

A HISTORY OF HADRAMI COMMUNITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract

Hadrami-Arabs have played essential roles in Islamisation process across Southeast Asian region. This article diachronically examines the history of Hadrami community and their roles in islamisation. It looks at the dynamics, adaptation, and contestation of Islamisation in the region. This article offers actors-centered accounts of how the Hadrami community contributes to Islamic proselitisation activism (dakwah), politics, and contestation within the community. It further argues that, throughout the history of Hadrami in Southeast Asia, political adaptation and contestation have been essential elements that shape the current Islamic-scape in contemporary Southeast Asia.

[Komunitas Hadrami-Arab berperan penting dalam proses Islamisasi di wilayah Asia Tenggara. Artikel ini akan membahas secara diakronis sejarah komunitas Hadrami dan peran mereka dalam proses Islamisasi. Artikel ini mengkaji dinamika, adaptasi, dan kontestasi dalam proses Islamisasi di wilayah Asia Tenggara. Kemudian, artikel ini menawarkan pendekatan “aktor” untuk membahas bagaimana komunitas Hadrami berkontribusi dalam aktifitas dakwah, politik, dan kontestasi dalam komunitas Hadrami. Selanjutnya, saya berargumen bahwa, melalui pelacakan sejarah Hadrami di Asia Tenggara, bahwa adaptasi politik dan kontestasi menjadi faktor penting yang menjelaskan terbentuknya Islamic-scape di Asia Tenggara kontemporer]

Keywords: Hadrami, Islamisation, Alawiyyin

Introduction

Long before the invention of motorized ship, a Chinese travel-records mentions that in 674 the Arabs have stayed in west-cost of Sumatera. They are particularly trader and Muslim scholars (*ulama*).¹ They travelled to Southeast Asian region through sea-route, from Aden to Gujarat-Kambey-Sailon, and land-route, from Damascus to Khorasan-Balochistan-Bamir-Kasykar-Shina-Khutan-Gobi-Sangtu and Hansyau Desert.² These first Arab travelers introduced Islam and established Muslim communities.³ Another story tells that Islam has arrived in Sumatera during the Prophet Muhammad era. The Prophet Muhammad sent Muaz bin Jabal for a mission to introduce Islam to the region of Yemen. The Muslim coverts in Yemen were particularly traders who traveled across Asia, including China and Sumatera, for commerce. A Chinese source for example reports the presence of a Muslim community in Hainan in 745 and the migration of Arab and Persian Muslim from Canton to Malaka and Pasai in 758. A Muslim tomb of Mahligai in Barus which is dated back to the first century of Islam, demonstrates the arrival of Islam in Sumatera.⁴

The Islamisation in Southeast Asian region later escalated following the migration of *Hadrami*-Arabs. Along with their intention for trade and commerce, *hadrami* introduced Islam to the Southeast Asian local population. The Southeast Asian history records that the migration of *Hadrami* community to the region escalated the massive expansion of Islam. The *Hadrami* are resident of Hadramaut, southern Yemen. Hadramaut is a region that stretches from the coastline that includes the cities of Mukalla and Shihr and the area which is in the vicinity of

¹ T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Constable & Company, 1913), p. 27.

² Robin A. Donkin, *Between East and West: The Moluccas and The Traffic in Spice Up to The Arrival of European* (USA: American Philosophical Society, 2003), p. 92.

³ A. Hasjmi, *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: al-Maarif, 1989), p. 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183-184.

the valley or Wadi'al-Ayn, Da'wan and Hadramaut. In Wadi Hadramaut, there are cities Shibam, Sewun and Tarim which are known as centers of Islamic education and culture.⁵

Hadramaut is a region with a culture that places the *Alawiyyin*, the descendant of Ali, the son-in-law to the Prophet Muhammad, in a very high position. *Alawiyyin* are a honorific title for those who are attributed to Alawi bin Ubaidillah bin Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir and were born in the city of Yemen after their migration from Basrah, Iraq.⁶ They are the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatimah az-Zahra who linked their *nasab* (origin) to the Prophet Muhammad. They generally have *laqob* (title) in the form of *sayyid*, *syarif*, or *habib* for male, and *sayyidah* and *syarifah* for their female counterparts.⁷

The *Alawiyyin* migrated to Hadramaut during the Abbasid Caliphate. The migration is particularly because of political intimidation of the Mu'tazilite Abbasid Dynasty to the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Led by Ahmad ibn Isa ibn Ali Uraidhi ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali Zainul Abidin ibn Husein, it is estimated that 70 members of *Alawiyyin* migrated to Hadramaut. They firstly went to Medina in 317, and moved to Hadramaut Yemen two years later. These early migrants settled in Husaisah which was located between Tarim and Seywun.⁸

At the time of early migration of *Alawiyyin*, Hadramaut settlers were members of the Khawarij Ibadhiyah. This community were well known for their hostility towards Ali and his descendants. The harsh environment that the *Alawiyyin* faced at their new settlement made them building an exclusive community. They particularly prohibited the

⁵ Natalie Mobine Kesheh, *Hadrami Awakening: Kebangkitan Hadrami di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Akbar, 2007), p. 10.

