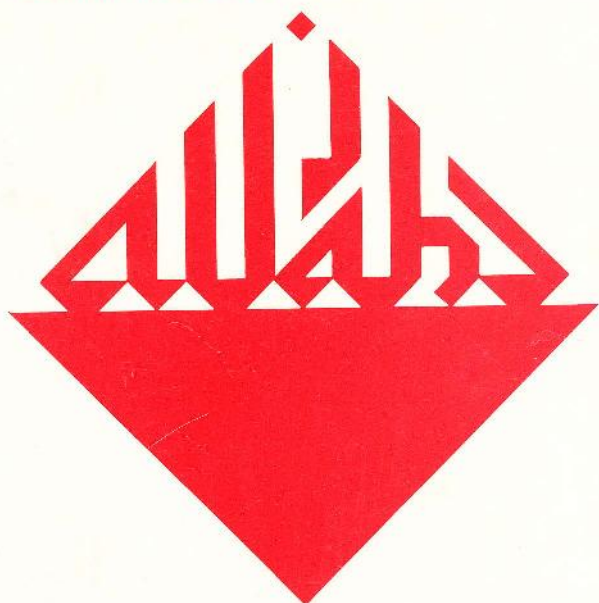


# STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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HADHRÂMÎ SCHOLARS IN THE MALAY-INDONESIAN DIASPORA:  
A Preliminary Study of Sayyid `Uthmân  
**Azyumardi Azra**

---

THE MUHAMMADIYAH DA'WAH AND ALLOCATIVE POLITICS IN THE NEW ORDER  
**M. Din Syamsuddin**

---

QUR'ÂN INTERPRETATIONS OF HAMZAH FANSURI (CA.1600)  
AND HAMKA (1908-1982): A Comparison  
**Karel Steenbrink**

---

ISLAM AND THE STATE IN INDONESIA:  
Munawir Sjadzali and the Development of a New Theological  
Underpinning of Political Islam  
**Bahtiar Effendy**

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## Hadhrâmî Scholars in the Malay-Indonesian Diaspora: A Preliminary Study of Sayyid 'Uthmân

**Abstraksi:** *Belum adanya studi mendalam tentang 'ulamâ' Hadhrâmî di kepulauan Nusantara, khususnya periode setelah abad 18 pada saat emigrasi orang-orang Hadhrâmî mencapai puncaknya, adalah sesuatu yang mengherankan. Memang ada catatan-catatan mengenai 'ulamâ' Hadhrâmî tertentu, tetapi tidak banyak memberikan informasi yang memadai. Catatan tersebut biasanya hanya memuat uraian sangat singkat dan tidak utuh mengenai keberadaan serta peran 'ulamâ' Hadhrâmî dalam sejarah Islam di kepulauan ini.*

*Tidaklah mengherankan, karena motivasi utama kedatangan sebagian besar orang-orang Hadhrâmî ke bagian dunia ini adalah berdagang, dan bukan menyebarkan agama. Dengan kata lain, kedatangan mereka lebih banyak didorong oleh keinginan untuk memperbaiki kondisi ekonomi dan memperoleh kekayaan. Maka kalau sebagian dari mereka ini kemudian menerima posisi tertentu, seperti qâdî atau imâm, kemungkinan besar lebih dimotivasi oleh kepentingan ekonomi untuk mendapatkan upah ketimbang kepentingan agama.*

*Sebagai 'ulamâ Hadhrâmî terkemuka Nusantara pada akhir abad 19 dan awal abad 20, al-Habib Sayyid 'Uthmân bin 'Abd Allâh bin 'Aqil bin Yahyâ al-'Alâwî al-Husainî (1822-1913), atau Sayyid 'Uthmân, bukanlah pengecualian dari kuatnya motif ekonomi-politik ini. Prestasi utamanya tidak terletak pada kehebatan karir intelektual agamanya, tetapi pada posisi pentingnya dalam administrasi pemerintah kolonial Belanda. Ia adalah muftî Batavia dan adviseur honorair (penasehat bayaran) pada pemerintah kolonial Belanda dalam urusan masyarakat Arab, yang seringkali juga mencakup masalah pribumi dan Islam pada umumnya. Ia juga kawan karib tokoh penting penasehat pemerintah kolonial dalam urusan Islam: Snouck Hurgronje, yang beranggapan bahwa Sayyid 'Uthmân adalah sahabat dekat pemerintah Belanda.*

*Meskipun Sayyid 'Uthmân tidak pernah menganggap rendah orang*

pribumi dalam tulisan-tulisannya, ia tetap berdiri sebagai pelopor paham kemurnian keturunan sayyid. Ia menentang keras perkawinan antara sharîfah dan lelaki yang bukan sayyid, baik Arab maupun non-Arab. Meskipun seorang sharîfah atau walinya telah berkenan mengawinkannya dengan lelaki non-sayyid, adalah kewajiban seluruh lelaki sayyid lainnya untuk menentang pernikahan tersebut, karena seorang sharîfah adalah khusus diperuntukkan bagi lelaki sayyid. Sayyid 'Uthmân mengklaim bahwa seluruh sayyid dan 'ulamâ' di Mekkah telah sepakat bahwa perkawinan antara seorang sharîfah dan lelaki non-sayyid tidak sah hukumnya (fasakh); kedua mempelai dalam perkawinan seperti ini harus dipisahkan, kalau perlu dengan cara kekerasan. Ia mengutip beberapa hadits serta pandangan 'ulamâ' ahl al-bayt yang menyatakan bahwa perkawinan antara sharîfah dan lelaki non-sayyid merupakan penghinaan terhadap Nabi Muhammad dan keturunannya. Hal ini akan membuat Nabi murka; dan Allah akan mengutuk mereka yang menghina Nabi. Maka 'ulamâ' ahl al-bayt menetapkan bahwa perkawinan antara sharîfah dan non-sayyid hukumnya harâm mutlaq.

