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Martin van Bruinessen

Sûfîs and Sultâns in Southeast Asia and Kurdistan; A Comparative Survey

Abstraksi: *Kisah-kisah mengenai hubungan antara sûfi dengan raja dalam proses Islamisasi suatu masyarakat mewarnai berbagai literatur di Dunia Islam. Hal itu terjadi, terutama, disebabkan kenyataan bahwa hubungan antara dunia agama (spiritual) dengan dunia kekuasaan (material) selalu merupakan problem yang agak tipikal. Di satu pihak, masyarakat cenderung beranggapan bahwa seorang sûfi tidak semestinya mendekati urusan politik, karena hal itu bertentangan dengan dunia asketis yang dijalaninya. Tapi, di pihak lain, terdapat satu harapan umum bahwa seorang raja harus dibimbing oleh sûfi dalam menjalankan tugas pemerintahannya. Dalam konteks ini, dalam berbagai literatur Sufisme, banyak dikisahkan mengenai hubungan yang problematik antara dunia sûfi dengan dunia sultân.*

Tak terkecuali literatur sûfi yang terdapat di kalangan masyarakat Muslim Asia Tenggara dan Kurdistan. Di kalangan masyarakat Muslim Asia, yang berdiam di kawasan antara Persia dan Melayu, hidup sebuah legenda tentang kisah Ibrâhîm ibn Adham, seorang sûfi yang hidup pada abad kedua Hijrah di sekitar Afghanistan sekarang. Dikisahkan bahwa Ibrâhîm adalah seorang penguasa Balkh yang meninggalkan tahtanya dan mengembara untuk menjalani hidup sebagai seorang sûfi. Meskipun dalam kenyataannya Ibrâhîm bukanlah seorang sultân—bahkan tak ada bukti yang menunjukkan dirinya sebagai keturunan bangsawan sekalipun—cerita tentang perjalanan hidup Ibrâhîm ini mengisyaratkan hal penting: bahwa, untuk mencapai kebenaran yang sejati, seseorang harus bersedia meninggalkan kemewahan dan godaan duniawi. Kisah Ibrâhîm ini juga mengisyaratkan bahwa memasuki dunia asketik seperti dirinya adalah persoalan pilihan hidup, bukan suatu keterpaksaan.

Legenda semacam itu tentu saja bukan hal baru. Bahkan, boleh jadi, cerita perjalanan Ibrâhîm diadopsi dari perjalanan spiritual Buddha. Tetapi, kisah Ibrâhîm—seorang sultân yang menjadi sûfi—serta merta menjadi pola dasar bagi masyarakat Muslim dalam kaitannya dengan persoalan hubungan antara raja (sultân) dengan dunia sûfi. Di kalangan masyarakat Jawa, misalnya, dikenal secara luas legenda mengenai Sunan Bayat atau Ki Pan-

dan Arang, seorang bupati di Semarang, berasal dari keturunan raja Surakarta yang menjadi wali setelah pertemuannya dengan Sunan Kalijaga. Begitu juga di kalangan masyarakat Melayu. Sultan Muhammad, seorang raja dari India Selatan, dan dipercayai keturunan Abû Bakr al-Siddîq, menanggalkan mahkotanya untuk menjalani hidup menjadi seorang faqîr karena mengikuti missi sebuah kapal yang akan menyebarkan Islam di Tanah Pasai (Melayu). Missi tersebut akhirnya berhasil mengislamkan raja Pasai, dan, untuk kemudian, diikuti oleh masyarakat Melayu.

Dalam konteks budaya literatur Melayu (dan juga Jawa), kisah-kisah di atas tidak dimaksudkan untuk mengidealisasikan perjalanan suci seseorang mencapai tingkat spiritual tertinggi, melainkan untuk mengisyaratkan bahwa proses Islamisasi masyarakat Melayu tidak mungkin terjadi tanpa pertolongan orang-orang yang berhubungan langsung dengan Nabi Muhammad sendiri, yakni para sûfi itu. Dengan sendirinya, mengikuti logika legenda di atas, raja Pasai atau para bangsawan Jawa, tidak akan masuk Islam kecuali dengan restu Nabi, dan ajaran-ajaran Sufistik yang dibawanya itu juga perlu diperkuat otoritasnya secara religius, yakni dengan keturunan Abû Bakr.

Konteks Melayu atas proses pengislaman masyarakat ini akhirnya berpengaruh pada pola hubungan struktural masyarakatnya, antara raja dan rakyat, gusti *dan* kawula. *Pada awal-awal sejarah Islamisasi di Jawa, misalnya, para sûfi yang dikenal dengan Wali Sanga (Sembilan Wali) berperan menjadi penguasa politik daerah Jawa untuk rentang waktu yang cukup panjang. Hal itu dilakukan dalam usaha memperoleh legitimasi relijius atas tatanan masyarakat Jawa dalam kaitannya dengan upaya Islamisasi. Dalam konteks yang sama, para sûfi di kawasan Melayu menjadi penasehat politik Sultân. Hal ini terjadi pada masyarakat Bugis, Makasar, dan Aceh, Melayu. Beberapa sûfi besar Aceh, seperti Hamzah Fansûrî, Nûruddîn al-Rânîrî dan Shamsuddîn al-Samatrânî, diketahui bekerja sebagai penasehat Sultân di bawah kesultanan Aceh pada abad keenambelas dan ke-tujuhbelas.*

Pola hubungan ini berbeda dengan fenomena yang ada di kalangan masyarakat Kurdistan. Para sultân di Kurdistan, umumnya memang membutuhkan legitimasi politik dan keagamaan dari para sûfi. Tetapi, ketika para sûfi lebih menunjukkan pengaruh politik di hadapan masyarakatnya, maka terjadi delegitimasi atas kekuasaan sultân. Karena itu, tak jarang terjadi pengusiran sûfi dari istana. Kasus yang paling populer adalah cerita mengenai seorang sûfi Naqsybandiyyah, Mahmud Urmawi dari Diyarbakir, yang dieksekusi Sultân Murad IV. Sehingga, konteks Kurdistan tentang hubungan sultân dan sûfi adalah bahwa, para sûfi sering kali diasosiasikan dengan gerakan anti negara.