⁶ Marzuki Ali, *Peran Dakwah Damai Habaib/Alawiyyin di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Rusayn Fikr, 2013), p. 3.

⁷ Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, (Berkeley: California Press University, 2016).

⁸ Marzuki Ali, *Peran Dakwah*..., p. 4.

marriage with non-*Alawiyyin* and established *naqaba* institution. The *naqaba* is a water reservoir to collect the rainwater for daily uses and agriculture. It creates a limited community in which religious tradition is maintained through a limited number of family. This institution was firstly established by the earliest *Alawiyyin* settler Ahmad bin Isa al-Muhajir.⁹

In Islamic theology, the *Alawiyyin* were particularly members Imamate Shia with Ja'far Sadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baqir as their theological patron. In later centuries, as the *Alawiyyin* settled in Hadramaut where the majority of its population were Shafiite-Sunni, the *Alawiyyin* adapted to the Shafiite school of Islamic law (*mazhab*) while adapting some aspects of Imamate-Shia particularly on the doctrine the purity of the Prophet's family (*'ahl al-bait*). One of the *Alawiyyin* settler in Hadramaut, one of the descendants of Ahmad ibn Isa al-Muhajir, Muhammad ibn Ali Ba'alawi known as al-Faqih al-Muqaddam (the prolific scholar in Islamic law) became an expert in Islamic law of the Shafiite and narrated many the Prophet tradition (*hadith*). Al-Faqih al-Muqaddam also established a *sufism* group (*tarekat*) exclusively for the *Alawiyyin*, *Tarekat Alawiyya*.¹⁰ The influence of Shia and Shafiite is surely observable in current Islamic-landscape in Southeast Asia and this leads us to the story of *Hadrami* migration to Hadramaut and their circulation in Southeast Asian region.¹¹

In Hadramaut, the *Alawiyyin* enjoyed a prestige position for being the descendants of the prophet. They are the *sayyid* an title exclusively for the *Alawiyyin* and below them is the *masyayikh* or non-*Alawiyyin* scholars. *Qabail*, *dhuaifa* and *masakin* form as the lower classes in the Hadramaut.¹² The *sayyid* began to migrate through Indian ocean since the time of

⁹ Hasyim Assegaf, *Derita Putri-Putri Nabi: Studi Historis Kafaah Syarifah* (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2000) p. 276.

¹⁰ Syed Hassan bin Muhammad Al-Attas, *Umar bin Abd al-Rahman: Kisah dan Sejarah al-Qutub al-Anfas al-Habib Umar bin Abd al-Rahman Pengasas Ratib al-Attas* (Singapore: Masjid Ba'alawi, 2010), p. 97.

¹¹ A. Hasjmi, *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Al-Ma'arif, 1989).

¹² Natalie Mobine Kesheh, *Hadrami Awakening...*, p. 22-23.

Muhammed Shahib Mirbath who later became the patron of many contemporary *sayyids* in Southeast Asia.¹³

In contemporary periods, the roles of the *Hadrami* in the Islamisation process of Southeast Asian region include also the genealogical links of the early Muslim saints in Indonesia, the nine saints (*Walisongo*), to the '*abl al-bait*. For a *Hadrami* scholar Zain bin Abdullah Alkaf, the members of *Walisongo* were indeed *Hadramis* suggesting their genealogical links to the '*abl al-bait*. As with other Southeast Asian *Hadrami*, the *Walisongo* were related to the '*abl al-bait* through the lines of Ahmad ibn Isa al-Muhajir and Muhammad ibn Ali, the Fāqih al-Muqaddam.¹⁴

In popular imaginary, the *Hadrami* genealogical link of *Walisongo* goes to the 15th century figure Jamaludin al-Akbar known as *Sheikh* Jamaludin Jumadil Kubro. Jamaludin al-Akbar is the father of three, namely Barkat Zainul Alam, Ali Nurul Alam and Ibrahim As-Samarqandi. Barkat Zainul Alam is no other than the father of Maulana Malik Ibrahim or Sunan Gresik, one of the *Walisongo*. In popular narratives, Ali Nurul Alam is known also as *Patih* Arya Gajah Mada. He was the Prime Minister of the Kelantan Sultanate in Malaysia and genealogically related to Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Jati. Other members of the *Walisongo*, such as Maulana Ishaq and Sunan Ampel, were also genealogically related to Ibrahim As-Samarqandi, a son to Jamaludin al-Akbar.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the massive Islamisation in Southeast Asian region is not only limited to the roles of Muslim scholars as the history of Islam in the region explains but also miraculous claims that were attributed to important leaders of Southeast Asian Muslim sultanates. The *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (the Chronicle of Pasai Kings) tells a story of Merah Silau, a King of Samudra Pasai, who converted to Islam following his dream of seeing the Prophet Muhammad who instructed the king to spell the

¹³ Marzuki Ali, *Peran Dakwah Damai*..., p. 10.