Masalah ini sebenarnya bukan hal yang baru dan sikap Sayyid 'Uthmân sendiri juga tidak aneh. Namun tampaknya ia menjadi 'ulamâ' pertama yang membawa masalah ini ke dalam perbincangan agama di kepulauan ini. Dalam politik, Sayyid 'Uthmân cenderung akomodasionis terhadap kekuasaan pemerintah Belanda. Sikap ini tidak aneh pada diri Sayyid 'Uthmân, karena banyak kalangan Hadhrâmî yang juga menyetujui penguasaan wilayah Muslim oleh kekuasaan non-Muslim, termasuk negeri mereka sendiri, Hadhramawt. Kaum Hadhrâmî di Nusantara cenderung tidak memperdulikan penindasan Belanda terhadap Muslim pribumi, sepanjang kepentingan mereka tidak terancam.

Sayyid 'Uthmân terus terang menerima kolonisasi wilayah Muslim oleh non-Muslim; perhatian utamanya adalah menghindari kekacauan dan menjaga stabilitas hukum serta ketertiban. Anehnya, Sayyid 'Uthmân adalah pembela gigih keberadaan Sarekat Islam (SI), gerakan proto-nasionalis pertama di Indonesia, yang menentang status quo posisi ekonomi-politik pemerintah kolonial. Ia beranggapan bahwa kehadiran SI telah melahirkan intensifikasi penjabaran nilai-nilai Islam; SI juga telah mendorong perkembangan pengadaan fasilitas bagi kegiatan agama dan ekonomi umat Islam; dan SI telah pula mengurangi jumlah pencuri dan perampok. Tetapi, mengapa Sayyid 'Uthmân begitu gigih membela keberadaan SI, yang jelas-jelas menentang pemerintah kolonial Belanda? Mungkinkah sikapnya ini berkaitan dengan kenyataan bahwa banyak pendukung SI yang berasal dari pedagang keturunan Arab?

## العلماء الحضارم في الديسبورة (المواطن الملايو) الإندونيسي: دراسة تمهيدية عن السيد عثمان (١٨٢٢-١٩١٣ م)

مما يعجبنا أنه لا دراسة مكرّسة عن العلماء الحضارم في الأرخبيل، خاصة في عصر عقب القرن الثامن عشر الميلادي عندما كانت هجرة الحضارم تبلغ ذروتها. وعلى الرغم من وجود بعض الملاحظات لعالم من العلماء الحضارم، إلا أن تلك الملاحظات غير كافية، إذ أنها تناولت مباحث موجزة وبمجملة عن كيانهم ودورهم في مسار تاريخ الإسلام في الأرخبيل.

فلا غرو أن هجرة بعضهم إلى الأرخبيل كانت لدافع رئيسي، وهو التجارة وليس لنشر الدعوة الإسلامية. وبكلمات أخرى أن مجيئهم كان الدافع بالدرجة الأولى تحسين أحوالهم الاقتصادية وكسب الثروات المادية. فإذا كان بعضهم يتولّون مناصب دينية أو قاض، فإن دافعهم الأساسي إلى حدّ كبير هو المصالح الاقتصادية من أجل الحصول على المكافأة، وليس المصالح الدينية.

ويعدّ الحبيب السيد عثمان (١٨٢٢-١٩١٣)، كأحد العلماء الحضارم البارزين المقيمين بالأرخبيل في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر إلى أوائل القرن العشرين، عالماً ليس دافعه المتين إلا الدافع الاقتصادي والسياسي. وكان إنجازته للأعمال لا يقتصر على مهنته العلمية والدينية فحسب، وإنما يشمل منصبه الهامّ في إدارة الحكومة الهولندية المستعمرة. وعلى الرغم من أن السيد عثمان لم يكن يتهاون بأهل البلاد في مؤلفاته، فقد قام رائداً للحفاظ على أصالة ونقاء "سلالة السادة العلويين". فناصر بدرجة عنيفة الزواج بين الشريفة برجل غير منسوب إلى السادة الأشراف، على جميع الرجال من سلالة السادة يجب مقاومة تنفيذ ذلك الزواج، لأن الشريفة لا يليق لها النكاح إلا من رجل شريف مثلها. وقد ادّعى السيد عثمان أن جميع السادة والعلماء بمكّة المكرمة قد اتفقوا

على أن نكاح شريفة برجل غير سيد شريف مثلها باطل (فاسق)، بل ولا بد من تفريق بين الزوجين مهما كان الأمر حتى بالعنف إن اضطر إلى ذلك. وتأكيداً لرأيه استدلت السيد عثمان بعدة أحاديث وأقوال علماء أهل البيت بأن النكاح بين شريفة ورجل من غير السادة يعتبر إهانة للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم وأهل بيته وقربته المكرمين، مما يجعل النبي يغضب عليه؛ والله يلعن هؤلاء الذين يهينون ويدلّون نبيهم. فأجمع علماء أهل البيت على الزواج بين الشريفة وغير الشريف حكمه حرام مطلق.

