

## THE USE OF *DAIF* HADITHS ON VIRTUES OF DEEDS (*FADĀ'IL AL-A'MĀL*) IN ISLAMIC PREACHING: STUDY OF SOME *MAJELIS TAKLIMS* IN SOUTH TANGERANG

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**Abstract:** *This article describes the use of daif hadiths about the virtues of deeds (faḍā'il al-a'māl) used by preachers at four majelis taklims in South Tangerang-Banten. This article is a qualitative, descriptive, and analytic study. This study found that the majority of preachers delivered their preaching regarding the virtues of deeds (faḍā'il al-a'māl) by presenting daif hadiths. They stated that daif hadiths may motivate jemaat (congregations) to do various good deeds as long as they do not contradict the Quran and ṣaḥīḥ hadiths. However, one majelis taklim refuses to use daif hadiths, even for the theme of virtues of deeds, and only uses ṣaḥīḥ hadiths in lectures for its congregation (jemaat).*

**Keywords:** *Majelis taklim; dakwah activity; virtues of deeds; daif hadith.*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menjelaskan tentang penggunaan hadis-hadis daif tentang keutamaan amal (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*) yang digunakan para penceramah di empat majelis taklim di Tangerang Selatan-Banten. Artikel ini adalah studi kualitatif, deskriptif dan analitik. Studi ini menemukan bahwa mayoritas penceramah menyampaikan dakwahnya mengenai keutamaan amal (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*) dengan mengutip hadis-hadis daif. Mereka menyatakan bahwa hadis-hadis daif boleh digunakan untuk memotivasi jamaah melakukan berbagai amal saleh selama tidak bertentangan dengan al-Quran dan hadis *ṣahih*. Tetapi, terdapat satu majelis taklim yang menolak menggunakan hadis-hadis daif, meskipun untuk tema keutamaan beramal, dan hanya menggunakan hadis-hadis *ṣahih* saja dalam ceramah-ceramah untuk jamaahnya.

**Kata kunci:** Majelis taklim; kegiatan dakwah; keutamaan amal; hadis daif.

### Introduction

*Majelis taklim* (religious congregation) is a gathering place used by Muslims to learn their religious knowledge. The existence of *majelis taklim* as a non-formal religious community is stated in Government Regulation (PP) No. 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education. Article 24 states that the *majelis taklim* is held in mosques or other places that meet the requirements.<sup>1</sup> In Indonesia, *majelis taklim* is a place dominated by women who routinely recite surah *Yāsīn*, *tasbīh*, *taḥmīd*, and *tahlīl*, and ended with prayers. The Yasin recitation began to change. Some contents in *majelis taklim* were filled only with religious studies, such as Tafsir, Hadith, Tahsin, and Tahfizh the Quran with diverse methods.<sup>2</sup> *Majelis taklim* can be categorized as having non-formal Islamic education, a place of spiritual experiences. Another factor that makes *majelis taklim* is quite attractive is that this non-formal education also a forum for “social solidarity making” in the sense of the development of Muslim life.<sup>3</sup>

The Islamic preaching within *majelis taklim* about heaven and hell is an attraction for the *jemaat* (congregation). Some materials about the virtues of deeds (*Faḍā'il al-a'māl*), believed to be the key to success in reaching heaven, are chosen by the preachers to be presented in attractive and easy ways. The Prophet saying (Hadith) that explains the virtues of charity are used to encourage someone to do good deeds, although some of that hadiths are considered to be *daif* (weak hadith). This kind of preaching is quantitatively successful in attracting many Muslims. In many cases, the congregation of *majelis taklim* is a forum for passive listeners who are not critical and only accept what the preachers said as a true teaching of religion. One can not expect the quality of Islamic teaching within majelis taklim activities.

Cempaka Putih Village, located in East Ciputat, the city of South Tangerang, has 41 neighborhood associations (RW), and each RW has at

least 1 to 9 *majelis taklim*.<sup>4</sup> Each *majelis taklim* organizes an Islamic lecture (*taklim*) at least once a week. When the lecture begins, the management invites the preacher. The books to be discussed are considered valid in traditional Islamic studies such as Islamic law (*fiqh*), theology (*tawhid*), Quranic studies, ethics, etc. The preaching ends with interactive dialogues that discuss current issues. The number of *jamaah* is relatively small. These *majelis taklims*, dominated by women, are more colored by recitations of *shalawat*, prayers, and hadiths of *faḍā'il al-a'māl*.

