq* emphasized by scriptural texts (Ataillah et al., 2021; Hakim, 2021; Kailaini et al., 2019).

The main critique starts from the non-substitution principle: prayer, as an *ʿibādah badaniyyah maḥḍah*, is not replaced by *fidyah*; analogy with fasting is rejected due to different *ʿillah*, and Shāfiʿī literature anchors itself in the ḥadīth *"Make up the fasts, not the prayers."* There is also a risk of public misconception—as if it were *"Obligatory for those with means."* This article's conceptual response is to limit claims to the two permissive channels already outlined: (1) *iḥtiyāṭ/ʿamal binafsih* (charity—not substitution) per the intra-Shāfiʿī *qawl ḍaʿīf*, and (2) the Ḥanafī *waṣiyya* route (value equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer, drawn from *al-thuluth*). With these limits, the practice remains in the realm of voluntary charity or execution of a bequest, not a general obligation exceeding the evidence (al-Nawawi, n.d.; al-Haytami, 2001; al-Malibari, 1350; al-Dimyati, n.d.; al-Sarakhsi, 1993; al-Marghinani, 1326; Ibn Abidin, 2000).

From the normative-empirical synthesis above, several practical guidelines follow: (1) terminological education (*fidyah*, *kaffārah*, *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*) so the public does not conflate charity with substitution of worship; (2) when invoking the Ḥanafī route, ensure a valid *waṣiyya*, adhere to the one-third estate limit, and use a unit value equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer; (3) apply *mustaḥiq* priority and non-coercion (*lā yukallifu Allāhu nafsan illā wusʿahā*); (4) for minimal accountability, keep simple records (measure, recipients, dates) and maintain a consistent operational definition of the *mudd* used. *Fiqh* references provide the technical foundation for these points, while local governance ensures the practice remains proportional and transparent (Wizarat al-Awqaf, 1983; al-Marghinani, 1326; Ibn Abidin, 2000).

Theoretically, this case offers a model of vernacularizing *fiqh* in the domain of bodily acts of worship: when the non-substitution baseline is upheld, channels of beneficence (intra-Shāfiʿī *iḥtiyāṭ* or the Ḥanafī *waṣiyya* route) are operated through local authority and almsgiving infrastructure, making the practice feasible and legitimate—in line with theories of "norm translation" and the shifting locus of authority between text and practice (Merry, 2006; Sartori, 2020; Salim et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the practice of *fidyat al-ṣalāh* in North Aceh is carried out as a form of almsgiving—typically rice or cooked food—directed to *mustaḥiq* and organized through cooperation between families, local ulema, and village governance structures. Its implementation includes determining the locally recognized *mudd*, selecting specific times for distribution, channeling aid to rightful recipients, and relying on the *tulak breuh* network, which enables *fidyah*

to remain affordable even for households with limited economic capacity. The practice is not understood as a substitute for prayer but as *ihdāʾ al-thawāb* or the execution of a bequest, aligned with two established *fiqh* bases: the intra-Shāfiʿī route of *iḥtiyāṭ* (giving one *mudd* as voluntary charity without replacing the act of worship) and the Ḥanafī route through *waṣiyya*, with a value equivalent to *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr* per prayer. Validation by local ulema ensures that *fidyah* remains within the boundaries of the Sharīʿa and does not evolve into a generalized claim of obligation. The process of vernacularizing *fiqh* occurs as legal norms are translated into Acehnese social and economic idioms through solidarity mechanisms such as *tulak breuh*, which functions as a ritual economy that strengthens redistribution and reinforces social cohesion. *Fidyah* in Aceh thus derives legitimacy not only from authoritative *fiqh* texts but also from the social ecology that sustains its practice. These findings affirm that *fiqh* becomes "alive" through communal enactment, balancing normative compliance with the lived needs of the community. To maintain proportionality and clarity in practice, this study recommends public terminological education (distinguishing *fidyah*, *kaffārah*, and *ihdāʾ al-thawāb*), limiting claims of obligation to the two legitimate doctrinal routes, developing operational guidelines for ulema and village leaders regarding the governance of *tulak breuh*, and upholding principles of non-coercion and *mustaḥiq* prioritization in distribution. Such recommendations aim to strengthen both *fiqh* integrity and the continuity of social solidarity embedded in *fidyah* practices in Aceh.

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