لا يعتبر ذلك من الأمور الجديدة، فإن موقف السيد عثمان من ذلك الأمر ليس فريداً ولا منفرداً. غير أنه يبدو كان أول من أتى بتلك الفتوى إلى الأرحبيل ثم قامت الجادلات الدينية حول ذلك. وكان السيد عثمان يميل بدرجة كبيرة إلى التوفيق في السياسة إزاء مصالح سلطة الحكومة الهولندية. وإن موقفه المعير عن ذلك التوفيق ليس عجباً أو أمراً غريباً، لأن كثيراً من الحضارم اتفقوا على أن تسيطر السلطة غير الإسلامية على ولايات المسلمين، بما فيها بلادهم حضر موت نفسها.

قبل السيد عثمان بصراحة استعمار الولايات الإسلامية على أيدي غير المسلمين. فكان اعتناؤه الرئيسي هو التحنّب والتحرّر من عدم الاستقرار إلى جانب الحفاظ على استقرار الحكم والنظام الاستنصاريين. ومن الغريب أن السيد عثمان كان أحد أنصار تأسيس "شركة الإسلام" باعتبارها أولى حركة وطنية النزعة في إندونيسيا، إذ قامت لمقاومة الأمر الواقع *status quo* لأوضاع الحكومة الهولندية الاقتصادية منها والسياسية. وكان يفترض أن يكون كيان "شركة الإسلام" من أسهم تكتيف ظاهرة القيم الإسلامية في صورة من صور المسائل التطبيقية، كما أنها قد ساهم في إثارة التطورات لتوفير التسهيلات الاقتصادية والتجارية والمرافق الممهدة للأنشطة الدينية والاجتماعية للأمة الإسلامية. لماذا كان السيد عثمان يؤيد بكل قواه كيان تلك الشركة التي كانت تقاوم غاية المقاومة الحكومة الهولندية؟ فهل من الممكن أن يفسر بأن موقف السيد عثمان المزوج إنما يرتبط وثيقاً بالواقع الحالي بأن أنصار هذه الشركة أكثرهم من التجّار العرب أصلاً ونسباً؟ والله أعلم.

The Hadhrâmî diaspora in the Malay-Indonesian world has been a subject of several studies. The most important are L.C.W. Van den Berg's classic study, *Le Hadhramaut et les Colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indé* (1886); Syed Mohsen al-Sagoff's *The Al-Sagoff Family in Malaysia, AH 1240 (AD 1824) to AH 1382 (AD 1962)*; Mahayudin Haji Yahya's *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang* (1984); Hisyam Ahmad's *Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Kota Pekalongan* (1977); H.A. Talib's "Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Pekalongan: Studi tentang Asimilasi" (1977); and C. Vuldy's *Pekalongan, Batik et Islam dans une ville du nord Java* (1987).

It must be admitted, however, that all of these studies paid attention mainly to the social, economic and political conditions of the Hadhrâmîs in the archipelago. Some attention has been given to their religious life in general, particularly with regard to their special position, given their Arab origins, among the Malay-Indonesian Muslim population. Furthermore, so far as Hadhrâmî religious life is concerned, some later studies are devoted to the so-called "sayyid and non-sayyid" controversies among the Hadhrâmîs. These include Husain Haykal's "The Incident of Sala (Syekh Ahmad Syurkati and Sayyid's Leadership) (1986); and Huub de Jonge's "Discord and Solidarity among the Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies 1900-1942" (1993).

Thus, it may seem surprising that, to date, there is no single study devoted to Hadhrâmî scholars ('ulamâ') in the archipelago, particularly after the period of the eighteenth century, during which the emigration of the Hadhrâmîs to this part of the world began to gain momentum. There is of course some mention of certain Hadhrâmî 'ulamâ' in various studies mentioned earlier but they throw very little light on this matter. There is only a very brief mention and very sketchy account of the presence and role of Hadhrâmî 'ulamâ' in the historical course of Islam in the archipelago.

This paper is preliminary an attempt to fill this gap in information about Hadhrâmî scholars in the Malay-Indonesian world. Special attention will be given to Sayyid 'Uthmân, the most prominent Hadhrâmî scholar in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the archipelago.

### Predecessors of Hadhrâmî 'Ulamâ'

The history of Hadhrâmî 'ulamâ' in the early course of Islam in the archipelago is obscure. Although there has been a lot of discus-

sion of the role of the Arabs in the spread of Islam to this part of the world, there is no clear reference to the involvement of Hadhrâmî scholars either in the conversion of the local population to Islam nor in the development of Islamic learning in the area.

Despite this, however, it is interesting to note that a Hadhrâmî scholar named Sayyid Zayn bin 'Abd Allâh Alkaf, as cited by Muhammad al-Bâqir (1986: 45), maintained that Hadhrami 'ulamâ', or more precisely preachers, played a crucial role in the spread of Islam in the archipelago. Alkaf asserted that most of the prominent early preachers of Islam in Java, collectively known as the "Wali Sanga" ("Nine Saints") were in fact Hadhramis. They included Mawlana Malik Ibrahim, Sunan Ampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Drajat, Sunan Giri, Sunan Kudus and Sunan Gunung Jati. Hamka, the late head of the Council of Indonesian 'Ulamâ's, who had a special interest in Islamic history, without mentioning the genealogical origins of some of the Wali Sanga, also maintained that some descendants of Ahmad bin 'Isâ al-Muhâjir and Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Faqîh al-Muqaddam were 'ulamâ' who played an important role in the preaching of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world (Hamka, 1983: 406-7).