Based on the facts above, we are interested in conducting research about the use of *daif* hadiths about the virtues of deeds (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*), focusing on the study of Islamic preachers (*dai*), as well as preaching materials in *majelis taklims* in Cempaka Putih Village, East Ciputat, South Tangerang City. There are 4 (four) samples of *majelis taklim* namely *majelis taklim* (1) Darul Arqom Jl. Bulak Raya RT 001/02, (2) *As Salam* Jl. Semanggi II RT. 001/03, (3) *Nurul Huda* Kampung Utan RT. 001/04, and (4) al-Istiqomah Jl. Mesjid RT. 001/06, which are representative of 41 *majelis taklim* in the area of Cempaka Putih Village-East Ciputat.

### The Discourse of *Daif* Hadiths among Muslim Scholars (Ulamas)

The word hadith comes from Arabic, which means: “*al-jadid min al-ashya'* (everything that is new) and; *al-khabar* (news or report).”<sup>5</sup> The term *hadith* refers to reports of statements or actions of Prophet Muhammad, or of his tacit approval or criticism of something said or done in his presence.<sup>6</sup> Hadith *daif* means the weak hadith. The word *daif* has both an empirical and a literal meaning. In general, a *daif* hadith means that does not possess the attributes of a *hasan* hadith due to the absence of one or more conditions. There are three ways in which a hadith can be rendered invalid. First, it is invalid because its chain of transmission is broken. The second is because the narrator is not fair and reliable, and the third is because of *shudhūdh* or ‘*illat*.<sup>7</sup>

There are several terms for a weak hadith due to a break in the chain of transmission. First, *mu'allaq* hadith (a weak hadith due to the discontinuity of the narrators at the beginning of the chain, whether it is one or more narrators in succession). Second, *mursal* hadith (a weak hadith due to the discontinuity of the narrators at the end of the chain after the *tābi'īn*). Thirdly, *mu'dal* hadith (unreliable hadith due to the discontinuity of two or more narrators in the chain of transmission). Fourth, *munqati'* hadith (*daif* hadith due to a break in the middle of the chain, whether it is one or more narrators). Fifth, the *mudallas* (concealing the disgrace of a narrator in a chain of transmission and pointing out only the good ones). Sixth, the

*mursal khafī* hadith (the narration of a narrator whom one has met or is a contemporary of but has never heard that the narrator heard the hadith). Seventh, the *mu'an'an* hadith (a hadith in which it is unclear that the narrator received it directly from the narrator above him with *al-tahammul* such as *anna* and *'an*. Eighth, *mu'annan* hadith (hadith narrated using the word *anna*). In addition, the weak hadith, due to their narrators, also have several terms. First, *mawḍū'* hadiths (a hadith narrated by a liar). Second, *matrūk* hadith (hadith narrated by a narrator who is accused of lying). Third, *munkar* hadith (hadiths narrated by a narrator who often makes mistakes and forgets). Fourth, *mu'allal* hadith (there is a significant defect *'illah qādiyah* in the narrator). Fifth, *mudraj* hadith (hadith in which the *sanad* is altered or the *matn* is inserted with something other than the actual text). Sixth, *maqlub* hadith (hadith in which the *sanad* or *matn* is reversed or the order of the *sanad* or *matan* chain is inconsistent). Seventh, *majhūl* hadith (a narrator whose identity is unknown).<sup>8</sup>

Hadith is said to be *daif* due to defects in narrators and *sanad*. Muslim scholars of hadith said that *daif* hadith cannot be confirmed as coming from the Prophet. Still, in terms of *matn* or content, many inspire the *ummah* to be enthusiastic about increasing good deeds. In fact, they consider that practicing such *daif* hadith can produce something expected, namely, the request granted by Allah.<sup>9</sup> This, according to scholars, motivates Muslims to practice it.

