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Michael Laffan

From alternative medicine to national cure

Another voice for the Sûfî orders in the Indonesian media¹

Introduction

Whereas general treatments of Southeast Asian Islam and more especially those of contemporary manifestations of Islamist discourse in the region have not always given much space to Sufism (Arabic: *tasawwuf*) in their discussions, this has in part reflected the relative silence of many Sûfî groups in the public sphere, or even an absence in the critical discourse of their opponents. Certainly, as far as Indonesia is concerned, one may regard the formalized Sûfî orders (Arabic: *tariqa*, Indonesian: *tarekat*) as a less obvious form of heightened religiosity when compared with the sabre waving of various paramilitaries mobilized against an imagined Judeo-Crusader conspiracy, the urban public activism of the reformist Muhammadiyah movement, or even the rural popularity of the much larger Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

Both of the latter Islamic alliances were born in Java and are now seen as complimentary elements of a civil society bulwark against the now muffled pronouncements of groups like Jamaah Islamiyah or Laskar Jihad. Muhammadiyah was founded in Yogyakarta by Ahmad Dahlan (1868-1923) in 1912 and attempts to put into practice the modernist ideology outlined by Egypt's Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and his follower Rashid Rida (1865-1935). In so doing Muhammadiyah embraces modern organizational methodologies and technology while simultaneously advocating a return to the ideals of the first Muslim community or "the pious generation" (Arabic: *al-salaf al-salih*). To bridge the gap

1. This paper is based on observations made during the course of two visits to Indonesia in July-August 2002 and February-March 2003 and was presented at the workshop "Modern Adaptations in Sûfî-based Islam", held at Berlin's Centre for Modern Oriental Studies on 5 April 2003. Each period of research was supported by the four bodies supporting the project on Islam in Indonesia in the 20th century: the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS), and the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM). See <http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination/>. I would like to express my special thanks here to Siti Soraya Devi for her help and kindness in Jakarta, Ulrike Freitag for her encouragement, Julian Millie for his valuable feedback and insights, and the anonymous reviewer for stringent, but productive and appropriate, suggestions.

in time between the present and that generation, and thus apply its motivations, Muhammadiyah claims the right for Muslims to interpret directly the Qur'an and the testified actions of the Prophet recorded in the Hadith.²

The other, far larger, component of the "civil Islam" paradigm is the NU.³ This alliance of traditionalist Islamic scholars (*ulama*) was founded in Surabaya in 1926 in part to defend their understanding of orthodoxy against the claims and rising influence of the modernists. It was also founded due to concerns about the Wahhabi occupation of Mecca in 1924, and it remains particularly opposed to the austere form of Islam still propagated by the Saudi state. NU does not necessarily reject the trappings of modernity, but nevertheless continues to make use of the accumulated works of the *ulama* produced since the death of Muhammad, and to harmonize their teachings with attendant forms of *tasawwuf*.

Traditionally too, teaching of the most advanced aspects of *tasawwuf* have been handled by the *tarekat*. However their public role in modern Indonesia has been even further obscured of late by the often forceful utterances of activist groups such as the now disbanded Laskar Jihad, which mobilized fighters in the inter-religious conflict that racked the Moluccas from late 1999. And whereas groups like Laskar Jihad are aligned with a form of Saudi-oriented Salafist piety that rejects the claims of the *tarekat* to any share in Islamic orthodoxy, even the pages of their journals seldom contain much in the way of a direct critique of the *tarekat* Sûfis.

Still, the *tarekat* are not entirely absent from the national stage either. In the following discussion, I wish to present some notes concerning a journal published in Jakarta with the title *Sûfi: Jalan menuju ilahi* (Sûfi: The path towards God). Under the direction of a young Sûfi aligned with NU, Luqman Hakiem, this periodical aimed, and continues to aim, to stimulate an awareness of Sufism in Indonesian society in general, but in a way that presents the teachings of the various *tarekat* as being equally valid, provided that they are recognized by a self-declared national body that examines their genealogical claims. This body is the NU-aligned Jam'iyah Ahlith Thoriqoh al-Mu'tabaroh ('The association for the people of the respectable path' or JATM), which was founded in 1957 (see below).

Even when seen beyond the competition between Muhammadiyah and NU, Luqman Hakiem's journal is interesting from the point of view of its own, more localized, genealogy, emerging as it did from the question-and-answer pages of another periodical specializing in "metaphysics and alternative medicine". In this essay I would like to ask what sort of medicine it proposes for the ailments

2. A good example of this methodology put in action is the format of the *fatwas* released by the Muhammadiyah, which prefer to cite Qur'an and Hadith if possible as the justifications for those opinions. For one recent study of the fatwas of Muhammadiyah see ANWAR, 2005.

3. For an outline view of the public discourse of what he calls civil Islam, see HEFNER, 2000.

of Indonesia today, how that remedy is a fusion of past ideals and present realities, and how the dosage should be administered.

Sufism's representatives in Indonesia

In July 2002 I travelled to Jakarta to attend a national conference of NU. Members of this body often point out that it is the largest single Muslim organization in the world, and claims range widely from a base figure in the order of 30 million "members" out of Indonesia's population of well over 210 million. National surveys carried out by Jakarta's Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, PPIM) found that approximately 45% of Indonesian Muslims questioned in 2001, and 42% in 2002, felt that they were part of the NU community, as opposed to 11% and then 12% respectively for Muhammadiyah.⁴ Regardless of such claims, or of how measurable affiliation to NU is, it is certainly a large array of interests that claims to represent orthodox Sunni Islam.

The core of the NU hierarchy remains the network of Islamic boarding schools (Indonesian: *pesantren*) and their charismatic *ulama*, known in Java as *kiai*. The NU *kiais* defend an orthodoxy defined as being of the Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (the people of the attested practice of the Prophet and the Islamic Community). This entails recognition of the four Sunni schools in Islamic law even if, for all intensive purposes, NU adheres solely to that founded by Imam Shafi'i (d. 820). Such a juridical approach is furthermore mediated through the Ghazalid tradition of mystical piety.⁵ In this tradition the primacy of the Sharia is constantly expressed and the moral injunctions of Sufism upheld, although instruction in the techniques of the *tarekat* is only given to students who are sufficiently acquainted with the so-called external (Indonesian: *lahir*; Arabic: *zahir*) elements of faith.⁶

4. These results are discussed in various forums, such the PPIM's own journal *Studia Islamika*. See JAMHARI, 2002.

5. While not the first to reconcile a fusion of Sunni jurisprudence and Sufism, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111) has produced the most enduring monument to that fusion, the *Ihya' ulum al-din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences). This work remains a core text in the *pesantren* and a source for a great many of the subsidiary books used there. According to a draft *fatwa* concerning the definition of the Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a released by NU in 2002: 'The understanding of the Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a is [embodied by] the person who holds fast to the Qur'an and who follows every single thing [*mengikuti segala sesuatu*] carried out by the Prophet, by his Companions, along with the Pious Forebears and their successors. ... In its undertaking, Nahdlatul Ulama follows: [1] one of four juridical schools in the field of Shari'a; [2] Imam Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi in the field of doctrine; and [3] Imam al-Junayd al-Baghdadi and Imam al-Ghazali in the field of *akhlaq-tasawwuf*. For discussion of the NU meeting of 2002 and its resultant *fatwas*, see LAFFAN, 2005.

6. In a handy and accessible study, Zulkifli has recently suggested that the concept of the *kiai* in Javanese reflects a fusion of the legally-focused '*alim* and the mystically-centred *sufi*. See ZULKIFLI, 2002, p. 37.