Considering the opposition of many Hadhrâmî scholars to Sufism, as we will elaborate upon further in due course, it is worth mentioning in passing that al-Faqîh al-Muqaddam was the first sayyid to turn to Sufism in the early 7th/13th century. To him is ascribed an injunction to the sayyids to abandon arms for the pursuit of religious and moral aims, and from him the 'Alâwî tarîqah of which he is the *qutb* (spiritual pole) has continued to the present day (Serjeant, 1956: 19).

Some of the Wali Sanga are known for their religious tendencies to Sufism; they even mixed it with local beliefs and practices. And, we are of course aware of the Arab origins of some of the Wali Sanga; but there is no hint whatsoever from other sources that they originated from the Hadhramawt. Local historiographies such as *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu* for instance, tell us about the Arabs who came to the archipelago to convert local rulers and their population to Islam; but they are said to have come from either Jeddah, Mecca or Baghdad, not from Hadhramawt (Azra, 1992: 35-8).

Thus, it is likely that Hadhrâmî scholars were not yet on the scene during this early history of Islam in the archipelago; or at least we do not have reliable accounts of their presence. In the seventeenth century, however, Hadhrâmî scholars began to appear in the picture.



The best known among them, though he was generally regarded as a "Malay" scholar, was Nûr al-Dîn bin 'Ali bin Hasanjî al-Humaydî al-'Aydarûsî al-Rânirî (d. 1068/1658). Al-Rânirî's father was among Hadhrâmî immigrants in Ranir, India, whereas his mother, it has been suggested, was a Malay. Prior to his coming to the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, his paternal uncle, Muhammad Jîlânî bin Hasan Muhammad al-Humaydî had also sojourned in Aceh between the years of 988-91/1580-83. Al-Rânirî was of course one of the most prominent 'ulamâ' in the whole of the archipelago in the seventeenth century; and he was also one of the most controversial in terms of his strong opposition regarding so-called "Wujûdiyyah" Sufism during his sojourn at the court of the Acehnese Sultanate (Azra, 1992: 346-484).

In the eighteenth century we encounter several Malay-Indonesian 'ulamâ' of Arab stock, though not necessarily of Hadhrâmî origins. One of them, a leading 'ulamâ' of the period, was Sayyid 'Abd al-Samad bin 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Jâwî, better known as 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbânî. Despite his *sayyid* title, Arabic accounts of his life mention no place of origin (al-Ahdal, 1979: 138-42; al-Baytar, 1963: II, 851-2), but a Malay source asserts that his father was a Yemeni and his mother a Palembang woman. With no explicit mention of his ethnic origin, we are on weak ground to say that al-Palimbânî was a real Hadhrâmî. Like al-Rânirî, al-Palimbânî has attracted a great deal of attention from many modern scholars and, therefore, there is no need to repeat lengthy discussion on their life and thought here.

We have little information on Hadhrâmî scholars in the subsequent periods despite the fact that the migration of the Hadhrâmîs in large numbers to the archipelago took place towards the end of the eighteenth century. As a result, they were able to establish some main "colonies" in Palembang, Pontianak, Batavia, Pekalongan, Surabaya, Sumenep, Kedah, Melaka and Penang. Some of the Hadhrâmî immigrants, who claimed to be *sayyid*, rose to important political positions in certain local courts in the archipelago (van den Berg, 1886: 104-22; de Vries, 1937: 145-7; Andaya, 1989: 44; Andaya and Ishii, 1992: 558).

Apart from their influence in the political field, it appears that there was no significant increase in the appearance of Hadhrâmî 'ulamâ' and, therefore, their role in the development of Islam in archipelago. This should not be a surprise, since the most important aim of Hadhrâmîs in general in coming to this part of the Muslim world was

to trade, not to proselytize Islam. In other words, the main motive to migrate was to improve their economic position and accumulate wealth. It may be, therefore, as van de Berg says, that if some of them in the archipelago accepted religious positions, such as *qâdî* or *imâm*, they did this not from religious motives, but for the salaries they received (Van den Berg, 1886: 123).

Van den Berg has listed several Arab 'ulamâ' from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, though not all of them were Hadhrâmî. The first Hadhrâmî 'ulamâ' was Sayyid Husayn bin Abu Bakr al-'Aydarus who died in 1798 in Batavia, where he taught for many years. It is reported that after his death he won a reputation as a man of *keramat* (Ar., *karâmah*, "miracles"). His grave, close to the mosque which was built after his death, became a place of religious pilgrimage (*ziyârah*), not only for Muslims but also for some *peranakan* Chinese in order to obtain blessings (Van den Berg, 1886: 162-3; Serjeant, 1957: 25). Van den Berg does not tell us why Sayyid Husayn was regarded as a man of *keramat*. This suggests that Sayyid Husayn may have been a sufi shaykh during his life time; for those who possess *keramat*, by and large, are sufi shaykhs who have achieved the lofty status of *wali Allah* (friend of God).

During his lifetime, it is also likely that Sayyid Husayn was visited by the great wandering Hadhrâmî scholar, 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Mustafâ al-'Aydârûs, who died in Egypt in 1194/1780. He was a teacher of many young 'ulamâ' in the Middle East; and he travelled to many parts of the Muslim world, including the archipelago. Apparently he was not interested in spending his scholarly career and the rest of his life in the Malay-Indonesian world, and instead returned to the Middle East (Azra, 1992: 359). This is also the case for Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Abu Bakr al-Habshî who came from Hadhrâmawt to Batavia in 1828 and returned to his homeland in 1853 (Van den Berg, 1886: 163).