¹⁴ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global dan Lokal Islam di Nusantara* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2002), p. 138.

¹⁵ Syed Hassan bin Muhammad Al-Attas, *Umar bin Abd al-Rahman*..., p. 8.

shabada formula; an important formula signifying the conversion to Islam. The story also goes that the king was miraculously circumcised and he changed his name into a Muslim name, Malikul Saleh (the pious king). The king later invited a religious teacher *Sheikh* Ismail to the palace to teach Islamic knowledge and to disseminate Islam to his ruled-subjects. The *Sejarah Melayu* (*Malay History*) also tells a similar story in which the King of Tengah, the ruler of Malaka, converted to Islam as dreaming the Prophet Muhammad and found his genital was miraculous circumcised. Later, the king invited *sayyid* Abdul Aziz to disseminate Islam in his kingdom and changed his honorary name to Sultan Muhammad Shah.¹⁶

If we go to the middle part of Southeast Asia, the early history of Islam in Pattani (Thailand) develops also through miraculous attributes. The story goes that the King Phaya Tu Nakpa was suffered from skin disease. The king invited doctors and healers to cure the disease and promised to marry whomever successfully cured him to his daughter. The story tells that a Muslim *Sheikh* Said of Pasai agreed to heal the disease but with a condition that the king must convert to Islam to which the king agreed to the request. As the king recovered from the disease, he broke his promise to convert to Islam and miraculously suffered from the same disease later. He invited *Sheikh* Said to the palace and requested him to heal the disease, but again as recovered from the diseases, the king did not convert to Islam. It continued until three times that the king broke his promise and later was suffered from the same disease. Nevertheless, as the final chance of suffering, the king fulfilled his promise to convert to Islam. Thus, Islam became the official religion of the kingdom.¹⁷

Important Muslim figures mentioned in the above story are connected to the *Hadrami* as they were the *sayyids*. *Sayyid* Abdul Aziz,

¹⁶ Russell Jones, Ten Conversion Myths from Indonesia (Holmes & Meier Publishers), p. 129-58, A. Teeuw, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai and Sejarah Melayu," John Sturgis Bastin and Roelof Roolvink (eds.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on His Eighty-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

¹⁷ A. Teeuw and David K. Wyatt, *Hikayat Patani. The Story of Patani* (Bibliotheca Indonesica; The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970).

Sheikh Ismail, and *Sheikh* Said are the *Hadrami* who were important scholars contributing to the Islamisation of Southeast Asians. Nevertheless, the claim that these figures were the *Hadramis* is indeed ambiguous as the genealogical link was created later on. Perhaps, a clear contribution of the *Hadrami* in the Southeast Asian Islamisation is found through the role of the 17th century Muslim scholar Nur al-Din bin Ali bin Hasanji al-Humaidi al-Aidrusi al-Raniri. Al-Raniri's father was a Hadramaut immigrant from Ranir, India while his mother is a Malay.¹⁸

Despite the ambiguity of genealogical links of the earliest important Muslim in Southeast Asia, the first Muslim settlers particularly bears the *sayyid* title implying that they were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad or the '*ahl al-bait*'. The *sayyid* attributed to important names, such as *Sayyid* Jumadil Kubro, *Sayyid* Ali Nurul Alam and *Sayyid* Abdul Aziz, mainly infers the descendants of *Alaminyin* of Hadramaut. In the Malay world, respected figures connected to the *Hadrami* bear the titles of either *maulana* or *sharif*, such *Maulana* Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Gresik), *Maulana* Ishaq, *Maulana* Ainul Yaqin (Sunan Giri), *Maulana* Makhdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang) and *Sharif* Gresik, *Maulana* Ishaq, *Maulana* Ainul Yaqin (Sunan Giri), *Maulana* Makhdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang) and *Sharif* Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati). Both *maulana* or *sharif* titles signify a similar meaning to the *sayyid*.

Nevertheless, the history of *Hadrami* communities in Southeast Asian region experienced a major transformation with regard to their religious status for being the members of '*ahl bait*'. Unlike the earliest settlers of *Hadrami* in Southeast Asia who demonstrated a high degree of blending with local population, contemporary *Hadrami* seems to develop their exclusive identity. This particularly happened in 18th-19th century when the generation of *Hadrami* in Southeast Asia, such as the family of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam and Abdurrahman bin Alawi Ammul Faqih, enjoyed a political prestige as political leaders of Southeast Asian sultanates. Abdurrahman Basyaiban, for instance, married to a

¹⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p. 139.

daughter and the Sultan of Cirebon sultanate, while *Sharif* Idrus Alaydrus established his Kubu Sultanate and the Al-Qadri family founded the Pontianak Sultanate.¹⁹