This is not to say though that traditionalist Sufism is only expressed through the *tarekat*. Not all NU-affiliated *kiai* teach *tarekat* techniques at their *pesantrens*, or are necessarily members of *tarekat*. The *pesantren* Tebuireng, founded at Jombang, East Java, in 1899 by the first leader of NU, Hasyim Asy'ari (1875-1947), neither encourages nor prohibits the *tarekat*.⁷ On the other hand, that of Suryalaya at Tasik Malaya, West Java, which was founded in 1905 by Abah Sepuh (d. 1950) and is now led by his son Abah Anom (b. 1915), is explicitly allied with the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya order.⁸

Where it is encouraged, maintenance of the *tarekat* in any *pesantren* hinges crucially on the charisma of the *kiai*. There are *pesantrens* that began by being affiliated to an order, but with the death of the *kiai* their curricula reverted to emphasizing the basic principles of 'moral education' (*akhlaq*).⁹ In any event though, and given the regular caveats against teaching mysticism to the unprepared, the *tarekat*-oriented *kiais* stress that while *tasawwuf* is not obligatory for the believer, it remains the ultimate form of knowledge for a complete Muslim.

Given what Fazlur Rahman would have termed the 'neo-Sûfi' approach of NU, *tarekat*-related issues often fell under its purview.¹⁰ Since 1957 that task has fallen to the JATM. But despite claims to wider recognition, the JATM remains in essence an association based on mutual respect and admiration among a circle of NU *kiais*. Its very existence actually belies the longer tradition of inter-*tarekat* competition within Indonesia, and Southeast Asia in general. The nineteenth century in particular saw widespread contestation between such locally-focused orders as the Shattariyya and newly active branches of the more

7. Hasyim Asy'ari is widely reputed to have disapproved of intensive *tarekat* sufism. This attitude has been maintained by his successors, including the current head, Yusuf Hasyim. Then again, a great many other member of the Hasyim line, including Gus Dur, are famous imbibers of *tasawwuf*.

8. For a short summary and differentiation of these two *pesantrens*, see the study of ZULKIFLI, 2002. The Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya was founded by Ahmad Khatib of Sambas, Borneo, who nominated Abd al-Karim of Banten as his successor shortly before his death in Mecca in 1876. The latter subsequently appointed deputies throughout Southeast Asia, with the line at Suryalaya having been transmitted by Shaykh Talha. Essentially this hybrid is an Indonesian interpretation of the Qadiriyya that fuses some of the techniques of the Naqshbandiyya. Indeed, when in Mecca in 1885 Snouck Hurgronje probably identified the teachings of Ahmad Khatib Sambas as passed on to a Lampungese shaykh as being Qadiri for this reason, see SNOUCK HURGRONJE, 1931, p. 259. For more on this order and its relationship with the Naqshbandiyya in general, see VAN BRUINESSEN, 1992.

9. One such institution is the Pondok Pesantren Wahid Hasyim, Gaten village, Yogyakarta, which no longer provides instruction in *tarekat* techniques since the passing of its founder, KH Abdul Hadi (1917-1999).

10. For example the NU issued fatwas relating to *tarekat* activity at its national congresses as in *fatwa* # 173 of April 1935 on the possibility of moving between orders. See MASYHURI, 1997, p. 124-125.

pietistic and internationalist Naqshbandiyya – particularly in the 1880s.¹¹ However, with the loss of Mecca to the Wahhabiyya in 1924, and the rise in the twentieth century of competing voices of Islam, like the Muhammadiyah, the existing networks within Indonesia probably saw increasing utility in uniting, especially as other mystical groupings saw common cause in the 1950s, such as the Badan Kongres Kebatinan Indonesia, which formed in 1956.

After its foundation the following year, the JATM was dominated by members of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya order. Outwardly though it claimed to represent all “respectable” (*mu’tabara*) orders, and disseminated a list of 44 *tarekat* that could claim such status. By 1975 the JATM was under the effective control of Kiai Musta’in Romly of Rejoso, described by Van Bruinessen as “the most charismatic ... and most ambitious” of the *tarekat* masters on Java.¹² However, in the lead-up to the 1977 general elections, Romly associated himself with the ruling Golkar Party of Suharto, and lost the support of the NU leadership associated with the United Development Party and, more especially, the key *pesantren* of Tebuireng.¹³ At the 1979 NU congress, a grouping from within the JATM founded the new, more-explicitly NU affiliate, and the movement remains within its general purview today and in 2003 under the leadership of the charismatic “paranormal” Habib Luthfi of Pekalongan whose name, as we shall see, cropped up on occasion within the pages of *Sûfi*.

Lugman Hakiem and an Indonesian sense of Islamic history¹⁴

From his small office in central Jakarta, Lugman Hakiem initially oversaw a small staff of three reporters and two editors to produce a monthly magazine of 50-60 pages in quarto-size. Lugman himself is in his mid-thirties, and a graduate of the *Pesantren* Tulung Agung, Peta, East Java, where he was taught by Kiai Abdul Jalil Mustaqim. Despite his youth, he is reputedly advanced enough to provide instruction in the techniques of the Asadiyya branch of the Shadhiliyya

11. Such developments were not lost on the then Dutch authorities, who sent C. Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) to the Hijaz in 1884 to determine the impact of the *tarekat* on their Southeast Asian colonies. Information on rival Naqshbandi *shaykhs* competing in part for Southeast Asian recruits may be found in his resultant study on the Holy City, *i.e.*: SNOUCK HURGRONJE, 1931, p. 176.

12. VAN BRUINESSEN, 1992, p. 171.

13. Van Bruinessen observes that 64 out of Romly’s 80 representatives came from Tebuireng, one even taught there. With the shift in political allegiance, one of the Tebuireng badals, Adlan Ali, was urged to renounce his allegiance to Romly and was granted a license to act as a *murshid* in his own right by Muslih of Mranggen, a senior member of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya. Thereafter the Tebuireng followers were urged to shift allegiance to Adlan Ali, which some did, while others moved to Romly’s *murshid*, Usman bin Ishaq from Sawahpulo, Surabaya. VAN BRUINESSEN, 1992, p. 172-173.

14. This description is derived from two interviews in Jakarta, one at the then Danau Batur office on 31 July 2002 and another in Kuningan on 21 February 2003.

order, though he is more likely to function as the deputy (*khalifa*) or representative (*badal*) of his own *shaykh* given that he does not have his own *pesantren*.¹⁵ On my asking, Luqman himself did not make any explicit claims as to his own ranking in the mystical order of things.

His manner was relaxed and engaging, and he was a willing respondent to all questions which began with the matter of the history of Sufism in Indonesia and its role in national life today. As Luqman painted it, Sufism has long pervaded all the activities of the Indonesian people. Indeed Islam came to Java through the Wali Songo, “the nine saints” of various origin. Perhaps most famous of these was a local, Sunan Kalijaga, who is popularly believed to have invented the shadow-play (*wayang*) as a means of giving moral instruction to the people consonant with their own cultural values and aesthetics.¹⁶ These Wali Songo had then formed teacher-student relationships with their envoys, establishing *pesantrens* throughout the countryside in which their teachings were disseminated under the guidance of the *kiais*. Mysticism was an intrinsic part of these teachings and, according to Luqman, some *pesantrens* became refuges for ascetics, while others were exclusive domains for the religious elite. However, the reformist currents of some Sûfî orders (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and then the emergence of the reformist movements of the twentieth century that connected with the developing urban environment had led to a new openness that began to impact on the traditionalist Sufism of the *kiais*. Finally, the *pesantrens* had experienced a profound intellectualization in the 1980s when NU was under the leadership of the charismatic grandson of Hasyim Asy’ari, Abdurrahman Wahid (also known as Gus Dur).

Such views on the history of Islam in Java are consistent with a general narrative put forward given by leading NU figures like Said Aqil Siradj.¹⁷ When I interviewed Said Aqil in the midst of debates over an official NU definition of Sunni orthodoxy for Indonesia, he too connected the Islam of Java to its source in the Middle East by means of the Wali Songo, supplying life dates and genealogical connections for them to the great *ulama* of the Central Lands, such as Hasan Basri (d. 728) and Imam al-Ash’ari (873-936).¹⁸ He also related how the first five of the Wali Songo had been vigorously opposed to the then Hindu rulers of the

15. In fact Luqman himself regards his teacher, Kiai Abdul Jalil, as the *murshid* of his order, which seems to imply that he is most likely the Jakarta emissary *badal* of the latter.