Another Hadhrâmî scholar worth mentioning was Sâlim bin 'Abd Allâh bin Sumayr. He came from Hadhrâmawt via Singapore to Batavia in 1851. Like most other Hadhrâmîs, his immigration was mainly motivated by economic reasons. He had been living in Singapore for several years before he finally moved to Batavia where he died in 1270/1854. Ibn Sumayr earned his livelihood chiefly from trade; but he also spent his time in teaching and writing. One of his works was a little book entitled *Safinah al-Najâh* which deals mainly with various regulations of the *fiqh 'ibâdah*, that is, matters of prayers,

fasting, hajj pilgrimage, etc. This book appears to have had some popularity in the archipelago; it was among the books used in the *pesantrens* (Islamic traditional boarding schools) in Java and Madura in the nineteenth century (Van den Berg, 1886b).

According to Sayyid ‘Uthmân —about whom we will say more in a more detailed fashion in due course— when Ibn Sumayr was in Singapore he observed that many local Muslims were induced to enter the Naqshbandiyyah tariqah by Shaykh Ismâ‘îl, a Minangkabau sufi master who came from Mecca. Ibn Sumayr asserted that Ismâ‘îl al-Minangkabawi was wrong for having taught Islamic mystical teachings to common Muslims who had allegedly not fulfilled certain requirements to enter the tariqah. In order to counter al-Minangkabawi’s activities, in 1269 Ibn Sumayr wrote a special work which was later expanded by Sayyid ‘Uthmân himself. We cannot find this Ibn Sumayr work but according to Sayyid ‘Uthmân, in it Ibn Sumayr delineates not only some proper ways to enter the tariqahs, but also some distinctions between true and false tariqahs (Sayyid ‘Uthmân, n.d. [a]: 2-3; 1891: 9). As far as Ibn Sumayr’s attitude to Sufism is concerned, he was apparently not content with only writing that book. He even carried out a kind of “heresy hunt” against those who spread and preached tariqahs to common Muslims (Van den Berg, 1886: 164; Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 82). This reminds one of similar “heresy hunts” against the Wujûdiyyah followers in Aceh during the time of al-Rânirî’s sojourn in the seventeenth century.

### Sayyid ‘Uthmân (1238-1331/1822-1913)

#### Betawi Muftî and adviser Honorair: A Brief Biography

There is no doubt that the most prominent Hadhrami scholar in the archipelago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was Sayyid ‘Uthmân whose name has been mentioned earlier. His prominence lies not only in his extraordinary scholarly career but also in his important position in the Dutch colonial administration in the Netherlands East Indies.

According to a short biography, published in 1353/1933, which was compiled from other biographies, the *Qamar al-Zaman* and *Sulûh al-Zaman*, Sayyid ‘Uthmân was the mufti of Betawi (Batavia) (Plano Sayyid ‘Uthmân). There is no indication however, whether or not his lofty religious position as “*mufti Betawi*”, confirmed by the Dutch, was also recognized by other leading ‘ulamâ’, especially Malay-Indo-

nesian 'ulamâ', during that period. Besides from this, he occupied a special place in the Dutch colonial administration. He was an *advisieur honorair* to the Dutch East Indies government for Arab affairs which in fact often included native and Islamic affairs as well. He was a close friend of the famous Snouck Hurgronje; and the latter rightly claims that Sayyid 'Uthmân was "*een Arabisch bondgenoot der Nederlandsche regeering*" (an Arab ally for the Netherlands East Indies government).

Al-Habîb Sayyid 'Uthmân bin 'Abd Allâh bin 'Aqil bin Yahyâ al-'Alâwî al-Husaynî, as his son 'Alî bin 'Alwî bin 'Uthmân bin Yahyâ tells us in the *Hikayat Qamar al-Zaman*, a biographical account of his father, was born in Pekojan, Batavia, in 1238/1882. His father was Sayyid 'Abd Allâh bin 'Aqil bin 'Umar bin Yahyâ, who was born in Mecca of Hadhrami stock. Unfortunately none of his biographical accounts provide us with information about exactly where in the Hadhramawt he came from. His mother, Amînah, was a daughter of Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Ahmad al-Misrî ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 2; Plano Sayyid 'Uthmân; Steenbrink, 1984: 134).

A passing note should be made of Sayyid 'Uthmân's maternal grandfather, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Misrî. As his *laqab* indicates he was of Egyptian not of Hadhramawt origin ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 3; Plano Sayyid 'Uthmân). According to Van den Berg, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân first came to Palembang and Padang to trade, but later on he made Petamburan, Batavia, his residence. In Petamburan he bought a substantial piece of land, where he built a mosque. He then withdrew from trade and devoted himself to Islamic learning instead. He was said to be an expert in the field of astronomy (*ilm al-falâk*) and astrology. With his expertise in astronomy, he devoted himself to correcting the direction of *qiblah* of some mosques in Palembang. Despite the controversies resulted from his correction of the *qiblah* direction of the mosques, he was respected by the Dutch authorities in Batavia. When he died in 1847, he was buried in the yard of the mosque he had founded (Van den Berg, 1886: 163-5; Snouck Hurgronje, 1991: 900-1).