مارتين فان برونيسن

الصوفى والسلطان فى جنوب شرق آسيا وكردستان: بعض انعكاس العلاقة

نبذة: إن القصص ذات الصلة بين الصوفى والملك فى مجرى إسلامية مجتمع ما تلون مختلف الآثار الأدبية فى العالم الإسلامى. وهذه الحالة تحدث –أولا– لسبب الحقيقة الواقعية أن العلاقة بين العالم الدينى (الروحى) والعالم المادى تعتبر دائما مشكلة نموذجية.

من ناحية، فإن المجتمع يميل إلى الاعتقاد بأن صوفيا لا يجب عليه التقرب إلى الأمور السياسية لأن هذه العملية تتنافى مع دنياه الزهدية التى يقوم بها. ولكن – من ناحية أخرى– توجد رغبة عامة أن ملكا ما يجب أن يقوده صوفى أثناء قيادته بمهمة حكومته. ففى هذه الصياغة، إنه فى مختلف الآثار الصوفية الإسلامية كثيرا ما يحكى عن علاقة مشكوك فيها بين عالم التصوف وعالم السلطنة.

لا يستثنى من ذلك الآثار الأدبية الصوفية الموجودة فى حوزة المجتمع الإسلامى فى جنوب شرق آسيا وكردستان. ففى وسط المجتمع الإسلامى الأسيوى القاطن فى المناطق الكائنة بين الفرس وملايو، عاشت أسطورة عن قصة إبراهيم بن أدهم، وهو صوفى عاش فى أوائل القرن الثانى الهجرى فيما حوالى أفغانستان الحالية. يروى أن إبراهيم أحد حكام بلخ الذى ترك عرشه وتجول مختارا حياة التقسف كصوفى. ولو كان –فى ظاهر أمره إبراهيم ليس بسلطان– إذ لم يوجد دليل من طريق حياته أنه من سلالة السلاطين. وقصة تاريخ حياة

إبراهيم هذا يشير إلى أمر هام وهو للوصول إلى الحقيقة الحقة يجب أن يكون الإنسان مستعدا لترك الرفاهية والمغريات الدنيوية. فقصة إبراهيم هذه تشير كذلك بأن دخول الدنيا الزاهدة مثله إنما هو اختيار الحياة وليس أمرا اضطراريا.

فالأسطورة مثل هذه ليست أمرا جديدا، بل يمكن أن تكون قصة تجوال إبراهيم اقتبسها من جولة بودا الروحية، ولكن قصة إبراهيم -ذلك السلطان الذى صار صوفيا- بكليتها صارت نموذجا أصليا للمجتمع المسلم فى علاقته بمسألة الصلة بين الملك (السلطان) والدنيا الصوفية. فى وسط المجتمع الجاوى مثلا عرف على شكل واسع أسطورة سونان بايت (Sunan Bayat) أو كى فاندن أرانج (Ki Pandan Arang)، أحد العمد فى سمارنج (Semarang) من أصل سلالة ملك سوراكرتا (Surakarta) الذى أصبح وليا بعد مقابلته بسونان كالى جاغا (Sunan Kali Jaga).

وكذلك فى أوساط المجتمع الملايوى، فالسلطان محمد أحد ملوك الهند الجنوبية، والمعتقد بأنه من سلالة الخليفة أبى بكر الصديق، قد ترك عرشه ليسلك حياة الفقراء، لأنه تابع وفد إحدى السفن القائمة بالدعوة الإسلامية فى منطقة فاساى (بملايو). هذا الوفد قد وصل أخيرا إلى إدخال ملك فاساى إلى الإسلام، ثم تابعه المجتمع الملايوى.

فى صياغة ثقافة الكتب الملايوية (وكذلك الجاوية) فإن القصص المذكورة أعلاه ليس المقصود بها تمجيد رحلة قدسية شخص لبلوغ المرحلة الروحية العليا، ولكن للإشارة إلى أن مجرى إسلامية المجتمع الملايوى لا يمكن بلوغه دون مساعدة أناس لهم صلة مباشرة بالنبى محمد نفسه، وهم هؤلاء الصوفيون. وفى حد ذاته فإن متابعة منطق تلك الأسطورة المذكورة أعلاه، تبرهن على أن ملك فاساى أو الاستقراطيين الجاويين لن يدخلوا الإسلام إلا ببركة النبى والتعاليم الصوفية التى

أتى بها هؤلاء الصوفيون وقد عضضها كيان السلطة الدينية، وهى سلالة أبى بكر.