The later generation of *Hadrami* settlers in Southeast Asia further accelerated their religious prestige into the form of exclusive social class. Thus, as a respected Indonesian Muslim scholar Ali Badri argues, the *Hadrami* is divided into two groups: the integrativism and the Yemenism. The integrativism refers to the group who pursue for acculturation of the *Hadrami* with Southeast Asian cultures and the figure a *Hadrami Sheikh* Jumadil Kubro serves as the patron for the group. Unlike the integrativism, the Yemenism group calls for genealogical purity of the *'abl bait* by outlawing marriage with non-*Alawiyyin* partner (*kafaah*) and imposes a clear-cut identity separating the *Alawiyyin* and non-*Alawiyyin* through their prestigious *sayyid* or *habib* title before their names.²⁰

The Development of *Hadrami* in Southeast Asia

The invention of motorized-ships in the 19th century had accelerated the migration of *Hadrami* to areas of Southeast Asian region. Since the 1820, there had been a proliferation of *Hadrami* settlements in major trade centers along the north coast of Java. The 1859 census by the Dutch East Indies government recorded 7,786 Arabs-includes the *Hadrami* and non-*Hadrami*-lived in East Indies and were 8,909 Arabs in the following year. The number was significantly increasing following the opening of a new route of the Suez Canal in 1869. It is estimated the number reaches up to 13,000 in 1870 and to 27,000 in 1900. The number increases due to the newly migration and the increase of birth-rate among the Arabs.²¹ In the 1920s, it estimated 45,000 living in East Indies and increasingly doubled in the following decade. During the Japanese

¹⁹ Marzuki Ali, *Peran Dakwah Damai*..., p. 163.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.164-167.

²¹ Ulreike Freitage and William G. Clarence Smith, *Hadrami Traders, Scholar and Statesmen in The Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Brill: Leiden, 1997), p. 94-95.

occupation, the estimation points to 80,000 Arabs living in Indonesia.

The majority of Arab immigrants comes from the Katiri region and the Wadi region which stretches from Shibam and Tarim in Hadramaut. Family network is essential to explain their arrival and the formation of their settlements in East Indies as they, upon their arrivals in a new homeland, settled in an area where they could find relatives.²² These new Arab immigrants seem to blend themselves with the local population and marriage between *Hadrami* and non-*Hadrami* couple, at first, was not an issue. Particularly important is the *Hadrami* marriage with important rulers in Southeast Asia. Thus, it is reasonably true that the marriage with local rulers later gave a birth to a new Sultanate under the leadership of *Hadrami* sultan as we see to the cases of Muslim sultanates in Kalimantan and Moluccas. In the *Hadrami* point of views, the blending later invokes a new social class within the *Hadrami*, the *muwallad* (mixed descendant). The *muwallad* particularly refers to a son or daughter of a *Hadrami* and non-*Hadrami* couple, in contrast to the *aqbah* or *walaidi*, a son or daughter of *hadrami* couple.²³

Beside the culturally exclusive nature of the *Hadrami* which mainly prohibits marriage with non-*Hadrami*, the Dutch East Indies government's policies at the turn of 20th century on non-indigenous community which apply also to the Arab and Chinese, do explain the exclusive characteristics of *Hadrami* cultural world in East Indies. The government imposed another law to the "foreigners" and divided their geographical settlements based on ethnic identities. The Arabs formed their settlement in an area later known as *kampung arab* (the Arab's settlements).

In Batavia, the largest Arab community was established in Pekojan. A few Arabs also lived in mixed-settings -along with Europeans and Indo-Europeans- at the outskirts of the Krukut River and Tanah Abang.

²² Natalie Mobine Kesheh, *Hadrami Awakening...*, p. 14-15.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.

Following the abolition of the the Dutch quarter settlement system for the foreigners in 1919, the Arab of Pekojan expanded their settlements to Krukut, Petamburan and Tanah Abang and later arrived also in Sawah Besar, Jatinegara, Tanah Tinggi and Condet.²⁴ Outside Batavia, more than 23 *kampung arabs* were found in cities in Java, Bali, Lombok, and Sumatera.²⁵ Surabaya was the second largest Arab communities by the turn of 20th century.²⁶ The city was the centre for trades and commerce in which the Arab were dominant. In these *kampung arabs*, the Arabs developed their particular religious tradition and maintained their privileged status as the *hadrami* through endogamy marriage system.