It was 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Misrî who took over the responsibility of raising Sayyid 'Uthmân after his father returned to Mecca when he was 3 years old. Therefore, Sayyid 'Uthmân acquired his early Islamic education from his grandfather. He was said to have been 18 years old when his grandfather died. He then decided for himself to

travel to Mecca to meet his father and to "complete his Islam", that is, to make the hajj pilgrimage, the fifth or the last pillar of Islam. After the pilgrimage, however, he prolonged his stay in Mecca to study, mostly with his father and Sayyid Ahmad Dahlân, a well-known Shâfi'ite *Muftî* and historian of Mecca ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 3-4; Plano Sayyid 'Uthmân; Steenbrink, 1984: 135; cf. Snouck Hurgronje, 1887).

After having studied in Mecca for 7 years, Sayyid 'Uthmân returned to his land of origin, Hadhramawt, where he studied with several leading 'ulamâ' such as Habîb 'Abd Allâh bin Husayn bin Tâhir, Habîb 'Abd Allâh bin 'Umar bin Yahyâ, Habîb Hasan bin Sâlih al-Bahr, Habîb 'Alâwî bin Saqqâf al-Jufrî and others. It is said that he spent most of his time studying. At the request of one of his teachers he married a *sbarîfab*. But when some of his teachers died, he felt uneasy about staying longer in the Hadhramawt. Thus, he returned to Mecca and later also went to Medina ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 3-4; Plano Sayyid 'Uthmân).

Like many 'ulamâ' in the history of Islamic learning, Sayyid 'Uthmân travelled a great deal. From Medina he went to Dimyat, Egypt, the homeland of his mother, looking for his family there. He stayed in Egypt for eight months, studying with unnamed teachers and getting married. Then he travelled to Tunis, Morocco and Algeria where he stayed for 5 and 7 months respectively. In this area he visited such towns as Marrakesh and Fez, where he studied both exoteric (*zâhir*) and esoteric (*bâtin*) sciences. He also established contacts and relationship with some leading 'ulamâ' of the region, including the *Muftî* of Tunis. Then he sailed to Istanbul where he stayed for 3 months. In Istanbul he was said to have met the *Muftî* and *Shaykh al-Islâm*, and submitted a letter from the Pasha of Medina to the latter. Later he travelled to Palestine, Syria and Hadhramawt. Finally he returned to Batavia via Singapore in 1279/1862 and spent the rest of his career and life there. He died at an advanced age in 1331/1931 ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân 1343/1924: 6-9; Plano Sayyid 'Uthmân).

The biographical accounts of Sayyid 'Uthmân claim that the main purpose of these travels and sojourns was to pursue Islamic knowledge. However, there is no information about his teachers in Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, Istanbul and Syria. Therefore, most likely what he did at that time was to exchange information on various religious matters and make contacts with some high ranking 'ulamâ'

and government officials. This was particularly true when he was in Tunis, where he stayed in the house of *wazîr*. In some instances, as his son 'Alî says, he travelled for leisure (*meliburkan hatinya*) ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân 1343/1924: 5, 6, 8).

Returning to Indonesia, Sayyid 'Uthmân devoted his life to teaching, preaching and writing. After only three months in Batavia, he was said to be one of the most sought after teachers in Batavia. Not least important, 'Abd al-Ghânî Bîmâ, a "graduate" of Mecca, helped him to teach at the Pekojan Mosque, the center of Sayyid 'Uthmân's later activities ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 9-10). While it would be interesting to know the ethnic composition of his students—whether most of them were Malay-Indonesians or Hadhramis—unfortunately all the sources are silent on this point.

This last point might be important. Even though nowhere in his works does Sayyid 'Uthmân look down upon indigenous Muslims, he was an ardent defender of purity of sayyid blood. In his work *Kitâb al-Qawânîn al-Shar'iyyah li 'Ahl al-Majâlis al-Hukûmiyyah wa al-Ifîâ'iyyah* (1312), when discussing the *kafâ'ah* (equality of rank) issue between marriage partners, Sayyid 'Uthmân strongly opposed marriages between *sharîfah* and non-sayyid men, either Arab or non-Arab. Even though a *sharîfah* or her wali (guardian) is willing for her to marry a non-sayyid man, it is the obligation of all other sayyids to oppose that marriage, for a *sharîfah* is exclusively reserved for a sayyid. Sayyid 'Uthmân claimed that all sayyids and 'ulamâ' in Mecca had declared that a marriage between a *sharîfah* and non-sayyid man was null and void (*faskh*); the couple involved in a marriage of this kind should be separated, if necessary by force. Sayyid 'Uthmân puts forward lengthy arguments, citing some hadîths and authorities among Hadhrâmî and Ahl al-Bayt 'ulamâ', that marriage between a *sharîfah* and non-sayyid man is a humiliation to the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fâtimah and their descendants. It will make the Prophet angry; and God will curse those who humiliate the Prophet. Therefore, all the Ahl al-Bayt 'ulamâ' have ruled that it is absolutely unlawful (*Harâm mutlaq*) for non-sayyids to marry *sharîfah* (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1312: 97-101).

The issue was not new and neither Sayyid 'Uthmân's position on it was not unique. According to Searjeant, the *kafâ'ah* issue was an old one among the Hadhrâmîs. All Hadhrâmî sayyids were united that there must be *kafâ'ah* between sayyid couples; and wherever they went

they sought to maintain their interpretation of *kafâ'ah* (Serjeant, 1957: 21-3).