Concerning the practice of *daif* hadiths, some scholars (*ulama*) cannot be tolerated due to their being *daif*. If the narrator is accused of lying, the tradition cannot be used legally because it is a *mawḍū'* hadith. Thus, the *ulama* is not permissible to apply the hadith in the determination of a ruling or *faḍā'il al-a'māl*, as well as to narrate it, except in explaining its falsity.<sup>10</sup>

Some *ulamas* think that *daif* hadith can be used as evidence to explain the virtues of deeds, such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal who accepts *daif* hadith related to *targhīb* and *tarhīb* but rejects them when they are related to Islamic law. On the other hand, Abū Dāwūd said that a *daif* hadith could be applied as long as no *ṣaḥīḥ* or *hasan* hadith could be found.<sup>11</sup>

According to Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, the *ulama* agreed one should act on a *daif* hadith in the case of *faḍā'il al-a'māl*. If it is *ṣaḥīḥ*, it gives him/her the right to practice it. If it is not *ṣaḥīḥ* at all, it does not impair what is lawful and unlawful and doesn't harm the right of others. Accordingly, Mulla Ali al-Qari stated that a *daif* hadith is valid in *Faḍā'il al-a'māl*, but it can also be practiced based on the consensus of the prominent *ulama*.<sup>12</sup>

Contemporary *ulama* such as Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī said, as quoted by

Muḥammad Shākīr, that it is not permissible to use *daif* hadith no matter that the hadith is about Islamic law, *faḍā'il al-a'māl*, or not. Al-Qaraḍāwī strictly forbids the *daif* hadith. Concerning to the opinion of Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Mubārak, and Ibn Mahdī that it is permissible to use *daif* hadith, what is meant by *daif* hadith according to them, is that they (hadiths) do not reach the level of *ṣaḥīḥ*. In addition, at that time, there was no clear and not well-established distinction between *daif* and *ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>13</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī was among the hadith ulama who allowed the use of *daif* hadith for *faḍā'il al-a'māl* under three conditions:<sup>14</sup>

1. Hadith that is not exaggerated and unreasonable. Hence, a *daif* hadith, because its narrator is a liar, accused of lying and making many mistakes, cannot be used as an argument, even for *faḍā'il al-a'māl*.
2. The basis for the deed indicated by the *daif* hadith is still below the basis justified by the other hadith which can be practiced
3. In practicing a *daif* hadith, one should aware that the hadith is not attributed to the Prophet, but the purpose of practicing it is simply to hope for a reward from God. The *Ijmā'* (consensus) of ulama has allowed the use of *daif* hadiths for *faḍā'il al-a'māl*, based on the statement of al-Nawawī who said that the *ijma'* of ulama agree and allow of using *daif* hadiths in *faḍā'il al-a'māl*.<sup>15</sup>

In Islamic world, the enthusiasm to implement Islamic values, is mostly, based on the hadith of *faḍā'il al-a'māl* (good deeds). Unfortunately, this enthusiasm is mostly filled with *daif* hadiths. One of the most popular books in *faḍā'il al-a'māl* is *Kitab Faḍā'il al-A'māl*, also known as *Tablīghī Niṣāb*, is a handbook of the Tabligh Jamaat by Muhammad Zakaria al-Kandahlawī.<sup>16</sup> This book has spread not only among them but also among wider Muslim communities. All of members Jamaat Tabligh around Muslim countries will likely know the book of *Faḍā'il al-A'māl*, a compulsory book used as a handbook. The book's position, for them, is almost equivalent to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī and Muslim. In addition to *Kitab Faḍā'il al-a'māl*, they also have other references about virtues of deeds, including *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* by al-Nawawī; *Hayāt al-Ṣaḥābah* and *al-Aḥādīth al-Muntakhabah* by Maulana Yusuf al-Kandahlawī; *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ* by Khaṭīb al-Tibrizī; *al-Tarḥīb wa-al-Tarḥīb* by al-Mundhirī; *al-Abwāb al-Muntakhabah min Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ* by Maulana Muhammad Ilyāsī.<sup>17</sup>

### **Islamic Preaching (*Da'wa*) in Majelis Taklims in South Tangerang**

Islamic preaching (*da'wa*) can be understood as a continuous effort to change humans that involve thoughts (*fikrah*), feelings (*shu'ūr*), and

behavior (*sulūk*), which then leads them to the path of Allah. *Da'wa* is an Arabic word that has the literal meaning of “issuing a summons,” or “making an invitation”. This term is often used to describe how Muslims teach others about the beliefs and practices of their Islamic faith.