As with the *Hadrami* in East Indies-currently Indonesia-the *Hadrami* in other parts of Southeast Asia played key roles in Islamisation. In Malaysia, as also in other parts, the *Hadrami* enjoyed a special status for being the descendants of the Prophet and many of important *Hadrami* were appointed as 'official' Muslim scholars or *muftis* (the adviser on religious affairs) of the Sultanates. For example, the *Hadrami Sheikh* Abdul Jalil al-Mahdani served as the *mufti* of Kedah Sultanate 1710; *Sayyid* Harun Jamalulail was a *penghulu* (district head) of Arau in 1797; *Sayyid* Husein Jamalulail was appointed as Sultan of Perlis in 1843; *Sayyid* Muhammad Al-Aydrus served as the *mufti* of al-Trulama in Trengganu; *Sayyid* Muhammad Zayn was appointed as the State minister with the title of *Engku Sayyid Seri Perdana*; *Sheikh* Daud bin Muhammad al-Bahrayn was appointed as the *mufti* of Kelantan.²⁷ Nevertheless, there was a few *hadrami* in Malaysia who joined trade activities, mainly in shipping industries and international traffic of transportations transporting pilgrims for the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca.²⁸

²⁴ Kees Grijns and Peter J.M. Naas, *Jakarta Batavia: Esai Sosio Kultural* (Jakarta: Banana, 2007), p. 152.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁶ Mandal Sumit Kumar, *Finding Their Place: A History of Arabs in Java Under Dutch Rule: 1800-1924* (Michigan: A Bell & Howell Company, 1996), p. 39-40.

²⁷ Ulreike Freitage and William G. Clarence Smith, *Hadrami Traders...*, p. 85-88.

²⁸ *Hajj* is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia. It is a religious duty for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime.

The *Hadrami* in Singapore demonstrated a different route compared to the *Hadrami* in Malaysia who mainly arrived at important positions in the Sultanates. The *Hadrami* in Singapore played key roles in trades, particularly because their vast commerce networks with outside world. The history of Singapore *Hadrami* records the roles of *Hadrami* families of al-Kaff, al-Saqqaf, al-Junaid and Bin Talib. The Alkaff family was one of the richest Singaporean settlers as the family owned Alkaff & Co, one of biggest firm in property businesses. The family of al-Junayd were important traders and owned many buildings located at the heart of Singapore. The Bin Talib family run their business in clothing and fashions, whereas the Al-Saqqaf family were importers of agricultural products.²⁹

As the *Hadrami* counterparts living in Singapore, the *Hadrami* in Batavia (currently Jakarta) were traders, moneylenders, property owners. In 1885, it is estimated the *Hadrami* owned properties valued as 2.5 million guilders and, in 1904, they owned 22 *particuliere landerijen* (private agricultural fields) in areas surrounding Batavia.³⁰ In addition renowned for their vast trade networks, the *Hadrami* were also textiles producers, mainly they produced batiks with the *Hadrami* style of batik motif, the *Kaati Batiak*.³¹

The *Hadrami* and Islamisation in Southeast Asia: An Institutional Approach

Since the early period of Islamisation in Southeast Asian region, educational institutions were centres for Islamic learnings. In Java, this learning institution is known as *pesantren*, while in other Southeast Asian parts was mentioned as *funduk*, *pondok*, and *dayah*.³² The *Hikayat Putro*

²⁹ Huub De Jonge and Nico Kapiten, *Transcending Borders: Arab, Politics, trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KILTV Press, 2002), p. 109-143.

³⁰ Kees Grijns and Peter J.M. Naas, *Jakarta Batavia*..., p. 154.

³¹ Robyn Maxwell, *Textile of Southeast Asia: Tradition, Trade and Transformation* (Melbourne, Oxford, Auckland & New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 325-327.

³² *Pondok pesantren* are Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. They consist of *pondok*, mosque, *santri*, teaching of classical Islamic texts and *kiai*.

Nurul Ala possibly written in the 11th century of Peurlak -currently area of Cot Kala Dayah- records the presence of an Islamic learning centre that teaches *Sufism*.³³ As the fall of Peurlak Sultanate, the Islamic learning institution moved to Pasai in northern Sumatra. This Islamic learning institution was essential in the circulation of Islamic knowledge in the Malay world. A popular anecdote says that some members of *Walisongo* studied at this educational centre. The Pasai Islamic learning institution also gave a birth to important Muslims in Southeast Asia, including *Sheikh* Said and *Sheikh* Safudin of Pattani and Fatahilah or Fadlullah Khan of Pasai.

The historical foundation of *pesantrens* in Java is also attributed to the *Walisongo*. Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Gresik) established the earliest *pesantren* in Gresik and Maulana Malik Ibrahim bin Sayyid Barkat Zainul Alam was the leader of *pesantren* (*kiai*).³⁴ Another earliest *pesantren* in Java was established by Raden Ali Rahmatullah bin Sayyid Ibrahim Assamarqandi (Sunan Ampel) in the Ampeldenta, Surabaya. It is said that Ampeldenta was a gift from the Javanese-Hindu King Brawijaya to Sunan Ampel. The Ampeldenta had been an important centre for Islamic learning during the Hindu Majapahit period and the story goes that Raden Paku (Sunan Giri), Raden Makhdum Ibrahim (Sunan Bonang), and Raden Fatah, the founder of the Demak Sultanate, were the earliest students (*santri*) of this Islamic learning centre.