16. Certainly Sunan Kalijaga and his popularity had an effect on Clifford Geertz, who used him to represent Indonesia in a study comparing the two ends of the Islamic world. See GEERTZ, 1968, p. 25-29, and *passim*.

17. A graduate of Mecca’s Umm al-Qura University, Said Aqil Siradj is presently the head of the Executive Council of NU. In a book published in the 1990s he invoked great controversy in NU circles for his open views as to what constituted the Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama’a. These differences though seemed to be publicly buried by the national meeting of 2002 and its *fatwa* on the matter mentioned in footnote 5 above.

18. Interview with Said Aqil Siradj, Asrama Haji, Jakarta, 29 July 2002.

Empire of Majapahit (1294-1478) before Sunan Kalijaga had his famous success with a cultural approach that harmonized Islamic teachings with local practices. Thereafter Said Aqil explained that the arrival of the Dutch (in the seventeenth century) had led to a further division in Java, with people opting to become either nominal Muslims (*abangan*), “modernists” interested in western ways, or students of Islam (*santri*) who developed the *pesantren* as a refuge from the Dutch. He described the history of traditionalist activism in the twentieth century as forming a response to the attacks of “the modernists” of Muhammadiyah, explaining the genesis of such precursors to NU as the Nahdatut Tujjar and Tasywirul Afkar, both founded in 1918.¹⁹

The narratives of both Luqman and Said Aqil show the direct influence of modern trends in Indonesian historiography that are informed by a sincere conviction in Islam’s mission in Indonesia, and which make use of the findings of western studies to add validity to the truth of that mission where useful. Their mention of Sûfi “reformism” in the eighteenth century is particularly redolent of the ideas on neo-Sufism advanced by Fazlur Rahman (1911-1988) and extended by John Voll.²⁰ For Indonesia, one skilful exponent of ideas about neo-Sufism is a graduate of Columbia University and the current rector of Jakarta’s Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN), Azyumardi Azra. Over the last ten years, Azra has utilized the arguments of Voll and Fazlur Rahman to develop his work on international reformist Sûfi networks connecting the Malayo-Indonesian world to Mecca and Medina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²¹ Following on from this, Azra (among others) has also suggested that the *pesantrens* were created by anti-royal *ulama* as a reaction to their Sultans forging alliances with the Dutch.

Indonesian historiography on Sufism and the *pesantren* is also informed by current realities, and the undeniably important place of the *pesantren* today is often projected back into the distant past, despite the absence of any firm data on there being such teaching institutions beyond the mosque until the eighteenth century.²² Said Aqil’s narrative also showed the indirect reformulation of the tripartite division of Javanese society most famously enunciated by Clifford Geertz in *The Religion of Java*.²³ Otherwise though the Mecca-trained intellectual was in perfect control of his sources when speaking of Islamic history in

19. From the Arabic *tashwir al-afkar* (the exchange of ideas), the latter was a forum founded by Wahab Chasbullah to facilitate debates between reformists and traditionalists. Similarly the Nahdatut Tujjar was established by Chasbullah to strengthen linkages among traditionalist merchants. On the origins of these precursors and their place in NU history, see FEALY, 1996, p. 1-41.

20. See RAHMAN, 1966, p. 195 and VOLL, 1995.

21. See AZRA, 2003. I should also note that Prof. Azra is very much aware of the mixed and cosmopolitan nature of this appropriation of orientalist discourse in general. See AZRA, 2001.

22. On the emergence of the *pesantren* and their curricula, see VAN BRUINESSEN, 1994, p. 132.

23. GEERTZ, 1960. Based on observations at his field site in East Java, Geertz concluded that Javanese society was stratified between nominal Muslims (*abangan*), pious Muslims (*santri*) and an aristocratic elite (*priyayi*) with strongly Indianized cultural aesthetics.

the Middle East, and then of Indonesia in the twentieth century. And while this historiography has its weaknesses by some standards, it is better informed than some accounts which either push a line that Arabs themselves brought Islam and Arabic directly to Indonesia within a century of the Prophet's death, or even within his life.

Whereas the Hadrami *sayyid* community has long emphasised the role of its ancestors in the Islamization of the archipelago, even defending that view forcefully in reaction to an article by Azyumardi Azra on the history of one prominent expatriate, Sayyid Uthman bin Aqil (1822-1913),²⁴ there was also a decided trend in the early twentieth century for Egypt-oriented activists to cite the valorized accounts that foregrounded Arab cultural agency in the process to the exclusion of all other groups. Ironically many such accounts of the Islamization of the archipelago, such as that interpolated by the Lebanese pan-Islamist Amir Shakib Arslan (1869-1946) in his translation of Lothrop Stoddard's *The New World of Islam*, were in turn based on earlier European valorizations.²⁵ Still, all such accounts – traditionalist or otherwise – have had their impact on popular perceptions of the process, whether enunciated by Ali Hasjmy (b. 1914) in his often reprinted *History of Islamic Culture in Indonesia*, or in the continuing flow of accounts that seek constantly to back-date the arrival of Islam in Sumatra.²⁶

Still, such transmissions of ideas from western sources are not accepted uncritically. During our first interview in Jakarta, my companion asked what Luqman, her own family's spiritual guide, thought of the apparent similarities between the stories of Mansur al-Hallaj and the Wali Siti Jenar. While al-Hallaj had been executed in Baghdad in 922 at the order of the Caliph for his excessive zeal in teaching the doctrine of the ultimate unity of man and God to the uninitiated, famously declaring on the gibbet that he was the divine truth (Arabic: *al-haqq*), according to Javanese tradition the eccentric Shaykh Siti Jenar had been condemned by an assembly of his fellow Wali Songo for enunciating another extreme form of ecstatic Sufism and for ignoring the dictates of the Sharia. By way of response Luqman could only state that he knew of no reliable historical source for the life of Siti Jenar, and thus no link or parallel between the two.

In a recent article, Michael Feener has deconstructed Massignon's early influential assumptions about the story of Siti Jenar representing an Indonesian continuity of that of al-Hallaj, showing references to al-Hallaj being of an incidental or cautionary nature. He notes that "it appears that the elements of the story

24. The article that caused the controversy was AZRA, 1995.

25. See STODDARD, 1925, p. 62-8, 185-195.

26. See HASJMY, 1990. For other examples of works seeking to backdate the process of the Islamization of Indonesia see MONTANA, 1997; and ABD AL-SHUKUR, 2002. In the case of the latter, the argument itself based on the general agreement of earlier Indonesian historians – including Hasjmy – in the 1960s and 1970s. Ironically such projections also conform to older court-centred literature on the conversion of Southeast Asia to Islam. See JONES, 1979.

which have generally been regarded as so ‘clearly Hallajian’ may in fact be simply a reflection of more common motifs in the literature of medieval mysticism in general”.²⁷ Nevertheless, he notes that:

in spite of this apparent lack of interest in the figure and teachings of Hallaj in traditional *pesantren* education, one nevertheless finds increasing attention focused on Hallaj and his Indonesian avatars in contemporary Southeast Asia. In general this may be interpreted as simply one manifestation of a more general renaissance of Sufism in the region, and particularly in Indonesia, in the past few decades.²⁸

One might indeed assume that, given their translated presence in the bookshops of Jakarta, the works of Massignon and his heirs are adjudged as sufficiently factual and worthy of reading by members of the intellectual elite and the conflation and linking of these figures will continue for some time, as within the work of Abdul Munir Mulkhan.²⁹ In a recent review of one of Mulkhan’s works on Siti Jenar, Julian Millie has observed his concern with identifying the council of Walis that ordered his execution with today’s *ulama* who have been made servants to the Indonesian state, or those of Muhammadiyah who are alleged to have abandoned the true path outlined by Ahmad Dahlan.³⁰ Whatever the reason for their collaboration or corruption, like the editors of *Sûfî*, Mulkhan agrees that a once guided Indonesia is now in crisis.