إن الصبغة الملايوية فى مجرى إسلامية هذا المجتمع لها أثر فى نظرية علاقة البناء الاجتماعى بين الملك والرعية، أى السلطة والمجتمع. ففى أوائل تاريخ إسلامية جاوة مثلا فإن الصوفيين الذين عرفوا بالأولياء التسعة تولوا السلطة السياسية فى منطقة جاوة فى مدى وقت غاية فى الطول. هذه الحالة إنما قاموا بها فى مجال السعى وراء الحصول على الشرعية الدينية إزاء نظام المجتمع الجاوى الذى له علاقة بمجرى الإسلامية. ففى نفس الحالة صار الصوفيون مستشارين سياسيين للملك. وقد حصلت هذه الحالة فى مجتمع بوجيس (Bugis)، مكاسر (Makasar) وآتشيه (Aceh) ملايو. فبعض صوفيين آتشيه الكبار مثل حمزة الفانسورى (Hamzah Fansuri) ونور الدين الرانيرى (Nuruddin ar-Raniri) وشمس الدين السومطرى (Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani) قد عرفوا بأنهم تحت سلطنة آتشيه فى القرنى السادس عشر والسابع عشر.

من هذه الناحية، فهناك خلاف فى الصورة الموجودة فى وسط مجتمع الكردستان. إن السلاطين حينما ظهر هؤلاء الصوفيون كان لهم نفوذ سياسى أكثر أمام المجتمع، فحدث عدم شرعيتهم على سلطة السلطان. ولذلك كثيرا ما يطرد الصوفيون من القصر الملكى. والحادثة الأكثر شهرة هى قصة الصوفى النقشابندى محمود أرموى من دياربكر الذى حكم عليه السلطان مراد الرابع بالإعدام، وكذلك بعض حوادث أخرى حتى صورة كردستان فيما يخص بعلاقة السلطان والصوفى هى أن الصوفيين عامة يوصفون بأنهم يقومون بحركة ضد الحكومة.

It is a commonplace, in the Muslim world as well as in the West, that power corrupts. The relationship of the man of religion, and a fortiori the mystic, with the powers of this world is at best problematic. Society expects the pious mystic not to be susceptible to worldly ambitions and to remain aloof from the bustle of political struggles. Mysticism, at least in the modern western perception, almost by definition implies an otherworldly, ascetic attitude that is not compatible with active involvement in worldly affairs. This view of mysticism also exists within Islam, but it is not the only view, and perhaps not even the dominant one. At different times and places, sûfîs have held quite diverging attitudes towards worldly power. I shall not attempt to survey the entire range but rather discuss a few patterns from the two regions I know best, Southeast Asia and Kurdistan.

Kings Turned Mystics: Ibrâhîm ibn Adham as an Archetype

One of the earliest sûfîs, legends about whom are to be found from Persia to the Malay Archipelago, was Ibrâhîm ibn Adham, who lived in the second century of the Hijrah. The legends make him the ruler of Balkh, a town in present day north Afghanistan, who abdicated the throne in order to take up the ascetic life. In reality, Ibrâhîm had no royal connections at all, although his family did live in Balkh and later travelled, earning his livehood with humble work.[1]

The legends about Ibrâhîm's royal origins is of interest because it appears to reflect the view that in order to attain spiritual advancement one should be ready to relinquish all worldly interests. It also made Ibrâhîm's piety and devotion even more admirable by showing that his life of poverty was a matter of choice, not of sheer necessity. The legend is reminiscent of the life history of Buddha, and some scholars have in fact assumed that this Islamic legend is a straightforward borrowing from Buddhist lore.[2] That is not necessarily the case; we find similar legends in many cultures. It is significant, however, that it is through this legend, rather than for what is known of his real life, that Ibrâhîm ibn Adham became a popular saint in much of Asia.[3] The legend clearly expressed something important—but we must remain aware that the meaning attributed to it may be a different one in different cultural contexts.

There are echoes of Ibrâhîm bin Adham in the legends surrounding the Javanese saint Sunan Bayat or Ki Pandan Arang, whose shrine at Bayat, south of Klaten, Central Java, is the most important non-

royal sacred grave in the Surakarta-Yogyakarta region.[4] Before devoting his life to meditations in this isolated location, Ki Pandan Arang allegedly was a regent (*bupati*) of the north coast harbour of Semarang, and a man more interested in worldly possessions than in spiritual matters. After an encounter with the trickster-saint Sunan Kalijaga, the *bupati* gives up his position and riches and embarks upon an adventurous journey through Java, finally settling at Bayat. Another legend, that has become blended with the above one, has it that Sunan Bayat really was identical with Brawijaya V, the last ruler of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit who, after his disappearance from the physical world, returned as an islamicized sage. The shrine appears to owe its reputation for spiritual potency to the royal origin attributed to Sunan Bayat.

The first sûfî whom we find mentioned in early Malay literature, the Indian ascetic who is credited with bringing Islam to Pasai, is also vaguely reminiscent of the legendary Ibrâhîm bin Adham. Pasai, a tiny coastal state in North Sumatra, was islamicized in the late 12th century, and it is the earliest well-documented Muslim state of the Malay Archipelago. A local source that was compiled several centuries later, the Chronicle of the Rulers of Pasai (*Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*), attributes the Islamization of Pasai to a mission despatched from Mecca especially for this purpose.[5] On its way to Sumatra, the ship with the Arabian envoys stops at a harbour state on the Coromandel Coast (*Ma'bar*) in Southeast India, that is governed by a Muslim ruler named Sultân Muhammad. When Sultân Muhammad, who is of Arab origin and a descendant of Abû Bakr al-Siddîq, hears of the objective of the mission, he abdicates the throne to become a *faqîr* ("poor" one) and goes on board the ship. The mission finally arrives in Pasai, whose ruler has meanwhile had a vision of the Prophet himself and received Islam at his hands. The *faqîr* completes the process of conversion by giving the ruler a Qur'ân. The leader of the mission convenes all notables and commoners of Pasai and teaches them the confession of faith, after which he returns to Mecca. The *faqîr* stays behind as a religious preceptor to the people of Pasai.