It appears that Sayyid 'Uthmân was the first scholar who brought the issue of *kafâ'ah* into the discourse of Islam in the archipelago. His writings on this issue is the first found in Islamic literature in the archipelago. Several studies devoted to the sayyid controversies among the Hadhrâmis, noted above, have failed to include Sayyid 'Uthmân's response to this particular matter.

Sayyid 'Uthmân was not a quietist. He was involved in various polemics with other scholars in both religious and political matters. He was quick to respond to matters proposed by others with which he disagreed. His strongest attack and criticism —as will be shown later— were directed towards Shaykh Ismâ'îl al-Minangkabâwî and Shaykh Sulaimân al-Affandî, both living mostly in Mecca, whom he held responsible for inducting common people into tarîqahs; and he virtually singles out the Naqsabandiyyah tarîqah as having led Muslims astray. He was also involved in long debates with Shaykh Ahmad Khâtib al-Minangkabâwî on the issue of "two mosques" in Palembang.

Not least important, Sayyid 'Uthmân was also very critical of the Wahhâbîs. He is reported to have written a special work in 1909 entitled *I'ânah al-Mustarshidîn 'alâ 'Ijtinâb al-Bida' fi al-Dîn*, in which he condemns Wahhâbî religious teachings and attitudes. He describes Wahhâbism as the most horrible *firaq* (splinter group) (Serjeant, 1957: 21; Ende, 1973: 1, 3-4). One might wonder why he does not include this work in the list of his works written by himself. But in his *Mustika Pengaruh buat Menyembuhkan Penyakit Keliru* (n.d. [c]: 11), he considers the Wahhâbîs to be the most sinful people, who have made a terrible error. Furthermore, his son, 'Alî, relates that his father wrote the *I'ânah al-Mustarshidîn* as a response to articles published in *al-Manâr*, Cairo, under the editorship of Rashid Rida, which tended to be on the side of the Wahhâbîs, especially on the issue of the sayyid's special position. 'Alî calls *al-Manâr's* attack on the sayyid's position one of the ten calamities (*bencana*) faced by his father in his life. According to 'Alî, *al-Manâr* was the most malicious [journal] for its humiliation of sayyids ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 20-3; cf. Ende, 1973: 13-5).

Sayyid 'Uthmân records some of the polemics in his writings devoted to answering or arguing particular matters that he disagreed with. But he also wrote a good number of non-polemical works, in

particular dealing with the *sharī'ah* or *fiqh*. The fact that he owned a lithographic printer made it possible for him to publish various works whenever he wished to.

As a writer, according to a list of his works written by himself, he composed around 100 works, mostly in Malay and only a few in Arabic. Most of Sayyid 'Uthmân's works are short treatises dealing with matters regarding *fiqh*—both *'ibâdah* (rituals) and *mu'âmalah* (religio-social matters like marriage and inheritance), *kalâm* (theology), *tawhîd* (knowledge on the Unity of God), *akhlâq* (ethics), Sufism, "histories" of some of the prophets, *tafsîr* (commentaries) on certain chapters of the Qur'an, hadiths, *du'â* (supplication) and Arabic (Sayyid 'Uthmân, n.d. [b]: 1-16; Van den Berg, 1886: 165-7; Brill Catalogue, 1980: 1-6).

Van den Berg (1886: 164) claims that Sayyid 'Uthmân was regarded as a respected authority on the *sharī'ah* and *kalâm* ("theology") not only by the Hadhrâmîs but also by some Indonesian Muslims. It is difficult, however, to gauge the influence of Sayyid 'Uthmân among Indonesian Muslims, or even among Hâdhramîs. Al-Bâqir, in his long essay on the 'Alâwiyyîn and their role in the history of Islam in Indonesia, has nothing to say about Sayyid 'Uthmân. One might wonder why he makes no mention at all of Sayyid 'Uthmân as it is unlikely that he was unaware of Sayyid 'Uthmân's scholarship and learning. Therefore, he was perhaps inflicted by some kind of bad feeling which, as Snouck Hurgronje says, was prevalent even among the Hâdhramîs, towards Sayyid 'Uthmân because of his collaboration with the Dutch East Indies government (Snouck Hurgronje, 1994: 1631-2).

Sayyid 'Uthmân was officially appointed by the Dutch as an *adviseur honorair voor Arabische zaken* on 20 June, 1889. His appointment to this post was undoubtedly recommended by Snouck Hurgronje who appeared to have known him well before this Dutch scholar came to Indonesia. Snouck Hurgronje, who came initially as a researcher, reported to the Dutch authorities in Batavia after only 40 days in Indonesia that Sayyid 'Uthmân was willing to help him in his research. It is interesting to note that as an honorary adviser, Sayyid 'Uthmân was not on the official payroll. Instead he was paid fl. 100 a month through Snouck Hurgronje for his services in providing information to the Dutch scholar on Islamic developments in the area. In addition to that monthly allowance, Sayyid 'Uthmân reportedly received much larger amounts of money as contributions to cover some of his expenses in producing publications considered favorable to the



maintenance of the political *status quo* (*Ibid*, 1623-4, 1626-7, 1634-5; Steenbrink, 1984: 60, 136).