A *Sûfî silsila*

I have tried to suggest above that, much like the qualification for being respectable as an order, historical validation is increasingly required for Indonesians to interpret the nature of Java’s Islamic past. Such an argument may be traced in the pages of *Sûfî* itself, but first I wish to look at its own genealogy. According to Luqman Hakiem, the idea for a new journal had been formed while writing a column for the Java-based weekly tabloid *Posmo*. In 2002, *Posmo* (a contraction of “post-modern”) claimed a circulation of some 300 thousand copies for whose readers the subtitle says it all: this is for anyone interested in “Metaphysics and alternative medicine” (*metafisika dan pengobatan alternatif*). From what I saw at the time its content largely reflected the political aspirations of President Megawati’s Party for Democratic Struggle. Beyond this its pages were full of stories of magic, mysteries and the paranormal. One issue, for example, related the account of a pilgrim who claims to have observed the great Sûfî master of the late eleventh century, Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani (d. 1166), flying around the

27. FEENER, 1998, p. 566-567.

28. FEENER, 1998, p. 585.

29. See, for example the conflation made association in an introduction to a recent work by Mulkhan on the life of Siti Jenar by Mohamad Sobary. See MULKHAN, 2002, p. V.

30. See MILLIE, 2002.

Ka'aba as he did his own, more terrestrial, circumambulation.³¹ There are also copious advertisements for demonstrations of Tibetan metaphysics, training in 'bioenergy', making your children clever pupils with the magic touch of 'the Water of Candrakila', *kamasutra* videos, or even Ms Djeng Asih's potions for eternal beauty.

As of late 2002 *Posmo* still maintained his "*konsultasi sûfi*" column, in which Hakiem attempted to provide simply-worded answers to people's problems from a Sûfi perspective.³² In a crude sense one could say of this that Luqman served as a cross between an agony aunt and a *mufti*. According to Luqman, this column had generated an extraordinary response with *Posmo* receiving 20 to 30 questions by email per week. Luqman also averred that all these questioners emphasised that they wanted specifically *sûfi*, and not juridical (*fiqhi*), answers. Indeed should they want such juridical answers, then there were more than enough people prepared these days to supply them.

Certainly Luqman is correct in this assertion. Over the course of the twentieth century a number of the movements mentioned previously – such as Muhammadiyah or NU, and now the quasi-official Council of Indonesian Ulama – have well established mechanisms to produce juridical solutions for modern problems.³³ Such responses are often disseminated in the pages of their respective organs or bound as reference compilations. The recent opening up of the public space for Islamic propagation since the early 1990s has also seen a surge in the number of books interpreting Islam for the average reader, including among them numerous texts on *fiqh* for modern times.

Luqman, however, was somewhat cynical about the general quality of many of these works, which he felt to be largely soulless. He lambasted the widely touted projects of Sharia banking or programs in Sharia business, and used the analogy of drinking coffee to illustrate that while a jurist could tell you whether coffee was licit or illicit, the Sûfi knew the correct way to drink it by virtue of the proper knowledge of *akbalaq*. As Luqman sees it, the outward forms of the Islamic revival like Sharia banking remain tied to the doomed projects of the modernists. Indeed he asserts that the past century had seen a cleavage in Indonesia between modernists and traditionalists. The first had become too rationalist, and ultimately fundamentalist like the Saudis, while the second had begun to

31. 'Melihat orang terbang sambil towaf', *Posmo*, vol. 4 n° 174, 29 July - 4 August 2002. Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani is the most invoked of all the Sûfi saints in gatherings of the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya, particularly by virtue of the regular gatherings to recite such adulatory texts as the *Burda* of al-Busiri (1212-1297). For further explanation of how these texts are appreciated in the *pesantren* milieu, see MILLIE and SYIHABUDDIN, 2005.

32. According to Luqman many of these were subsequently republished by the Gramedia chain with the title *Allahpun berzikir* (Even God performs *dbikr*).

33. On the juridical pronouncements of the Council of Ulama, see ICHWAN, forthcoming; and HOSEN, 2004.

undergo a spiritual crisis, especially in the last twenty years. According to Luqman even some *kiais* were experiencing problems finding their way between the doctrines of free-will (*qadariyya*) and predestination (*jabriyya*), though he attributes this to a neglect of the core text that negotiates mysticism and *fiqh*, the *Ihya' ulum al-din* of al-Ghazali.³⁴ To this end Luqman likened the debate between proponents of rationalism and spiritualism to a comparison between al-Ghazali and Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126-1198); for while Averroes could know one's mind, al-Ghazali knew one's heart.

Beyond the allegedly soulless nature of the modernist-led Islamic revival and neglect of the traditional teachings of the *pesantren*, the financial crashes of 1997-1998 had deepened the national malaise. For Luqman, Indonesians remain in need of a spiritual solution or, as he put it, a "liberal Sufism". And when Luqman invokes the value of "liberal" one cannot escape thinking about the Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network) led by Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, a student of the NU *pesantren* who has recently found a space to develop his ideas at Jakarta's modern Universitas Paramadina Mulia.

Paramadina itself was founded by someone with almost the opposite background to the NU *kiais*, Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005), a graduate of the Cairo-oriented and avowedly 'modern' Gontor *pesantren*.³⁵ Madjid later completed his doctoral dissertation in Chicago under Fazlur Rahman, whose ideas as a historical contextualist of the Qur'an led to difficulties in Pakistan and his departure for the United States. Meanwhile Ulil has attracted widespread recent attention due to his efforts to propagate, and even extend, contemporary arguments about the need to contextualize Qur'anic revelation through historical understanding, particularly those voiced by the Egyptian philosopher Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.³⁶ Ulil too has been branded an apostate by a group of conservative Indonesian *ulama*, but such calls have only given his Jaringan Islam Liberal valuable attention and invoked protection from NU (despite many *kiais* personally disapproving of some of his ideas).

While some attribute Ulil's use of the term "liberal" to the work of an American social scientist, Charles Kurzman – whose writings are often featured on the JIL website – Ulil has recently remarked at a joint Indonesian-Egyptian gathering that it is actually a tribute to another scholar from Cairo University allied with

34. On the *qadariyya* and *jabriyya*, see VAN ESS and WATT.

35. On the origins and early intellectual directions of Gontor, see CASTLES, 1966. For one assessment on the thought of Nurcholish Madjid and comparison with Abdurrahman Wahid, see BARTON, 1997.

36. Much as Fazlur Rahman was forced from Pakistan, Abu Zayd was impelled to move to Europe in 1995 due to fears for his life and state threats to absolve his marriage having accepted the Islamist argument that his views render him an apostate. After several years at Leiden University and teaching stints in Germany, Abu Zayd has been appointed to the University for Humanist Studies in Utrecht, presenting his inaugural lecture "Rethinking the Qur'an: Towards Humanistic Hermeneutics" on 27 May 2004.

Abu Zayd, the Francophile Hasan Hanafi.³⁷ And when Ulil presented some of his ideas in Cairo in 2003 he was met with interest and little overt hostility.³⁸ However quite the opposite occurred when Masdar Farid Masudi, Ulil's superior at Paramadina, was in Cairo for a follow-up meeting in February 2004. On this occasion he was physically threatened by the head of the Indonesian student community, Limra Zainuddin.³⁹

Despite such widely covered incidents and his own concerns about the fractures in modern Indonesia, a reading of Luqman's journal shows that Indonesian Islam is not hopelessly divided, and there is an interesting trend toward rapprochement between the major movements, at least at the level of their respective leaderships, or in the increasing dialogue between the classrooms of the *pesantren* and Paramadina. Similarly one often can find representatives of the old Sûfî orders and the new historical contextualists sharing public space in Indonesia, often against the attacks of Salafis oriented to a puritanical piety that rejects the practices of the *tarekat*.