So in this legend we again have a ruler giving up his kingdom in order to become a sûfî. In the cultural context of the Malay world, however, the legend appears to carry a quite different meaning from the one suggested above. It does not idealize renunciation of the world but to the contrary suggests that the *faqîr*'s religious message was accepted in Pasai precisely because behind his modest exterior he

really was a king. Pasai's ruler could not be converted to Islam by anyone less than the Prophet himself, and the sûfî teachings of the *faqîr* had to be given added weight by his royal status. In Southeast Asia, the rulers were considered to be the most spiritually potent human beings, intermediaries between heaven and earth; they were God-man, Shiva-Buddha, or *bodhisattva* before the advent of Islam, and after Islamization many legitimated their positions by claiming sainthood. Worldly power and spiritual attainment, moreover, were considered as closely related in this environment. It was widely believed that the latter was a necessary precondition for the former.

Kings as Sûfîs

The Javanese commonly attribute the Islamization of their island to Nine Saints (*wali sanga*), whose graves are still major centers of pilgrimage.[6] These Nine Saints are a heterogeneous lot, and not all of them may have been historical persons. The number of nine has cosmic significance, and the various lists of Nine Saints that one finds in Javanese sources in reality add up to a somewhat larger number. The interesting thing is that at least two of these saints, and perhaps more, were in fact the rulers of harbour states on the north coast.[7] Posterity venerates them as sûfîs and religious scholars, whose charisma is still capable of curing disease or barrenness and bestowing business or academic success on the pious visitors to their shrines. The pre-islamic Javanese tradition of worshipping semi-divine kings appears to have merged with the Islamic cult of saints. No sharp line can be drawn between the ostensibly Islamic veneration of the Nine Saints and the worship at the royal graves of Mataram in inland central Java. Many Javanese visit both and expect similar benefits from these visits.

It is conceivable that the rulers of the harbour states were, in their lifetimes or posthumously, declared saints in order to lend Islamic legitimacy to the cult of royalty. That cannot be the whole story, however. We know little about the Nine Saints themselves, but many later Javanese rulers did show a genuine interest in Sufism, that went well beyond a pragmatic concern with its political usefulness. Several are known to have seriously studied sûfî literature and practised the exercises of various sûfî orders (*Tarekat*).

The dynastic chronicles of the West Javanese kingdoms of Banten and Cirebon, for instance, claim that the founder of both dynasties, Sunan Gunung Jati (one of the Nine Saints), visited Mecca and Medina and received initiations in the Kubrawiyyah, Shâdhiliyyah, Naqshban-

diyyah and Shattâriyyah orders.[8] Although this can be shown to be an anachronism that tells us little about Sunan Gunung Jati himself, it indicates that these mystical orders were known and valued in court circles at the time the chronicles were compiled in the 17th century. We also know that Banten's ruler Abûl Mafâkhir Abdul Qâdir (1596-1651) not only read difficult sûfî texts, but that he also sent letters to leading scholars as far afield as India and Arabia querying them as to the correct interpretation of these texts.[9]

Abûl Mafâkhir's contemporary, Sultân Agung of the central Javanese kingdom of Mataram, not only succeeded in bringing more territory and people under his control than any Mataram ruler before or after him, he reputedly also shared Abûl Mafâkhir's interest in Islamic mysticism. In his case, however, the interest was more practical than intellectual, and we have no indications as to whether sûfî literature was actually read at his court, as it was in Banten. Agung's mysticism appears more like an islamicised version of the traditional Javanese pursuit of spiritual powers at sacred places and through asceticism, and no doubt his contemporaries considered his political and military successes as indications of his spiritual advancement. For this reason it is perhaps not appropriate to call Sultan Agung a sûfî in the strict sense of the term.

In the case of a later member of Mataram's royal family, use of the term sûfî apears more justified. This was Ratu Pakubuwana, the widow of king Pakubuwana I, who after her husband's death remained a dominant force at the court during the turbulent second quarter of the 18th century. Ratu Pakubuwana is the author of some of the most important sûfî texts extant in Javanese.[10] She wrote these texts on behalf of her grandson, king Pakubuwana II, and they were probably meant to lend him supernatural protection and to strengthen his reign. She clearly was a deeply pious person and well acquainted with sûfî thought, although in her hands this was given a typically Javanese twist.

It is not only in Java that we encounter kings who were sûfîs. Members of the ruling houses of Celebes also practised Sufism, and one of them, Ahmad al-Sâlih Shams al-Milla wa'l-Dîn, the ruler of Bone (1775-1812), appears to have compiled one of the few extant sûfî texts in the Bugis language.[11] This king, like Ratu Pakubuwana, was apparently not just a devotee of Sufism but a leading authority. As I have attempted to show elsewhere, there are reasons to believe that the royal families of the Archipelago initially prevented sûfî teach-

ings from spreading to the population at large, considering them as a source of spiritual power that guaranteed their lasting superiority over their subjects.[12]

Sûfîs as Kings' Companions and Advisers

The accomplished sûfî-kings must nevertheless have been few. Most rulers who were, for whatever reason, interested in Sufism sought the permanent presence of sûfî masters as their teachers and boon companions. Throughout the Muslim world we find numerous cases of symbiotic relationships between kings and famous sûfîs—a pattern that of course is not unique to the Muslim world. Rulers needed their sûfîs as soothsayers, legitimizers, advisers, healers and living amulets; their sûfî companions derived from this relationship livelihood, fame, political influence, and perhaps a moral impact.