Numerous Muslim scholars define *da'wa* as an activity that invites or calls people to the path of Allah, instead of following a group of people.<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Abu al-Fath al-Bayanuni defined *da'wa* as delivering Islamic teachings to be practiced by people in their life.<sup>19</sup> The prominent Indonesian Muslim scholar in Quranic studies, Quraish Shihab defines *dawah* as an invitation or an effort to change situations that are not good to situations that are better and perfect, both for individuals and society.<sup>20</sup>

*Da'wa* activities cannot be separated from four elements: *dai* (*dawah* actor); *mad'ū* (object of *dawah*); *da'wa* contents, and methods of *da'wa*.<sup>21</sup> Husnul Aqib Suminto, a Muslim scholar from the State Islamic University of Jakarta, analogized *da'wa* with medical activity. A *da'i* is like a doctor; *mad'ū* is like a patient; *da'wa* contents are like medicine used by doctors in treating patient diseases, while media or *da'wa* methods are tools or doctors' methods in such treatment.

Systematic lectures will create an interesting atmosphere, arouse interest, show clear messages, make it easier to understand, reinforce main ideas, and show logical thoughts. The power of words in relation to *da'wa* language which can stimulate psychological responses of objects lies in the following types of power:<sup>22</sup> (a) because of the beauty of language, such as verses of poetry, (b) because of the clarity of the information, (c) because of the authoritative intonation of the voice, (d) because the logic is powerful, (e) because it gives hope/optimism (*bashīran*), (f) because it provides a gripping warning (*nadhīran*), (g) because the expression is full of lessons (*'ibra*).

According to an interesting article, while engaging in *da'wa*, Muslims benefit from following these Islamic guidelines, which are often described as part of the “methodology” or “knowledge” of *da'wa*, are: (a) Listen! Smile!, (b) Be friendly, respectful, and gentle, (c) Be a living example of the truth and peace of Islam, (d) Choose your time and place carefully, (e) Find common ground; speak a common language with your audience, (f) Avoid Arabic terminology with a non-Arabic speaker, (g) Have a dialogue, not a monologue, (h) Clear up any misconceptions about Islam, (i) Be direct; answer questions asked, (j) Speak with wisdom, from a place of knowledge, (k), Keep yourself humble; be willing to say, “I don't know”, (l) Invite people to an understanding of Islam and *tauhīd* not to membership in a particular mosque or organization.<sup>23</sup>

Concerning *majelis taklim* the oldest educational institution in Islam, it has been implemented since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. In very early Islam, the first Prophet's *majelis taklim* took place secretly in the house of Arqam Ibn Abi al-Arqam. In the Medina period, when Islam was firmly established in society, *da'wa* organizations flourished, and in this way, the Prophet succeeded in spreading Islam and instilling an Islamic way of life. In the time of *Wali Songo* (the nine saints) in Indonesia, they also used *majelis taklim* to spread Islamic values via *da'wa*. In an increasingly modern world along with the development of knowledge and the idea of regulating education, formal education such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *madrasahs*, and public schools are arising and developing apart from *majelis taklim*.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Use of Daif Hadiths in South Tangerang *Majelis Taklims***

South Tangerang City has several *majelis taklim* as places to learn religious studies, including the Darul Arqom in Kampung Bulak, East Ciputat Subdistrict, as-Salam in Semanggi Street, South Tangerang, al-Istiqomah in Jl. Masjid Kampung Utan Cempaka Putih, and Nurul Huda in Kampung Utan.