Certainly Luqman is not the only Sûfî to engage with the current climate of openness. There has been a veritable flood of works on Sufism for the modern age of late, as a visit to any of the more elite bookshops in Jakarta will show. But, as I will suggest below, even with the notable contributions from intellectuals of the new Paramadina school of historically contextualized Sufism, the journal Luqman produced may nonetheless be seen from certain angles as the revamped voice of an older orthodoxy that is seeking to maintain its position in the vanguard of Sûfî practice and which continues to emphasize that the best way to understand Sufism is with the aid of a teacher within the structure of a (traditional) *tarekat*.

Dealing with modernity, reconstructing Sufism

Sûfî first appeared in April 2000 and appeared on a monthly basis for at least the following 22 months before a long hiatus in 2003.⁴⁰ The theme of the first issue was to announce the dawning of the third millennium, regardless of

37. On the very broad descriptive category "liberal Islam", see KURZMAN, 1998. The JIL website itself gives no specific lineage, stating that its name merely illustrates the movement's 'fundamental principles', being an Islam which emphasizes "private liberties" (according to the Mu'tazili doctrine on "human liberties"), and 'liberation' of the socio-political structure from 'unhealthy and oppressive domination'. See <http://www.islamlib.com>, accessed 17 May 2004.

38. For a report on the Indonesian-Egyptian meeting of 2003, see LAFFAN, 2003. Also, for further background to the changing nature of the Cairene community, see LAFFAN, 2004.

39. See ASRORI S. KARNI, "Gertak Mati Pengawal Akidah", *Gatra*, n° 14, Friday 13 February 2004.

40. According to the colophon, *Sûfî* was initially managed by Helmi Azwary with the assistance of Amal Alghozali. Noted as advisors were the NU luminaries Mustofa Bisri, Said Aqil Siradj and Fudoli Zaini. It sold for rp. 4000 with additional costs for subscribers outside Java.

the fact that the Islamic date was Muharram 1421. According to *Sûfi*, after the parties heralding the end of the last thousand years, with its “exoticism, hedonism and dehumanism” made all the more complex by the advent of “globalization”, people were faced with a new challenge:

The fact is that as the global village (*kampung dunia*) becomes ever smaller, the solutions offered to mankind are no simpler, but rather ever more complex, ever more barren and, finally, ever more removed from the oasis of the life of *fatamorgana*. The hell of the world becomes as a prison for the soul. The world of Sufism offers an escape from this prison through the heaven of the heart and inner peace of the soul. ... It is no exaggeration to say that the editorial team [of *Sûfi*] want to make this Sûfi world more actual, bearing in mind that this Sûfi world is growing at such a rapid rate today.⁴¹

The editors then noted that they therefore sought to give practical advice to those seeking the mystical path by the presentation of general themes within the rubric of *tasawwuf* generally. To this end they claimed the backing of the *ulama* and *kiais* who were experts in Sufism, and that they would consult with the leading Sûfis of the nation. Furthermore, given that they published readers’ letters, these may be taken as offering an idea of what was to come. A certain Aswin claimed that he found the standard books on Sufism – presumably as found in the *pesantren* – far too stiff. There was not enough background to the lives of the great Sûfis. Moreover there needed to be more humor so that the atmosphere generated could be healthier and not too serious. Another reader urged that the web pages of the journal be updated with an English version “to help those interested from abroad”.⁴²

Clearly the journal had high ambitions, and given that NU members in general often wonder why it is that their organization gets no press beyond Indonesia, regardless of it being the largest such Islamic association in the world, this might be taken as a sign of some interest in gaining a place in the global imagination. Still, one has to start with the local, and the leading feature of the first issue consisted of an interview with former NU chairman Sahal Mahfudh kicked off by Luqman’s own introduction entitled “Escape from the barren oasis”.⁴³ Herein Luqman reiterated that modern life is a strain, but that religious communities everywhere, and the Muslim Umma in particular, know that the values of the past cannot simply be abandoned. True Islam though has seemingly been relinquished by its adherents, and what has emerged in its place is an urban Sufism, at five-star hotels, among the cohorts of tie-wearing executives, and even behind the gloss of performing artists.⁴⁴

41. LUQMAN HAKIEM, “Milenium Sûfi”, *Sûfi*, vol. 1, n° 1, April 2000, p. 3.

42. Here references were given to www.sufinet.com and www.sufinet.org.com. Neither site is now active.

43. LUQMAN HAKIEM, “Mentas dari oase kegersangan”, *Sûfi*, vol. 1, n° 1, April 2000, p. 5.

44. For preliminary notes on this phenomenon, see HASAN and MUFID, 2002.

Luqman summarizes the following discussions with Sahal Mahfudh of Pati who, much like the *kiais* from Tebuireng, is known to have an ambivalent attitude to the *tarekat*, as well as articles by Said Aqil Siradj, mentioned above, and the poet Dr Abdul Hadi WM. As Luqman explained, Mahfudh points out that modernity needs not be in conflict with “the world of Sufism”, Said Aqil emphasizes the inseparable nature of the worlds of *tasawwuf* and Sharia, and Abdul Hadi discusses the current trend for troubled people to seek guidance from quacks and paranormals instead of taking advantage of serious programs on mysticism; such as that offered by his own institution. Finally Luqman set all these contributions against the image of a corrupted and unspiritual West, claiming that the investigations of *Sûfi* had revealed “the tragedy of western society”; a society suffused by fear and in danger of imminent breakdown.

The very first question put to Sahal Mahfudh in the interview was on how to face the “tragedy” of modern life, which he answered with the straightforward imperative to look at Sufism in terms of Islam’s three traditional and mutually reinforcing dimensions: *aqida*, *sharia* and *akhlaq*. Of these, Sufism was but a facet of the third, and all had to be studied in order. Luqman put the question as to whether *tasawwuf* is a religious obligation, to which Mahfudh replied that it was indeed “in order to make one’s belief and practice of Sharia complete”.

Such themes are by no means new in *Sûfi* thought, but this all served as preamble to the main question on the matter of “modernity”:

L. H.: Modernity has caused a spiritual crisis. Can *tasawwuf* provide a solution?

S. M.: I see modernity as the crest of materialism which leads ultimately to secularism. A contradiction has emerged between modernity and Sufism, yet the fact is that we cannot avoid modernity in our lives. Because of this perhaps there needs to be a fusion of the functions of Sufism and modernity. Sufism must become a guide to modernity itself.

L. H.: But if modernity ends in secularism, are not the values of Sufism quite separate from this?

S. M.: As a matter of fact it cannot be so. When talking of modernity we cannot separate it from rationality, efficiency, democracy, the acknowledgement of plurality and human rights. None of this conflicts with Sufism. If we can say that humanity (*manusia*) consist of a soul (*jiwa*) and body (*raga*) then one’s material needs must also be answered, and in this Sufism has a role to play. Namely people’s material needs can be directed by its ethics or morals.

L. H.: Where then is the meeting of Sufism, with its spiritual morality, and modernity, with its materialism?

S. M.: Modernity can still connect with Sufism. We know in Sufism that this world is a means (*sarana*) and not an end (*tujuan*), it is not a goal (*ghaya*) but just the means (*wasail*). One can reject wealth, but do not regard such a rejection as the final goal. As a means it can enrich and remind one of fraternal matters. For such reasons Sufism might become a way out for modern people. Let *Sûfis* not be too exclusive or separate

themselves from modernity. As modernity itself cannot be avoided and stands as a inevitability, there must be an effort to return to understanding the world as a tool and not a goal.⁴⁵

The discussion continued in this vein with Luqman asking if current exclusivist practices by some Sûfis constituted deviation or misuse, to which Sahal Mahfudh responded that they are more in the nature of a distraction and reiterated the need to grapple with the modern world. The main point should be that people hold to their values and be motivated by their *aqida*. If they cannot enact the Sharia in their daily lives, then any attempt to carry out *tasawwuf* will only fail.