Also in the northern part of Java, the *Walisongo* Raden Paku or Maulana Ainul Yaqin bin Maulana Ishaq bin Sayyid Ibrahim Assamarqandi (Sunan Giri) established his Giri Kedaton as the centre for Islamic learning institution. The tale says that graduates of Giri Kedaton played key roles in Islamisation of other parts in Southeast Asia, such as Makassar, Bone, Dompu, Borneo, Ternate and Tidore. In addition to a religious

³³ A. Hasymi, *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Al-Maarif, 1993), p. 165.

³⁴ KH. Saifudin Zuhri, *Sejarah Kebangkitan Islam dan Perkembangannya di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Al-Maarif, 1979), p. 263.

centre, Giri Kedaton was indeed a political centre for the Muslim with which Sunan Giri served as the advisor to the rulers in Java. Other members of *Walisongo* also established their *pesantren*. Sunan Kudus established his *pesantren* close to the Kudus mosque and in Kadilangu, Sunan Kalijaga run his *pesantren* nearby the political centre of the first Muslim kingdom in Java, Demak. In addition to the *Walisongo*, a number of important *Hadrami* scholars also established their educational institutions, including Nur al-Din bin Ali Al-Aidrusi ar-Raniri, Sayyid Abd al-Shamad al-Palimbani, Sayyid Husein bin Abu Bakar Al-Aidrus Luar Batang and Salim bin Abdullah bin Sumair.³⁵ Particularly important attributes to these names that they also established Sufi centres. The 17th century Aceh records a *Hadrami* scholar Nur al-Din al-Aidrusi al-Raniri.

Nur al-Din al-Aidrusi al-Raniri was a *Hadrami* born in Ranir (India) and settled in Aceh in 1631. A practicing Sufi of Al-Aidrusiyah al-Raniri served as *Sheikh al-Islam* (advisor to the Sultan) at the reign of Sultan Iskandar Tsani. He contested the speculative Sufism of *wujudiyah* developed by Hamzah al-Fansuri and Syamsudin al-Sumatrani. Through his *Tibyan fi Ma'rifah*, Al-Raniri accused the teaching of *wujudiyah*, especially *wujudiyah mulbid*, as an unlawful Sufism and *shirk* (idolatry) at worst.³⁶ Like al-Raniri, a *Hadrami Sheikh* Abdus Shamad al-Palimbani and his father *Sheikh* Abdul Jalil bin *Sheikh* Abdul Wahid bin Ahmad Al-Mahdani were *Hadramis*.³⁷ *Sheikh* Abdus Samad was the founder of Sufi group (*tarekat*) Sammaniya.³⁸ It is not surprising that many important *Hadramis* were later venerated as Muslim saints. Sayyid Husein bin Abu Bakr Al-Aydrus-known as Habib Husein Kramat Luar Batang-born in Tarim and died in Batavia in 1789, has been venerated as a Muslim saint in Jakarta. Van den Berg reports that in 1886, the grave of *Habib* Husein

³⁵ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p. 139-141.

³⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p.123.

³⁷ Luzmy Ningsih, "Syaiikh Abdus Samad Al-Palimbani: Pemikiran Dakwah dan Karyanya" *Thesis*, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, 1998.

³⁸ Sri Mulyati, *Mengenal dan Memahami Tarekat-Tarekat Muktabarah di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Group, 2004), p. 192.

has become a centre for Muslim pilgrimage (*ziara*).³⁹ The grave of Habib Husein currently invites hundreds of Muslim pilgrims everyday.

In addition to Islamic learning and *sufism* centres, some *Hadrami* were influential politicians. *Habib* Abdurrahman Az-Zahir to whom Snouck Hurgronje attributed to a reformist Muslim led the struggle against the Dutch.⁴⁰ Other names, such as *Habib* Tengku Teupin Wan, *Habib* Long, *Habib* Samalangan, *Habib* Cut and *Habib* Saunangan were important leaders in the Acehnese struggles against the Dutch.⁴¹ Their rebellious activism made the colonial government imposed a high-degree of surveillance on the *hadrami* who could posed possible threats to the Dutch.

The *Hadrami* and Pro-Dutch Movement: a Case of *Sayyid Utsman*

Some *Hadramis* were renowned for the struggle activism against the Dutch. The Dutch on the other hand was worried by the circulation of Pan-Islamism ideology that was transferred through the mobility and networks of the *hadrami*, particularly through the traffic of *hajj*. Thus, the Dutch imposed a high surveillance to the activities of many *Hadramis* and separated the *hadrami* from the indigenous population to limit their influence. Nevertheless, the *Hadrami* Indonesia history also witnesses the role of a *Hadrami*, *sayyid* Utsman bin Yahya, who collaborated with the Dutch.

Sayyid Utsman was born in Pekojan, Batavia in 1862. His father, *Sayyid* Abdullah bin Aqil bin Yahya and his mother Aminah binti Abdurrahman bin Ahmad al-Mishri were *Hadramis*. *Sayyid* Utsman went to Mecca and studied under a renowned *Jawi* scholar, *Sayyid* Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, a *Syafi'i mufīi* in Mecca. *Sayyid* Utsman later moved to Hadramaut

³⁹ Van den Berg, *Le Hadramaut et les Colonies Arabes dans L'Archipel Indien* (Batavia: Imprimerie du gouvernement, 1886).