The teaching contents as well as speakers in Darul Arqom have been arranged and scheduled. This lecture is held every Monday and Wednesday. The preachers on Monday are Ustaz Hajj Zakaria Ismail, who discusses the history of Islamic culture; Hajjah Mastanah on Islamic law (*fiqh*), Hajjah Raudhah on Quranic studies, Hajjah Siti Badriah on Islamic law, and Ustaz Hajj Adang Asdari on Islamic studies in general. The preachers on Wednesday, including Hajjah Siti Barkah on Islamic ethics, Hajjah Mastanah on Islamic law, and Ustaz Hajj Husni Thamrin on hadith studies. Discourse on Islamic law in this *majelis taklim* is conducted three times a week.<sup>25</sup>

*Majelis taklim* as-Salam, which is located in Semanggi, South Tangerang is also the same as *majelis taklim* Darul Arqom. The schedule and preachers have been arranged. Still, to the day, this *majelis taklim* holds a lecture every Friday. The preachers are as follows: Ustaz Hajj H.D. Sirojuddin AR discusses Islamic theology (*'aqidah*) and ethics, Ustaz Hajj Jejen Zainuddin on Islamic law, Ustaz Hajj Momon Abdurrahman on Islamic studies in general, and Ustaz Apipuddin Syarif on Quranic studies.<sup>26</sup>

*Majelis taklim* al-Istiqomah is different from the two previous ones. The preachers are at any time depending on their readiness of them. The preachers included Ustaz Saenih on Islamic law, Hajjah Zaenab Sofa on Islamic ethics, Hajjah Tatu Uyainah on Islamic studies in general, Hajjah

Enung on Islamic law, and Hajjah Unah on Islamic theology and ethics.<sup>27</sup>

Concerning *Majelis taklim* Nurul Huda we only get copies of documents about the history and schedule of lecture activities. The preachers including Ustazah Hajjah Siti Fahriyah, *Ustazah* Rukiyah, and Ustaz Ma'ruf Yazid discuss Islamic theology ('*aqidah*). The lectures still run according to the day and time.<sup>28</sup>

For most *majelis taklims*, the book often used by preachers is *Kitab Durrat al-Nāṣiḥīn fī al-Wa'z wa-al-Irshād* by 'Uthmān b. Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Shākir al-Khawbarī. This book discusses the *fadā'il al-a'māl* (virtues of deeds) such as fasting, charity (alms), being dutiful/obedience to parents (*birr al-wālidayn*), generosity, *tahajjud* and others as well as the dangers of despicable traits that must be avoided. Among the students of *salafiyya* Islamic boarding schools at Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the book of *Durrat al-Nāṣiḥīn* is top-rated, which is certainly enough to influence their insights, religious attitudes, and practices.<sup>29</sup> Although there is criticism from several Muslim scholars that the existence of the prophet's sayings in the book is weak (*daif*), the traditions are still rooted in the Muslim community, especially in rural Muslims. In contrast to Muslim urban with a critical and rational view, the books of *fadā'il al-a'māl* will be accepted selectively, which ones can be practiced and which should be abandoned.

On one occasion at *Majelis taklim* as-Salam, Ustaz Sirojuddin delivered the hadith about the sunnah of reciting Surah Yasin to people who were dying, namely in the form of a hadith saying "*laqqinū mawtākum yāsīn*". In addition to the hadith about death, Ustaz Sirojuddin motivated many *jamaah* (congregations) to study hard and do good deeds as a provision for the hereafter. The hadiths revealed in the study can be categorized into *fadā'il al-a'māl*, namely about the virtues of deeds that will receive a reward from Allah.

In explaining the virtues of good deeds, Ustaz Sirojuddin did not explain in detail the quality of the hadiths presented, whether they were *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, or *daif*. The most important thing for Sirojuddin is that these hadiths do not contradict the Quran and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, and have become good habits in Muslim society, for example, the habit of reading Surah Yasin for those who are dying and saying *tayyiba* words such as "*lā ilāha illallāh*", then giving charity, doing good to neighbors and so on.

In his lectures, Sirojuddin made extensive use of classical Islamic literature such as the hadith books *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya*, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, and *Durrat al-Nāṣiḥīn*.<sup>30</sup> With these various references, the use of hadiths of *fadā'il al-a'māl* at As-Salam sometimes

uses *daif* hadiths like the last two books above which are very popular in traditional Islamic boarding schools and are very close to the *daif* hadiths. However, the jemaat of As-Salam responded well and was ready to practice it. However, Sirojuddin still prioritizes *ṣaḥīḥ* (valid) sources, because *daif* hadiths can only be practiced in the context of motivation for doing good deeds and could not be used as a source of Islamic true law.