Discussions then turn to the JATM which Sahal urges should not be regarded as an organization that manages Sufism, but rather as a corporate body (*wadah*) to represent their interests. And finally, when asked for his opinion on criticisms that the members of the JATM were “unable to develop intellectually or artistically”, Sahal Mahfudh has this to say:

We do not say that Sufism progresses or declines, whatever the estimations of writings [on the subject] may be. In the field of Sûfi writing, for example, one might ask what the Ahlit Tarekat [*i.e.* the JATM] could say on the matter. Has there not already been much written by way of explanation in all sorts of books on Sufism? What is the use then of making new ones? I think that the real achievement of the Sûfis has been to strengthen the morality of the community, this has been their greatest result. ... Who else is there that still holds up high moral values? We might well ask what has been the role of the *pesantren* in the life of the nation? What are the books that have been written [there]? and How many university graduates have they produced?, in which case the answer is: none. To write a book or produce a graduate is easy. Yet to make people good is truly difficult. That is what we want to see as the role of the Sûfis today.⁴⁶

It seems that modernity, however loosely defined, is inescapable, and, as may be noted in Sahal Mahfudh's reference to easily-produced books and university graduates, he is well aware of the present (and to his mind unsatisfactory) responses to that modernity. Jakarta today has its elite bookshops with outlets in most shopping malls, such as the Gunung Agung, Gramedia and Wali Songo chains, all stocked with copious titles with advice for modern times, Islamic or otherwise. And one cannot travel far in cities like Yogyakarta, Cirebon or Bandung without noticing the new or updated university campuses. But despite the range of books and the new concrete, such institutions will not necessarily produce a large class of high-quality graduates, especially today where so many degrees and theses are openly bought or copied,⁴⁷ and where many universities have to deal with the effects of campus decentralization carried out under Soeharto in order to inhibit organized student agitation.

45. Interview with Sahal Mahfudh, *Sûfi*, n° 1, April 2000, p. 6-10.

46. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

47. This devaluation of knowledge was noted by the eldest son of the now late Kiai of Buntet. Personal communication, Pesantren Buntet, Cirebon, 4 March 2003.

Of course there have been some notable successes beyond the NU *pesantren*, and the next interviews featured in *Sûfi*'s maiden issue were with Abdul Hadi and Rifai Hasan, both lecturers at Paramadina. Abdul Hadi is well known for his work on the historical face of Sufism in Indonesian literature in general, having produced several studies of the poetry of the first known Southeast Asian Sûfi, Hamzah Fansuri.⁴⁸ Like Sahal Mahfudh, Abdul Hadi stresses that Sûfis need to bring themselves from isolation and into public life.⁴⁹ In the following article his colleague, and head of Paramadina's program on Sufism, described its new study program which also does not separate itself from daily life – though he disavowed the ideas that Sufism could, or should, become a mass movement.⁵⁰

Indeed on the question of the value of movements in general Hasan made a comparison with the various mystical movements in “the West” which he claimed have degenerated into schemes for the accumulation of wealth or which have even led to mass-suicides, as with famous instances in Uganda and California. When asked if such could occur in Indonesia he expressed doubts, and pointed out how much Indonesian activity was focused on simple beliefs in magic and ritual – whether by drinking specially blessed water or visiting holy graves like those of the Wali Songo. To this end he suggested that the JATM has a role to play in distinguishing correct Sufism from such practices, but urged that it not become one more way of pigeon-holing people, given that Sufism was about universality not formalization.

Certainly the mystics of the *pesantrens* feel that they have often been pigeon-holed by many of their rivals from the modernist camp, as is made clear in an article by Said Aqil, entitled “The reconstruction of Sufism”.⁵¹ According to Said Aqil, too many people have a distorted view of the true essence (*hakikat*) of Sufism, believing that it merely consists of such ritual behaviour as the repetition of pious phrases. This, he says, is because of the activities of the modernists (also glossed in English as: “Islamic movement”) which started at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Said Aqil, the modernists aim to create a community “which only exhibits the formal symbols of Islam” and in which “every aspect of life has to be labeled as ‘Islamic’ if it wants to be counted as an aspect of modernization.” But what, asked Aqil, had this movement actually given Indonesians in the last 100 years? How had it contributed to the advancement of

48. There is currently some debate over the life history of Hamzah Fansuri stirred up by the recent publication and reading of a Meccan tomb-stone giving a death date of 1527. See GUILLOT and KALUS, 2000. One of the more recent works by Abdul Hadi concerning Hamza Fansuri is an anthology of his mystical poems, see ABDUL HADI, 1995. Not surprisingly this book was given a less than favorable review by the anti-Sûfi editors of *Salafi*, see *Salafi*, n° 5, Dhu'l-hijja 1416/1996, p. 67-69.

49. Interview with Abdul Hadi, “Keluar dari Keterasingan”, *Sûfi*, n° 1, April 2000, p. 11-3.

50. Interview with Rifai Hasan, “Kami Kembangkan Tasawuf Positif”, *Sûfi*, n° 1, April 2000, p. 14-17.

51. Said Aqil SIRADJ, “Rekonstruksi Sufisme”, *Sûfi*, n° 1, April 2000, p. 18-20.

the community (*umat*)? As far as he could see there was as yet no real evidence of any advancement and thus this third millennium was in great need of a reorientation of the *umat*'s course, towards the realization of the civil (*madani*) ideal.⁵²

According to Said Aqil, people need to steep themselves again in the accumulated spiritual values of Sufism which are applicable to any place given that, to use the language of al-Junayd, Sûfis are like water that takes on the hue of its surrounds and yet suffuses it (Arabic: *al-'arif kal-maya la law'n lahu*).⁵³ Said Aqil also attempts to counter the modernist presentation of Sufism as intellectual stagnation by presenting it as something dynamic, as is demonstrated by the fact that the Sûfi had to pass through numerous developmental stages on the path to gnosis, being those of repentance, piety, patience and complete trust in God.

Coupled with his arguments against Sufism being labeled as a cause of stagnation, Aqil nonetheless seems in general agreement with the modernists that stagnation is an unavoidable present reality. Yet unlike the modernist discourse describing the onset of decline in the Muslim community immediately after the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs,⁵⁴ and an insistence on a return to Qur'an and Sunna alone, Aqil proposes a somewhat later return to the past truth given that he places the decline after a golden age of intellectual activity.

Ultimately in order to reconstruct Sufism, and especially in Indonesia, what is clearly needed are precise and accurate works of reference (*marajil/referensi*). The authoritative references must be compiled from the primary sources in the field of *tasawwuf* written by the Sûfis of the second and third centuries of Islam, which were constantly examined in each successive period. After this, in the middle ages (*abad pertengahan*), they were augmented by the compilations of the *ulama*, at which time the Muslim World began several centuries of intellectual stagnation.⁵⁵

While not the source book visualized by Said Aqil, *Sûfi* is clearly an attempt to engage with the people of the present modernity by providing them with accessible information about past greats and pointers to the primary sources, but by also nudging them in the direction of the 'respectable orders' as an examination of the general contents shows.

52. I should pause here to mention that Said Aqil's use of the term *madani* is not clear in the article, though given his outspoken views against the state effectuating the Sharia, this is probably closer to the idea of civil society advanced in the Middle East (*al-mujtama' al-madani*). This is more usually translated in Indonesia as *masyarakat sipil* with *masyarakat madani* being the term claimed by many Islamists as representing their idealized version of the first politico-religious community in Medina. Then again, writers like Nurcholish Madjid – who introduced the term into Indonesian public discourse – claim that the community in Medina was very much like our understanding of civil society.

53. "The Gnostic is like water, he has no colour". Said Aqil SIRADJ, "Rekonstruksi Sufisme", *op. cit.*, p. 19.

54. The Rightly Guided Caliphs – *al-khulafa' al-rashidun* – was the Medina-based polity under the first four successors to Muhammad, Abu Bakar, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, who ruled following his death in 632 until 661.