⁴⁰ Snouck Hurgronje, *Aceh di Mata Kolonialis*, trans. Ng. Singarimbun (Jakarta: Yayasan Sokoguru, 1985), p. 158-164.

⁴¹ Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara: Sanad dan Jejaring Ulama-Santri (1830-1945)* (Jakarta: Pustaka Kompas, 2016), p. 407-408.

and studied to Habib Abdullah bin Husein bin Thahir, Habib Abdullah bin Umar bin Yahya, Habib Hasan bin Shalih al-Bahr, and Habib Alawi bin Saqqaf al -Jufrie. In 1882, he returned to Indonesia and started his Islamic learning centre in Pekojan Mosque.⁴² A number of important *Hadramis* studied at his educational learning which includes *Habib* Ali bin Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi Kwitang, *Habib* Salim bin Jindan, *Habib* Alwi al-Haddad Bogor, *Guru* Marzuki and *Guru* Mansur.⁴³

Sayyid Utsman was a prolific author as he authored many books written both in Malay and Arabic languages. His works are important sources in the making of Islam in Indonesia for being read in many Islamic educational centres.⁴⁴ Particularly important works by *Sayyid* Utsman are *Nasiba al-Aniqah* and *al-Watsiqah al-Waffiyyah* through which the author demonstrated his opposition to the teachings of the *tarekat*.⁴⁵ Through the later book, *al-Watsiqah al-Waffiyyah*, *Sayyid* Utsman criticized the practice of the *tarekat*, such as the notion of secret knowledge and sainthood (*nilāyā*), which opposed the principles of Islamic law (*sharia*). Nevertheless, this is not meant that *Sayyid* Utsman denounced Sufism altogether. For *Sayyid* Utsman, the rightful *tarekat* should have a clear line of chains to the famous Sufi teacher (*murshid*), such as Al-Junaidiyah

⁴² Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p. 142-144.

⁴³ Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Masterpiece Islam*..., p. 388.

⁴⁴ The works by *Sayyid* Utsman include *Taudih al-Adillati 'ala Syuruthi al-Abillah, Al-Qawanin Ayy-Syari'ah li Ahl Al-Majalisi Al-Hukmiyah wal Iftaiyah, Ta'bir Aqwa 'adillah, Jam Al-Fawaid, Sifat Dua Puluh, Irsyad Al-Anam, Zahar al-Basyim, Ishlah Al-Hal, Taudhib Al-Adillah, Masalik Al-Abyar, Sa'adat Al-Anam, Nafais Al-Ihlah, Kitab Al-Faraid, Saguna Sakaya, Muthala'ah, Soal Jawab Agama, Tjuh Faedah, Al-Nashidat Al-Aniqah, Khutbah Nikah, Al-Qur'an wa Al-Du'a, Ringkasan Ilmu Adat Istiadat, Ringkasan seni membaca Al-Qur'an, Membahas Al-Qur'an dan Kesalahan dalam Berdo'a, Perbhasan, Ringkasan Unsur-unsur Do'a, Ringkasan Tata Bahasa Arab, Al-Silsilah Al-Nabawiyah, Atlas Arabi, Ilmu Kalam, Hukum Perkawinan, Ringkasan Hukum Pengunduran Diri Istri Secara Sab, Ringkasan Undang-Undang Saudara Susu, Buku Pelajaran Bahasa dan Ukuran Buku, Adab Al-Insan, Kamus Arab Melayu, Cempaka Mulia, Risalah Dua Ilmu, Bab al-Minan, Hadits Keluarga, Khawariq Al-Adat, Kitab Al-Manasik dan Ilmu Falak. See, Ahmad Fadli HS, *Ulama Betawi: Studi Tentang Jaringan Ulama Betawi dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Perkembangan Islam Abad ke-19 dan 20* (Jakarta: Manhalun Nasyi'in Press, 2011).*

⁴⁵ Michael F. Laffan, *Sejarah Islam Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2015), p. 68.

(to Imam Junaid al-Baghdadi), Al-Alawiyah (to the Alawi *Sayyids*), Al-Ghazaliyyah (to Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali), Qadiriyyah (to Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani), Syadziliyyah (to Abu Hasan Al-Sayadzili), Rifa'iyah (to Ahmad Al-Rifa'i), Naqsabandiyah (to Baha Al-Din Al-Naqsabandi), and Khalwatiyahyah (to Ibrahim Al-Khalwati).⁴⁶ Also through his *al-Qawānin al-Syar'iyyā li 'Ahl al-Majālis al-Hukūmīyya wa al-Iftā'iyya*, *Sayyid* Utsman strongly opposed marriage involving non-*Alawīyyin* partner.⁴⁷