A regular jemaat of As-Salam, Mrs. Laily, stated that several preachers often delivered topics about the virtues of deeds in important months such as the month of Rajab, for example, the virtue of fasting sunnah of Rajab in addition to fasting the sunnah three days of the full moon every month. According to Mrs. Laily, the preachers strongly encourage Muslims to carry out these practices because the reward is greater than fasting in other months, except for the month of Ramadan.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from As-Salam, Hajjah Tatu Uyainah from the Al-Istiqomah *majelis taklim* of Kampung Utan Cempaka Putih delivered a topic about the Quran. She stressed the importance of reading the Quran correctly, then the *jemaat* had to learn and practice it. Besides that, the preacher of Tatu explained the hadiths on the virtue of knowledge, the midnight prayer (*tahajjud*), and other sunnah prayers. References used by Tatu include *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Kutub al-Sittah*, *Durrat al-Nāṣiḥīn*, and other Islamic sources. According to Tatu, there is no problem to practice *daif* hadiths about good deeds as long as they do not contradict the Quran and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, especially to support the glory of Islam in Muslim societies,<sup>32</sup> for example, reciting surah Yasin on the night of *Nisf Sha'bān* as well as reading *Salawat* together. In general, most of the jemaat at Al-Istiqomah accept the explanations about *faḍā'il al-a'māl* hadiths without being critical: is the hadith *ṣaḥīḥ* or *daif*? What the preacher conveyed at the taklim, is the guideline for practice.

In the same spirit, Ustazah Fakhriyah, a preacher at the Nurul Huda *majelis taklim* Kampung Utan Ciputat, located behind UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, explained the doctrine of *tawhid* which is linked to noble character. In the same tone as the preachers above, Fakhriyah emphasized that *daif* hadith about the virtues of deeds, such as worshiping in the month of Ramadan or *Nisf Sha'bān*, then giving alms, and praying at night (*tahajjud*), as well as worshiping in the month of Rajab, the month of Muharram, can be practiced as long as it does not contradict with the Quran and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths.<sup>33</sup> However, for Fakhriyah, *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths as the second source after the Quran must be prioritized. For Fakhriyah, before practicing *daif* hadiths about the virtues of deeds, a Muslim must first look at the explanations of the Quran and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, if they are contrary,

then the *daif* hadiths must be abandoned.

One of the *jemaat* of Nurul Huda, Mrs. Popon, stated that the contents of *taklim* delivered by preachers mostly about the virtues of deeds. According to Popon, these themes are in great demand by the *jemaat*. They were quite pleased to hear that.

Apart from Ustazah Fakhriyah, another preacher, Ustazah Rukiyah put more emphasis on the stories of Isra and Miraj, the examples of the prophets and pious people. The two preachers did not specify the quality of the degrees of hadith. According to Popon, the *jemaat's* response to virtues of deeds is based on *daif* hadiths, some are pleased to practice them and some are not, depending on each individual.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to *majelis taklims* above, the content of religious studies at Darul Arqom *majelis taklim*, Bulak Cempaka Putih-East Ciputat, must be selective. The lectures delivered should not use *daif* hadiths, even if it is about the virtues of deeds. Ustaz Zakaria as a preacher, explicitly refused to use *daif* hadith. According to him, *daif* hadith absolutely cannot be used as a reference in worship. Therefore, Zakaria always gives lectures based on the Quran and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths. The books used as references are *Fath al-Bārī*, *Bulūgh al-Marām*, and *al-Arba'īn al-Nawawīyya*.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, based on our research, some *majelis taklims* in South Tangerang do not use the hadith of *fadā'il al-a'māl*, which are very strong containing *daif* hadiths. This is in line with the explanation of the *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths that are used as references:

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا،  
وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ

“The best of words is the Book of Allah (the Quran), the best of guidance is the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), while the worst of works is what is made up. Every innovation is *bidah*, and every *bidah* is misguided.”<sup>36</sup>

مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever does any work that is not in our religion, that which is done is rejected.”<sup>37</sup>

### The Important Influence of the Preachers

The level of education and religious knowledge of *jemaat* of *majelis taklim* are mostly non-graduate and are women. This condition shows that their mindset is quite simple and practical. All the virtues of good deeds that will be rewarded, they will immediately do without having

to be critical of the hadiths presented by the preachers. If the preachers teach Islamic knowledge that came from the Prophet Muhammad, they immediately practice it sincerely. However, as Mrs. Popon explained above, the *jemaat*'s response to virtues of deeds is based on *daif* hadiths, some are pleased to practice them and some are not, depending on each individual.