All known great sûfîs in Southeast Asian history worked under royal patronage and counted royalty among their disciples. This is perhaps why they are remembered at all, for their works were kept and copied in the court libraries, while the writings of others have been lost. These sûfîs often exercised a great influence over their patrons, from which some profited to further their private ambitions but which most used to enjoin more Islamic policies. The early great Malay sufi poets, Hamzah Fansûrî, Shamsuddîn Samatrânî, Nuruddîn Rânîrî and Abdurra'ûf Singkilî, worked under the patronage of Aceh's rulers in the late 16th and 17th centuries, the last three apparently as the *shaykh al-Islâm* and supreme judge (*qâdî*). All became more famous than their royal patrons, which perhaps reflects the fact that the tradition of divine kingship was less firmly entrenched in Sumatra than in Java. Hamzah in fact praised his patron, 'Alâ' al-dîn Ri'âyat Shâh, as a perfect (*kâmil*) saint and the "pole" (*qutb*) of the age, but it is Hamzah himself, and not the king, who is remembered as the Malay world's greatest sûfî.

These sûfîs had considerable leverage in the kingdom, as European visitors to Aceh did not fail to notice. Rânîrî used his position to suppress the sûfî teachings of his predecessors in favour of his own version of the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujûd* and to persecute adherents of Hamzah's doctrines, some of whom he had burnt at the stake. After a few years, however, he fell victim to a change in political circumstances himself and had to flee Acheh in a great hurry.[13] Abdurra'ûf distanced himself from Rânîrî's intolerance. He may have

become the most influential of all these courtier-sûfîs, which was perhaps not unrelated to the fact that his patron, the Sultânah Safiyatuddîn, was the first of Aceh's female rulers and therefore more than any male ruler in need of the Islamic legitimation he gave her. Abdurra'ûf dedicated several of his works to this patron, on whom he bestows lavish praise.

Abdurra'ûf's contemporary, Yûsuf Makassar, exemplifies a more thorough political involvement. He was probably related to the royal house of Gowa in South Celebes, which must have helped him in the early phases of his career as a courtier-sûfî. Upon his return after decades of study in Arabia, he found Gowa occupied by the Dutch and therefore settled in Banten, the West Javanese sultanate that was in open rivalry with the Dutch East Indies Company at Batavia. He became the sultân's closest confidant and adviser and married a princess. His political position was further strengthened by the presence in Banten of a large contingent of Makassarese soldiers and sailors, who like himself refused to live under Dutch, i.e. infidel, rule. As a mediator between the court and these militarily useful but unruly guests, Shaykh Yûsuf's leverage in both camps rose. The Makassarese were blindly loyal to him, and at the court too he wielded great influence. He was a major factor in the uncompromising attitude of the ruler, Sultân Ageng Tirtayasa, towards the Dutch. When the Crown Prince, alienated from Yûsuf because of the latter's growing influence, invited the Dutch to throw their weight behind his own faction, Shaykh Yûsuf took to the mountains with his Makassarese supporters and led this guerrilla band across West Java in search of defensible positions. When finally captured, he was sent into exile to Ceylon and later the Cape of Good Hope. Some years after his death his bones were, at the request of the king of Gowa, returned to Celebes for reburial. His grave there is still greatly venerated and the sûfî order into which he initiated his fellow Makassarese (a branch of the Khalwatiyyah) still flourishes in the region.[14]

Yûsuf Makassar's political involvement differed in one important aspect from that of the Sumatran sûfîs mentioned above: his uncompromising opposition to infidel encroachments on Muslim territory. This attitude, which has anachronistically been called anticolonial, became increasingly common among sûfîs as the European expansion intensified, in Indonesia as well as elsewhere in the Muslim world. In the heyday of imperialism we find time and again sûfîs in the forefront of the resistance movements.[15]

Jihâd, "Holy War," was as much part of the idealized image of the sûfî as was withdrawal from the world. At times of relative quiet the concept of *jihâd* was given a metaphorical interpretation and explained as the struggle against one's own base nature, but when the House of Islam was under threat no sûfî would preach quietism. The greatest Indonesian sûfî author of the 18th century, 'Abdussamad Palimbânî, who spent most of his life in Arabia, is best known for his Malay adaptation of al-Ghazâlî's quietist *Ihyâ'*. However, he also wrote a treatise on *jihâd*, and he sent letters to the rulers of the twin Central Javanese kingdoms of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, who by then had acquiesced to Dutch overlordship, obliquely reminding them of their religious duty of *jihâd*.[16]

Withdrawal from or Intervention in the World?

The company of kings seems hardly the most appropriate environment for those who seek spiritual advancement and nearness to God. Islamic literature abounds with warnings, and sûfîs seeking that company are likely to be suspected of personal ambitions. A famous saying attributed to the Prophet himself has it that rulers (*umarâ*) who pay their respects to the *'ulamâ'* are the best of rulers but that *'ulamâ'* calling upon rulers are the worst of their class. In the sûfî literature one can, however, also find justifications for such social and political involvement.

One of the eight principles of the Naqshbandî path, that were first formulated by 'Abdulkhâliq Ghujdawânî, is called in Persian *khalwat dar anjuman*, "seclusion in the midst of society". This is commonly interpreted as being inwardly focussed on God whilst outwardly taking an active part in the life of the community. Many Naqshbandîs have taken this principle as an injunction to political activism; at the very least it amounts to a rejection of the otherworldliness that outsiders often expect of sûfîs. It is no coincidence that the Naqshbandiyyah in particular has acquired the reputation that its shaykhs were much inclined to associate with the high and mighty. It has been noticed that at many times and places the Naqshbandiyyah in its proselytization tended to start at the top of the social pyramid. In this respect it differed much from orders like the Qâdiriyyah and the Rifâ'iyyah, which at most places found their following on the lower rungs of the social ladder.