In the discussion on Islamic law, *Sayyid* Utsman contested the proliferation of unlawful innovation in affairs of religion (*bid'ah*). *Sayyid* Utsman divided *bid'ah* into five: *first*, prohibited innovation (*bid'ah al-haram*) that contradicts the principle of Islam; *second*, disliked innovation (*bid'ah al-makruh*) which particularly appears in non-foundational principle of religion, such as drawing floral decoration for the mosque architecture; *third*, allowed/neutral innovation (*bid'ah al-mubah*), neither prohibited nor recommended by religion, such as eating delicious food; *fourth*, recommended innovation (*bid'ah al-sunnah* or *al-basanah*) or a kind of innovation that has no textual reference in the Qur'an nor the *hadīth* but essential for the betterment of Muslim community, such as building Sufi lodges; *fifth*, communally-obliged innovation (*bid'ah al-wajīb bi al-fardh al-kifāyah*) or a form of innovation without textual references but is a must to perform, such as opposing [unlawful] *bid'ah* perpetrators.⁴⁸

However, the anti-*bid'ah* campaign by *Sayyid* Utsman is different from the conception of the modernist Muslim thinkers, such as Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (the founder of the Wahhabi movement), Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. *Sayyid* Utsman even wrote a paper specifically criticizing Wahhabism. Through his *I'ānah Al-Musytarsyidīn ala*

⁴⁶ One of the interesting of *Sayyid* Utsman also included Ibn Arabi who was the pioneer of *Wibdatul Wujud* which was opposed by Ar-Raniri as one of *mursyid* who is validated. *Sayyid* Utsman bin Yahya, *Al-Watsiqah Al-Waffiyah fi Ulumw Sya'n Thariqah Al-Shufiyyah* (Batavia: tp., 1886).

⁴⁷ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*.p. 144.

⁴⁸ *Sayyid* Utsman bin Yahya, *Minhaj al-Istiqaamah fi al-din bi-l-alama* (Batavia: tp., 1890), p. 14-17.

Ijtināb Al-Bidā' fi al-Dīn (a treatise to avoid religious innovation), *Sayyid* Utsman accused the Wahhabi of the most-frightening splinter group in the history of Islam and criticised the reformist Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha who supported the Wahhabism.⁴⁹

In politics, *Sayyid* Utsman sided to the Dutch government and outlawed wars against the colonial government. For *Sayyid* Utsman, wars against the Dutch under the banner of *jihad* (holy wars) was the practice of *ghurur* (delusion), thus contradicting the principle of *sharia*. Responding the Muslim wars against the Dutch in Banten and Bekasi at the end of 19th century, *Sayyid* Utsman argued that the wars indeed confronted the principles of *jihad* in Islam.⁵⁰ Rather than armed struggle against the Dutch, *Sayyid* Utsman called for non-violence struggle and campaigned for a cooperative approach with the colonial government. His political stance further expressed through his participation in the establishment Sarekat Islam (SI). He authored two important treatises on SI, *Sinar Isterlam pada Menyatakan Kebenaran Syarekat Islam* and *Selampai Tersulam pada Menyatakan Kebajikan Syarekat Islam*, supporting the organisation.⁵¹ Later, *Sayyid* Utsman withdrew his support to the SI for the organisation campaigned for a radical stance against the Dutch. For *Sayyid* Utsman, education, rather than armed struggles, is the key to free Indonesian from the fate of colonialism. The non-violence stance against the Dutch as *Sayyid* Utsman campaigned was indeed dominant among the *Hadrami* at the early 20th century. It particularly appears through the active participation of the *Hadrami* in the foundation of Jamiatul Kheir and Al-Irshad; two leading organisation accommodating the Arabs, mainly the *Hadrami* for the former organisation.

⁴⁹ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p. 145-146.

⁵⁰ Sayyid Utsman bin Yahya, *Minhaj al-Istiqomah*..., p. 24-25.

⁵¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Global*..., p. 152.

Conclusion

The article has demonstrated the centrality of the *Hadrami* in the making of Southeast Asian Islam. From the earliest history of Islam in the region, the *Hadrami*'s roles were essential in Islamic missionary activism (*dakwah*). The *Hadrami* travelled to many ports in Southeast Asia both to introduce Islam and to trade with local producers. The local producers on the other hand depended on the *Hadrami*'s vast networks to trade with outside world. As for the roles of *Hadrami* in Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*), the privileged status, mainly for being descendants of '*ahl al-bait*', made the *Hadrami* enjoying a prestigious respect of local Muslim and they were particularly referred to as the *sayyid* and *babib*. While expanding their influence through *dakwah* activism, the *Hadrami* attempted to maintain the purity of '*ahl bait*' through outlawing marriage between *Alawiyyin* and non-*Alawiyyin* couple. Education is essential in the *Hadrami*'s *dakwah* activism as they established educational centres and *Sufi* groups. In the early 20th century Indonesian politics, the *Hadrami* tend to submit their allegiance to the Dutch government while refusing a radical interpretation of *jihad* against the Dutch colonial government. This particularly appears to the figure of the most prolific *Hadrami* author, Sayyid Utsman bin Yahya.

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