55. Said Aqil Siradj, "Rekonstruksi Sufisme", *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Themes thereafter

When I asked a son of the late kiai of the famous *pesantren* at Buntet, near Cirebon in West Java, whether he was familiar with the journal *Sûfi* and Luqman Hakiem in particular, he replied that he certainly was, and that his father, Ki Fuad Hasyim, was a subscriber. He then remarked that it was a very useful journal for people in general given that it provided them the chance to familiarize themselves with the great mystics of the past – whose pictures adorn many walls of the *pesantren*, including his own.⁵⁶

From July 2000 there were indeed features on great *Sûfi* masters, beginning with al-Ghazali (n° 3), before moving to al-Jaylani (n° 4), Jalal al-Din Rumi (n° 5), and “the great tragedy of al-Hallaj” (n° 7). This emphasis from the classic past soon changes though to include local heirs to the *tarekat* tradition, such as Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1802-1872), the Borneo-born founder of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya order (n° 10), or Ismail Minangkabau, who spread the Khalidiyya variant of the Naqshbandiyya in Singapore and the Riau archipelago in the 1850s and 1860s (n° 13).

Indeed it is apparent that *Sûfi* was providing information about the many orders deemed by the JATM as valid – including the Shadhiliyya, Shattariyya, Sanusiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya – while often pointing out the weakness of new-age cults, such as the phenomenon of Lia Aminuddin, who claims to be in communication with the Angel Gabriel.⁵⁷ General differentiations are also made between exercises and regimens of *Sûfis* that appear similar to other semi-mystical phenomena, such as those of Muslim prayer and certain Tai Chi movements. It is consistently recommended that the true *Sûfi* path requires proper supervision and that one needs a guide (*murshid*), lest one be waylaid by *ghurur* or what Luqman terms “the various deceptions on the *Sûfi* path”.⁵⁸

Throughout too there are the regular articles of NU *kiais* like Fachruddin Masturo and Mustofa Bisri, or with the modern intellectuals aligned broadly with NU, such as Nurcholish Madjid, Komorudin Hidayat, and Jalaluddin Rakhmat. Notable in the writings of the latter group are the copious references to both the writings of past *Sûfi* greats and the observations of Massignon and his heirs in the West, thus contextualizing Indonesia in the history and geography of a Muslim world.⁵⁹ There are also references to the more recent contributions

56. It is interesting to note how many popular representations of greats like al-Junayd or even Abu Bakr are instantly recognizable to the students of the *pesantren*, much like many of the icons of the saints are to members of the Catholic tradition. Doubtless the modernists have their own views on the accuracy and validity of such representations.

57. See MUFIID, 2003.

58. LUQMAN Hakiem, “Ghurur: Tipudaya Kaum Sûfi”, *Sûfi*, n° 13, June 2001.

59. For example, another lecturer at Paramadina, Yunasril Ali, wrote an article on “the positive aspects of the teachings of Sufis” reviewing on the way the writings of Massignon, Arberry, and Nicholson. See “Segi-segi Ajaran Positif Para Tokoh Sûfi”, *Sûfi*, n° 11, April 2001, p. 42-46.

of Martin van Bruinessen on the *pesantren* tradition, which reflect their engagement with western scholarship, often after having completed masters and doctoral studies in North America or Europe.⁶⁰ Indeed the back cover of *Sûfi* often featured advertisements for the Indonesian translation of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam*.

There are also features on ritual practice, such as fasting (*sawm*), prayer (*du'a*), and the pious recollection of God (*dhikr*). These are interspersed with numerous human interest stories. For example, number 11 ran a story about a glamorous female entertainer (Ayu Azhari) who had found Islam again through the *tarekat*.⁶¹ Then there are the humorous anecdotes about *kiais* who claimed to have swallowed the Ka'aba, or the tales of simple pilgrims such as the man who was horrified to see a sign in the Hijaz which he thought read "sexual intercourse forbidden" – rather than the more bearable 'no entry' (*mamnu' al-dukhul*).⁶²

The Haqqani-Kabbani connection

Still, while *Sûfi* could regularly praise the *pesantrens* such as those of Buntet and Suryalaya for their role in keeping the *tarekat* vibrant in Indonesia, the visit to Southeast Asia of leading international shaykhs receives much print space. The *Sûfi* centre had come to tour the periphery in the person of two Naqshbandi masters, Muhammad Nazim Adil al-Haqqani of Cyprus, and his deputy (*khalifa*) and son-in-law Muhammad Hisham al-Kabbani, who were in Indonesia from 26 April to 6 May 2001. For the latter it was his fourth visit, and they were especially interested in the *pesantrens* of Suryalaya and that of al-Taufiqy in Pekalongan, patronized by Habib Luthfy, head of the JATM.

After a build up of two issues, n° 13 featured an Indonesian translation of a final speech originally given in English by Nazim Adil at the Suryalaya complex.⁶³ In this speech Shaykh Nazim claimed that after ten full days in Indonesia he had met with many people who claimed to follow the Sunna of the Prophet, however in his opinion many of them did not. Indeed he asserted that he had met less than ten such truly Sunni Muslims. Thus when he heard of Abah Anom of Suryalaya he felt compelled to visit him to make up for all the officials and ministers who were clearly unable to lead mankind and society in the direction ordained by God. The *ulama* as a class are also criticized for only providing intellectual rather than spiritual nourishment, and none seemed to be in true quest of the light of Muhammad.

60. Most commonly cited are his book on the Naqshbandiyya and an article on traditional texts in the *pesantren*. See VAN BRUIJESSEN, 1990 and 1992.

61. "Ayu Azhari: Sekarang Saya Bertarekat", *Sûfi*, n° 11, April 2001, p. 56-58.

62. "Aneh tapi Benar", *Sûfi*, n° 11, April 2001, p. 16-17.

63. *Sûfi*, n° 11, April 2001, p. 50-51.

He continued, very much rhetorically, by announcing that:⁶⁴

Many *ulama* give candles to the people, but not light! Both candle and light can only be handed on through a *tarekat*. There are 41 *tarekat* at the moment, 40 connected to Ali (r.a.) and one which draws light from Sayyidna Abu Bakar Siddiq (r.a.), being the Naqshbandiyya *tarekat*. The *ulama* and the intellectuals can hand out candles as big as coconut trees, but what meaning have they without light? What is needed now is the light which shall set aflame the candles of knowledge. Many *ulama* only look outside in quest of knowledge (*pengetahuan*). They know much ... but what is the benefit of knowledge without divine illumination?

The saints abide in hidden places and people may only know their knowledge (*ilmu*) from the books they wrote. In the past many *ulama* established *madrasas*, but at the moment when the students finish, all they are given is a certificate (*ijaza*). The teachers say: "We have given you knowledge from intellectual (*aqli*) and transmitted (*naqli*) sources". But these are only candles. And what is the meaning of a candle without light?⁶⁵

The sermon went on with an exhortation to seek light, given that God had ordained that those who were blind in this life would be blind in the next:

We now live in an age where very few people seek light any more. Few Indonesian *ulama* indeed possess the light. Syekh Ahmad Sohibulwafa Tajul Arifin [Abah Anom] has possessed it, but now he is old and frail. Whoever seeks it must do so urgently ... I do not know who shall gain God's light after him, but I do know that it will not end with him. You all see now that he appears dormant, but do not say that he is asleep.⁶⁶ I receive this message from his heart. And do not say that Shaykh Nazim is speaking, for it is Ahmad Sohibulwafa speaking through me, for I would personally be embarrassed to appear before you all. I shall therefore form my words based on what is taken from his heart.