The obvious justification sûfîs could give for their doubtful association with the powerful was that this enabled them to most effec-

tively practise *al-amr bi'l-ma'rûf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, "enjoining the good and prohibiting the forbidden," which is every Muslim's duty. By associating with the ruler they might gently guide him towards more Islamic policies, which would be useful to the entire Muslim community. Self-serving though this argument may often have been, it is nevertheless true that this is what often appeared to happen. The colonial literature abounds with references to sûfî shaykhs who are said to have incited initially "tolerant" indigenous rulers to "fanaticism."

In order to influence the ruler, a sûfî of course need not seek his physical company. It could be done just as well by correspondence, a method that made the sûfî less vulnerable to criticism. Letters of admonition constitute a well-known distinct genre of sûfî literature. The most celebrated example of this genre is the letters sent by the Indian Naqshbandî, Ahmad Sirhindî (1564-1624). His collected letters (*Maktûbât*), which were eagerly copied by disciples and admirers, and were later translated into Arabic and Turkish, contain a number of epistles to the Mughal rulers of his day. Sirhindî's admirers credit him with a religious reorientation of the court, from the syncretic *dîn-i ilâhî* espoused by Akbar to the more orthodox Islam embraced by his successor Jahângîr. Two of the Indonesian sûfîs mentioned above also had recourse to this method. Yûsuf Makassar sent from Banten a letter of admonition to Daeng Karunrung, a princeling of Gowa who kept resisting the Dutch after the conquest of this kingdom. 'Abdussamad Palimbani, as said, did the same to the Central Javanese rulers, whom he had never met.

Sûfîs against Sultâns

Admonishing a king, as may be imagined, was not always without risk. Most Muslim rulers welcomed such religious legitimation sûfîs could lend to their positions but were wary of criticism, however carefully phrased, that could be construed as delegitimizing. In particular sûfîs who had an independent power base in the form of a popular following constituted potential threats. This threat was even more serious when the sûfî in question was based in a peripheral region not firmly controlled by the central government.

Such was the case, for instance, of the popular Naqshbandî shaykh Mahmûd Urmawî of Diyarbakir, who was executed by the Ottoman Sultân Murâd IV in 1639. Only a few years earlier the shaykh had still accompanied the sultân in the military campaign to reconquer

Yerivan, on the Caucasian frontier, from Persian hands. Although the shaykh's presence contributed to the success of the campaign, the sultân had had misgivings about the large numbers of people who came to pay their respects to the shaykh each day. In 1638-9 Sultân Murâd led a second military campaign to the east, this time to retake Baghdad from the Persians. These two large campaigns, one so soon after the other, placed an enormous burden on the region's populace, for large amounts of grain were requisitioned to feed the troops and animals. When the sultân was on his way to the east, Shaykh Mahmûd led a delegation of notables to welcome him with precious gifts. After first having pleased the sultân by predicting a great victory, the shaykh complained of the grain requisitions and requested a reduction. This, combined with his wide influence in the east, must have made the sultân apprehensive about the shaykh's intentions. On the return journey from Baghdad he had Shaykh Mahmûd strangled. Having made himself the spokesman of popular discontent, however courteous, the shaykh appeared to be a potential rebel, and a dangerous one at that.[17]

Two and a half centuries later, in 1880, another Kurdish Naqshbandî, Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh of Nehri, did actually lead a large-scale rebellion in the border region of the Ottoman and Persian empires. Central government control over this region was weak then, and the Ottoman state in particular had recently been severely shaken by the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78. The government had armed the Kurdish tribes in defense of its territory, and the shaykh himself, who was the most widely respected authority in the region, had led a large contingent of tribesmen in this *jihâd* against the invading Russians. When the war was over, the shaykh was unwilling to relinquish his control of the mountains. The shaykh contested the Ottomans' and Persians' right to rule the region, accusing both governments of causing ruin and lawlessness through the corruption and ineptitude of their officials. In 1879 the shaykh's men in fact attacked the Ottoman army column that was despatched to bring the region under control. The government took a conciliatory stand and attempted to solve the problem by paying the shaykh a monthly allowance. The following year, a large tribal force loyal to Shaykh 'Ubaydullâh invaded Iran and temporarily took control of the fertile Urmia - Sawj Bulaq plain in northwestern Iran. While continuing to plead loyalty to the sultân (though not to his officials), the shaykh informed a British missionary in Urmia that his aim was the estab-

lishment of an independent or autonomous Kurdish state. This was the first Kurdish rebellion with clear nationalist overtones. The uprising failed, for the disorganised tribal forces were no match for the Persian troops that were despatched against them. The shaykh himself was captured by the Ottomans, who sent him into exile to Mecca, where he died a few years later.[18]

Sûfîs as Worldly Rulers and Political Leaders

I began this paper by mentioning worldly rulers who became sûfîs; Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh exemplifies the reverse case, the sûfî shaykh who temporarily became a worldly ruler. This is not at all an uncommon phenomenon, although it only occurs under specific circumstances. It typically belongs to the periphery of larger states, especially in tribal societies.