As mentioned above, the Darul Arqam majelis taklim takes a different position, especially in Zakaria's lectures. In the practice of worshipping at Darul Arqam there is no reading of Salawat nor the reading of the surah Yasin, dhikr, and sending the Fatihah to the Prophet as is generally the case for women's majelis taklim. *Jemaat* follows the teachings of the preacher which refer to the Quran and Sunnah. That way, they are sure not to get lost. Anything that has no basis, for them, including explanations from *daif* hadiths, must be left behind as narrated in *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي قَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ مَا إِنْ اعْتَصَمْتُمْ بِهِ فَلَنْ تَضِلُّوا أَبَدًا: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ  
وَسُنَّةُ نَبِيِّهِ

“O mankind, indeed I have left among you a matter which if you hold fast, you will not be lost forever, namely the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.”<sup>38</sup>

The preachers' factor as a central figure in shaping the mindset and attitude of the *jemaat* is very influential. Preachers are considered noble teachers. What the preachers convey will be heard and accepted by the *jemaat* without any critical attitude. They believe that the teacher has a noble position and that all his actions deserve to be emulated.

Among the *jemaats*, a doctrine is instilled from the saying of ulama: “Anyone who studies Islamic knowledge but does not have a master, then his master is a devil”. From this point of view, preachers have a very good position in their lectures, making them easier to understand and more effective. A respective Muslim scholar, Sayyid Alawi bin Ahmad al-Saqaf once said, “Indeed, the master's position is very important, and his role is very influential”.<sup>39</sup> It is to those masters that hundreds of women in *majelis taklims* in South Tangerang rely on the knowledge and religious practices.

## Conclusion

There are many ways and places for Indonesian Muslims to increase their religious knowledge. Formally, some Muslims study religion at state Islamic universities, others at Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*). Informally, *majelis taklim* is a relaxed place for Indonesian women to

study their religion. In fact, *majelis taklim* is not only a comfortable place to study religion, but it is also a space for economic, social, and political activities. According to Professor Nasaruddin Umar, Grand Imam of the Istiqlal Mosque-Jakarta, in 2018 there were 250 thousand *majelis taklim* spread across Indonesia taking place in mosques and small mosques (*mushala*). The majority of its members are women. If each *majelis taklim* has at least 50 members, then there are around 12 million 500 thousand members of *majelis taklim* in Indonesia. However, according to Umar, this number is not equivalent to the quality of the Muslim community improvement.<sup>40</sup>

The study of four *majelis taklims* in South Tangerang in this article confirms the opinion of Nasaruddin Umar above. Three of the four *majelis taklims* in South Tangerang are filled with lectures on the virtues of deeds (*fadā'il al-a'māl*). The female members, who have a simple and practical mindset and are mostly non-graduate, simply accept the Islamic teachings conveyed by preachers, especially regarding the virtues of deeds. The most important thing for them is the spirit of worshipping God, doing good to others, and having noble characters, without having to be critical about whether the hadiths about the virtues of deeds are *ṣahīḥ* or not. On the other hand, for preachers such as Sirojuddin, Tatu Uyainah and Fakhriyah, the most important thing is that the members of *majelis taklim* keep the spirit of worship and love of Islam. The three preachers, although they allow the use of *daif* hadiths in the virtues of deeds (not as a reference in establishing Islamic law), they also state that *ṣahīḥ* hadiths are of course better and more important. The exception of the three *majelis taklims* is the Darul Arqom which refuses *daif* hadiths and only uses *ṣahīḥ* hadiths in Islamic lectures for its members (*jemaat*).

Finally, the lively activities of *majelis taklims* in South Tangerang-Banten and other places show that Islamization in Indonesia has never been extinguished. Religious activities in public spheres continue to be intense. Indonesian Muslims continue to love their religion by studying their religion continuously.

## Endnotes

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