Clearly Shaykh Nazim knows how to inspire a crowd, and his whirlwind tour can only have helped affirm the impression that the Haqqaniyya branch of the Naqshbandiyya would continue as one of the most internationally successful of some 41 orders adjudged valid by virtue of their pedigree.⁶⁷

This does not necessarily mean though that such an appearance leaves the Abah Anom in the shadow of international stars like Shaykh Nazim. If anything the visit would have affirmed his own status among the thousands of often

64. Although the Indonesian version printed in *Sûfi* was itself a translation of an English speech, my own version here is an attempt to show how that speech would have been interpreted locally. In any event the visit of Haqqani and Kabbani was also reported on the Haqqani websites. These were first established by Kabbani in 1990, with an Indonesian portal (Haqqani Indonesia) being inaugurated in 2000. Another visit to Southeast Asia was also documented in 2003. See http://www.naqshbandi.org/events/SEAsia2003_2/Indonesia/ (accessed 17 May 2004).

65. *Sûfi*, n° 11, April 2001, p. 51.

66. For some times Abah Anom's physical condition has been extremely poor, now verging on paralysis.

67. Actually the JATM has, since 1957, propagated a notion that there are 44 orders that properly represent orthodox Sufism. See VAN BRUINSEN, 1992, p. 171-173; and the first *fatwa* on the subject issued by the JATM in 1959 as presented in HAMID, ANWAR and MASYHURI, 1982, p. 11-13.

rurally-based people who make their way to Suryalaya to partake of his blessings.⁶⁸ But neither does the Haqqaniyya focus its attention solely on the traditional vessels of the *pesantren*. There are presently numerous and somewhat elite branches of the order throughout Southeast Asia – either openly in Indonesia or on a clandestine basis in Malaysia, where the *tarekat* are officially banned.

One such branch seems to operate in the well-appointed homes of the Jakarta elite, which I briefly visited in August 2002.⁶⁹ In short discussions with the host, it was claimed that Kabbani's regional deputy hopes to link the various chapters in Southeast Asia, and he too spoke at some length about the historical friction in Southeast Asia between “modernists” and members of the *tarekat*. He himself was the son of such a modernist from Pariaman in West Sumatra, a region famous for the depth of antagonism between the two rival claimants to the mantle of orthodoxy. This competition is often back-dated to the Padri wars of the early nineteenth century, inspired in part by the first Wahhabi interregnum in the Hijaz.⁷⁰ Certainly the members of the various *tarekat* remain very much “disrespectable” in the eyes of the current authorities in Saudi Arabia, and the host explained that both Shaykh Nizam and his kinsmen were still denied access to the Holy Places.

Regardless of whether the Holy Places are officially off-limits to some heads of Sûfî orders, the meeting in Jakarta which followed was certainly exclusive, and various guests would make their appearances in late-model four-wheel drives dressed in what might be described as retro-Turkic *chic*.⁷¹ This, to me, seemed very much to resemble the urban elitism criticized by Luqman Hakiem in the first issue of *Sûfî*.

Looking forward, looking back

Despite Luqman's ambitions and energy, as well as regular advertising for Islamic insurance companies (Asuransi Takaful) or the Oxford Encyclopedia of

68. Julian Millie informs me that many of the murids of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya in West Java often have vague notions of the actual historical place of figures like Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani or yet such important visitors as Shaykh Nazim, focusing all their attention instead on the person of Abah Anom as the mediator of divine *baraka*. Julian Millie, personal communication, 10 May 2004.

69. This was to accompany my colleague Ahmad Syafii Mufid, then working on urban manifestations of Sufism in Indonesia. Jakarta, 1 August 2002.

70. On the history of the Padri movement and the conflicts in West Sumatra, see DOBBIN, 1983.

71. Coincidentally I have learned of the use of the category of “Islamic chic” coined by Jenny White to describe the elite (or upper-middle class) salons of urbanites in Istanbul and applied by Mona Abaza in a recent article on high-class gatherings in Jakarta patronized by women of Hadrami descent. See ABAZA, 2004.

Islam, the journal he launched did not at all prove to be a stable proposition. When I interviewed him again in February 2003, he was then looking for a new financial backer and hoped to come back afresh with an even larger volume addressing how the life stories of the Sûfî greats could be applicable to modern life, or perhaps even a new website. He hoped that to this end he would gain the support of the *ulama*, whom he believes needed to realize that they had to engage with the public in a new way to face the challenges of modernity. As he still sees it, there are three sorts of *kiai*, all of whom are defined by their attitude to modernity: whether for it, opposed to it, or willing to adapt to it without compromising their teachings. At this point I asked him to explain more precisely what he meant by modernity, to which he responded that it implied a greater openness and progressive spirit that gave space to the ideas of others. And although I did not press further on this, I made a comment about the continuing trend in Indonesia for the Islamization of public space by adopting “Islamic dress” (like the green turbans of the Jakartan Haqqanis) or by rebuilding the village mosque so that it is complete with a minaret and onion dome reminiscent of the Mogulesque illustrations in popular editions of *A Thousand and One Nights*. In its own way this is just as much an aspect of modernity as executives performing *dhikr* in elite houses or students in the *pesantren* and at the new universities reading Luqman’s journal – or yet learning of the histories and esoteria connected with the Sûfîs online. As he sees it, this phenomenon indicates a continuing search for identity that had departed from the spirit brought to Indonesia by the Wali Songo who had first Islamized Java in the local cultural idiom.

Still, it seems that Luqman, for all his ideas and plans, is as much a part of this search for identity as anyone. Much like western textbooks, or indeed most Islamic publications in Indonesia, his own journal often used images for its covers sourced from abroad and continues to depict an ideal Islam that is located elsewhere (or perhaps everywhere?) in time and space – even if it is still attainable by recourse to the tried and true methods of past masters. And whilst his footnotes are drawn from the classic texts, his ideas come from the intellectualizations of the Indonesian present.

Moreover, with his hope to engage with a new elite by way of the internet, Luqman is one more participant in an alternative globalization which is certainly not the same as Americanization as some would have it.⁷² Whether in Jakarta, Cairo or Chicago, a new *umma* is taking shape that is envisioned against the perceived challenge of (western) modernity, and which offers an “Islamic” solution

72. Certainly the meaning of globalization is still being debated in *pesantren* circles, or beyond Indonesia when students gather together. See, for example, the wide range of responses in ROMLI and TIDJANI, 2002.

by invoking the images of the past to bolster the arguments of the present. Just whether Sufism is an intrinsic element of the package, and if indeed their electronic silsilas and ijazas will be accepted by the broader public remains, for the moment, an open question.

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Résumé

L'article discute la façon dont une revue dédiée au Soufisme a récemment expliqué que l'inculcation d'une piété mystique adéquate au peuple indonésien sauverait la nation de ses nombreux problèmes actuels. Elle le fait en présentant la modernité comme une réalité inévitable et suggère que si les gens peuvent tirer profit d'une approche historique et contextualisée de l'histoire du Soufisme, il n'en reste pas moins que les écoles islamiques traditionnelles sont mieux à même d'en offrir une réelle compréhension et que les meilleurs exemples de pratique de cette religion sont fournis par les confréries traditionnelles.

Mots-clés : Indonésie, soufisme, tariqua, presse.

Abstract

This article discusses the ways in which a recent periodical devoted to Sufism argues that the inculcation of proper mystical piety in the Indonesian people will save their nation from its current raft of problems. It does this with reference to modernity as an inescapable reality and suggests that while people are well served by an intellectual and contextualist approach to the history of Sufism, the actual understanding of it is still most ably communicated in the traditional Islamic schools and its practises are best exemplified by the traditional orders.

Key words: Indonesia, Sufism, tariqa, the press.

El artículo discute la manera en que una revista dedicada al Sufismo ha explicado recientemente que la inculcación de una piedad mística adecuada para el pueblo indonesio salvaría la nación de sus numerosos problemas actuales. Lo hace presentando a la modernidad como una realidad inevitable, y sugiere que si las personas pueden aprovechar una perspectiva histórica y contextualizada de la historia del Sufismo, no es menos cierto que las escuelas islámicas tradicionales están en mejores condiciones de ofrecer una real comprensión de ésta, y que los mejores ejemplos de práctica de esta religión están dados por las cofradías tradicionales.

Palabras claves : Indonesia, Sufismo, tariqa, la prensa.