The dynamics of this process have been beautifully described by Evans-Pritchard in his classic study of the Sanûsiyyah in Cyrenaica.[21] Tribal society is essentially fissiparous and conflict-ridden, and it usually lacks the kind of overriding authority capable of integrating the various tribal groups. In the second half of the 19th century, it was the Sanûsiyyah which provided the Beduin tribes of Cyrenaica with precisely such an integrating structure. The order was hierarchically organized, with a central lodge at Jaghbûb and numerous other lodges dispersed throughout the region, each led by a *khalîfah* obedient to the head of the order. Each of the lodges was located in the territory of a particular tribe. The Beduin tribes had long held holy men, *marabouts*, in great veneration. The Sanûsiyyah brotherhood gave them a whole network of such holy men, none of them Beduin themselves (and therefore not party to Beduin conflicts). The network replicated the structure of the tribes and superimposed a hierarchical order onto it, which quite naturally gave the Sanûsî family (the descendants of the order's founder, Muhammad al-Sanûsî) a coordinating role. Two long wars in which the Beduin resisted invading Italians (1911-17 and 1923-32) propelled the Sanûsiyyah into a more explicitly political role. When finally Libya became an independent state, the head of the order and of the Sanûsî family, Muhammad Idrîs, became its first king.

Similar developments took place in Kurdistan in the second half of the 19th and the early 20th century. For centuries the Ottomans had ruled this part of their empire indirectly, through Kurdish dynasties that enjoyed a large measure of autonomy. This system was

gradually replaced by one of direct rule through centrally appointed governors and an expanding bureaucracy. The last of the Kurdish emirates were abolished in the early 19th century. This resulted in a period of chaos and lawlessness, for the centrally appointed Ottoman officials lacked the authority to maintain law and order in the region. Conflicts between tribes were no longer held in check, the peasantry were not protected from rape and plunder, there was no redress for injustices. The power vacuum that existed was filled quite naturally by sûfî shaykhs, most of them of the Naqshbandî order.[22]

The role of sûfî shaykh tended to be hereditary among the Kurds, and certain families, including that of Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh, had been established in the region for centuries. The number of Kurdish shaykhs significantly increased in the period under consideration due to the missionary efforts of the charismatic Kurdish Naqshbandî shaykh, Mawlânâ Khâlid, who returned from India in 1811 and in the brief period until his death in 1827 appointed well over thirty *khalîfah*s to various parts of Kurdistan alone. These deputies in turn appointed their own *khalîfah*s, and soon there was hardly a region left that did not have its local shaykh, who was part of Mawlânâ Khâlid's network. Even some of the old established shaykh families became part of the same network. Thus Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh's grandfather, who like his ancestors had been a Qâdirî, requested an initiation and *ijâzah* in the Naqshbandiyya from Mawlânâ Khâlid.

These sûfî shaykhs had a core of active followers around them, who under their supervision practised the devotions of one of the sûfî orders, but besides this they performed a whole range of other functions for a wider following: they were healers, advisers, clairvoyants, holy men whom people visited to receive their blessing, and - a highly important function - they mediated in all sorts of conflicts. It was only men of extraordinary qualities, such as a venerated shaykh or a powerful scion of one of the Kurdish ruling houses, who could make peace in tribal conflict. By the late 19th century we find that several of these Kurdish Naqshbandî shaykhs have acquired considerable political and economic power due to their ability to mediate in, and to manipulate, tribal conflicts.

It is not a coincidence that for half a century, beginning with Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh's rebellion, most of the Kurdish uprisings were led by Naqshbandî shaykhs. The first great Kurdish revolt in republican Turkey, commonly named for its chief leader Shaykh Sa'îd, is a case in point.[21] The uprising had been planned by nationalist officers

and intellectuals, and the bulk of the participants were tribesmen under their own chieftains. As soon as fighting broke out, the leadership of the uprising shifted as if by itself from the officers and intellectuals to Shaykh Sa'îd and a few fellow shaykhs. Only they could overcome the mutual suspicions among neighbouring tribes, impose a peaceful solution to feuds, and coordinate the military actions of the various tribes.

In present day Iraq, it was the shaykhs of Bârzân, descendants of a *khalîfah* of Shaykh 'Ubaidullâh's father, who repeatedly led popular rebellions. The Bârzânî family gathered a large following around it that gradually became a sort of tribe itself. These shaykhs were at once religious and secular leaders, engaging in alliances with some tribes and warring against others. By the middle of this century, Shaykh Ahmad Bârzânî had evolved from a shaykh-cum-tribal leader into a national leader of the Iraqi Kurds; his younger brother Mullâ Mustafâ (who was not a shaykh himself) became the greatest Kurdish leader of this century and a powerful symbol of Kurdish nationalism.

The prominent political roles played by these Kurdish Naqshbandîs may have owed something to the world-affirming element in Naqshbandî tradition, but they were in the first place a response to the concrete socio-political situation. In the southern part of Iraqi Kurdistan we find the leading shaykhs of another order, the Qâdiriyyah, playing similar roles. The Barzinjîs were an old established shaykh family, which had been patronized by the (Kurdish) rulers of the Bâbân emirate. After the deposition of the last emîr in 1850, the Barzinjî shaykhs became the chief indigenous authorities of the region, commanding the loyalties of various tribes as well as the non-tribal peasantry. When the British occupied Mesopotamia in the First World War, they soon discovered that Shaykh Mahmûd Barzinjî held the key to southern Kurdistan. They attempted to coopt him by giving him administrative functions, but the shaykh had different ideas and repeatedly proclaimed his independence, once even explicitly adopting the title of "king of Kurdistan" (*hukmdâr-i Kurdistân*).

Conclusion

The examples given above can easily be supplemented with numerous similar cases from other times and places. The political role of sûfî orders in the struggle against traditional elites and colonial powers in Asia and Africa during the past century is well known

enough not to need further comment. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that this has by no means been the general attitude of the orders, and that accommodation even with infidel rulers has perhaps been a more common attitude than resistance. Nor is it possible to distinguish between activist sûfî orders and quietist ones; in most we find both attitudes represented. This is aptly illustrated by the case of the Naqshbandiyyah in republican Turkey, which was most directly involved in early political protest movements against secularizing policies, then succeeded in quietistically surviving underground, and from this underground position has once more become a political force to be reckoned with, due to the electoral importance of its following.[22]

Endnotes

1. See Russell Jones, "Ibrahim b. Adham", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol III, 985-6.
2. The first to put forward this hypothesis probably was Ignaz Goldziher, quoted in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1904, 132-3.
3. There exists a written Malay version of legend of Ibrâhîm ibn Adham, attributed to Shaykh Abû Bakr from Hadramawt; later Javanese and Bugis versions appear to based on this Malay texts. The Malay text is edited by Russel Jones; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol III, 985-6.
4. Legends from various, mostly written, Javanese sources are compiled in: D.A. Rinkes, "De heiligen van Java IV: Ki Pandan arang te Tembayat", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Bataviaasch Genootschap) 53 (1911), 435-510; Amen Budiman, *Semarang riwayatmu dulu*, jilid pertama (Semarang: Tanjung Sari, 1978), 130-261. See also John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 279-85 for an interpretation that emphasizes the this-worldly, financial aspect of the spirituality associated with Sunan Bayat.
5. Russell Jones, *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti, 1987). The earlier edition of this text by A.H. Hill, in *Journal of the Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33 (1960), is accompanied by an English translation.
6. See J.J. Ras, "Javanese Tradition on the Coming of Islam", in: W.A.L. Stokhof & N.J.G. Kaptein (eds), *Beberapa Kajian Indonesia dan Islam* (Jakarta: INIS, 1990), pp. 147-78; James J. Fox, "Ziarah Visits to the Tombs of the Wali, the Founders of Islam on Java", in: M.C. Ricklefs (ed), *Islam in the Indonesian Social Context* (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1991), pp. 19-38.
7. Sunan Gunung Jati was the founder of the kingdoms of Cirebon and Banten, and Sunan Giri ruled the coastal state of Gresik (which in fact had several consecutive rulers with the title of Sunan Giri). Sunan Bonang and Sunan Kudus may also have wielded worldly power at Tuban and Kudus, respectively, although these towns were not known as powerful states.
8. Thus the *Babad Cirebon* (ed. Brandes), the *Sajarah Banten* (summarized by Hoesein Djajadiningrat) and the *Hikajat Hasanoeddin* (ed. J. Edel). See the analysis in Martin van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court, Tarekat and Pesantren: Religious Institutions in the Banten Sultanate", *Archipel* 50, pp. 178-80.
9. Van Bruinessen, "Shari'a court, Tarekat and Pesantren", pp. 167-8; Azyumardi Azra, *The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1992), pp. 365, 463n39.
10. These texts, of which especially the *Kitab Usulbiah* and the *Suluk Garwa Kancana* are of great interest, are studied at length in an important forthcoming book by M.C. Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726-1749*.
11. This is the treatise *al-Nûr al-Hâdî ilâ Tarîq al-Rashad*, apparently based on an Arabic work of the same title by Shaykh Yûsuf of Makassar.
12. Van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court, Tarekat and Pesantren", pp. 185-6.
13. Takeshi Ito, "Why did Nuruddin ar-Raniri leave Aceh in 1054 A.H.?", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 134 (1978), 489-91.
14. Abu Hamid, *Syekh Yusuf: Seorang Ulama, Sufi dan Pejuang* (Jakarta: Yayasan

Obor Indonesia, 1994); Martin van Bruinessen, "The Tariqa Khalwatiyya in South Celebes", in: Harry A. Poeze & Pim Schoorl (eds), *Excursies in Celebes* (Leiden: KITLV, 1991), pp. 251-69.

15. The most celebrated sûfî leading resistance against 19th-century imperial expansion was probably the Caucasian Naqshbandi Shaykh Shâmil, who held out for decades against Russian armies. See Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Frank Cass, 1994). Similarly, in the early 20th century, it was the Sanûsiyyah order that led the resistance against the Italian occupation of Cyrenaica in present Libya.
16. M. Chatib Quzwain, *Mengenal Allah: Suatu Studi mengenai Ajaran Tasawuf Syaikh 'Abdus-Samad al-Palimbani* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1985), pp. 16-7, 22-3.
17. Martin van Bruinessen, "The Naqshbandi order in 17th-century Kurdistan", in: Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic & Thierry Zarcone (eds), *Naqshbandis: cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman* (Istanbul-Paris: Editions Isis), pp. 337-60.
18. In spite of its great importance in the history of the region, Shaykh 'Ubaydullâh's rebellion has not been the subject of much serious scholarly attention yet. Besides an unpublished dissertation by Wadie Jwaideh (*The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, Syracuse University, 1960), the most useful material is to be found in: John J. Joseph, *The Nestorians and the Muslim neighbors* (Princeton University Press, 1961).
19. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).
20. This process is described and analyzed in my *Agha, Shaikh and State: the Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), pp. 224-34.
21. Studied in: van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, pp. 279-99.
22. See Hamid Algar, "Der Naksibendi-Orden in der republikanischen Türkei", in: Jochen Blaschke & Martin van Bruinessen (eds), *Islam und Politik in der Türkei* (Berlin: Parabolis, 1989), pp. 167-96; Thierry Zarcone, "Les Naksibendi et la République Turque: De la persécution au repositionnement théologique, politique et social (1925-1991)", *Turcica* XXIV (1992), 133-51.

Martin van Bruinessen *is a lecturer at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.*