### Political Attitude: *Jibâd is Ghurûr*

The accommodationist attitude of Sayyid 'Uthmân to the Dutch is not unique. Many important works on the Hâdhramîs have shown that in the Dutch East Indies they were generally favorable to non-Muslim rule over Muslim lands, even over their own homeland, the Hadhramawt. Conversely most of them were said to have been indifferent to political matters; the Hâdhramîs in the Dutch East Indies ignored Dutch oppression of indigenous Muslims as long as their interests were not in jeopardy. They almost always took the side of the Dutch in their conflicts and their wars against native Muslims (Van den Berg, 1886: 173-83; Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 79; de Vries, 1937: 148). Van den Berg has a long list of leading Hâdhramî *sayyids* who supported the Dutch in their attempts to suppress various riots and rebellions among local Muslims throughout the Indies. They included Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Abû Bakr al-Qadrî in Sumba, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Hâmid al-Qadrî in Banjarmasin, Sayyid 'Abd Allâh bin Mansûr al-'Aydârûs in Batavia, Sayyid Abû Bakr in Palembang and Sayyid 'Umar al-Habshî in Surabaya. In many cases they were awarded honorary titles by the Dutch for their services (van den Berg, 1886: 180-2).

But there were a few Hâdhramî leaders who supported their Indonesian co-religionists in their conflicts with the Dutch. The best known was Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmân bin Muhammad al-Zâhir in Aceh. After carrying out a series of long diplomatic attempts to procure the survival of the Acehnes Sultanate, he finally surrendered to the Dutch (Reid, 1972: 37-59; Alexander, 1880: 1008-20). But his support of the Acehnes was opposed by another Hâdhramî, Sayyid Muhammad bin Abû Bakr 'Aydîd, who rendered a great service to the Dutch in their war against the Acehnes. 'Aydîd later moved from Aceh to Batavia, where he was appointed as an "Arab captain"; and in 1877 the Dutch government awarded him the honorary titles of "major" and "*pangeran*" (Van den Berg, 1886: 180).

Thus the accommodationist attitude of Sayyid 'Uthmân has historical precedents. Not only that, Snouck Hurgronje argues that it was Sayyid 'Uthmân's erudition in Islamic learning that allowed him to accept the non-Muslim colonization of Muslim countries. Sayyid

'Uthmân even regarded this as a historical necessity (Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 79).

Snouck Hurgronje is correct. Sayyid 'Uthmân explicitly accepts the colonization of Muslim lands by non-Muslims in his discussion of the appointment of Muslim judges (*qâdîs*) according to the precepts of the *sharî'ah*. In his fairly long work entitled *Kitâb al-Qawânîn al-Shar'iyyah li Abl al-Majâlis al-Hukûmiyyah wa al-Iftâ'iyyah* (1312), in which he gives detailed guidance for *qâdîs* in the administration of Islamic courts (*priesterraad*), Sayyid 'Uthmân states that they should be appointed by rulers or their representatives. Citing the *Tuhfat al-Mawâlî li al-Qâdî* he further states that it is perfectly permissible from the *sharî'ah*'s point of view for them to be appointed by non-Muslim rulers. If no ruler exists then the appointment of the *qâdîs* is made by the *Ahl al-Hall wa al-'Aqd* (influential people) who have been chosen by the Muslim population from among the 'ulamâ', tribal chiefs and other important persons (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1312: 25).

Another reason for Sayyid 'Uthmân's accommodationist attitude is given by 'Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân. He maintains that one of his father's main concerns was the prevention of political disruption and the maintenance of law and order ('Alî bin Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1343/1924: 21). Therefore, it is not surprising that Sayyid 'Uthmân did not sanction rebellion or war (*jihâd*) against the Dutch.

As a result, as Steenbrink points out, it may be quite reasonable to some people, especially native Indonesian Muslims, to accuse Sayyid 'Uthmân of being a Dutch spy or even of selling Islam for his own purposes (Steenbrink, 1984: 136). Sayyid 'Uthmân's example, from the point of view of Indonesian Muslims during his time, may have contributed to what Van den Berg calls "open antipathy" towards the Arabs. He further writes that the more learned the native 'ulamâ' were the more they kept their distance from the Hadhrâmîs (1886: 162; cf. Snouck Hurgronje, 1994: 1634).

Sayyid 'Uthmân's strong opposition to *jihâd* was timely indeed for the Dutch. It is worth recalling that during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the appeal for *jihad* against the Dutch was gaining momentum as a result of this intensification of Islamic feeling among Indonesian Muslims. One of the peaks of the intensification was the so-called "peasants" rebellion of Banten in 1888. Kartodirdjo has convincingly shown that one of the main factors of the Bantenese *jihâd* was the religious revival in the area as indicated by the ever

growing numbers of hajjis who spread *Sufi tariqahs* and established *pesantrens* after their return to their villages from the pilgrimage (Kartodirdjo, 1966).

It is not clear whether or not it was in response to the Bantenese jihâd that Sayyid 'Uthmân in his *Minhaj al-Istiqâmah fi al-Dîn bi al-Salâmah* published in 1307/1889-90, touched on the issue of jihâd. But he says explicitly that jihâd as carried out in Banten was a *ghurûr* (misunderstanding) of the true teachings of Islam; the real meaning of jihâd had been misunderstood by what he calls *orang-orang yang jâhil pada bab jihâd* (people ignorant on matters of jihâd). As a result, they believe that the jihâd they had launched was in accordance with Islamic teachings on holy wars. In fact, what they pursued, according to Sayyid 'Uthmân, was not true jihâd, but simply disruption and disorder of peaceful life (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 24-5).

In Sayyid 'Uthmân's view, furthermore, the jihâd which had been launched by these *ghurûr* Muslims led only to the misery of the whole population both individually and socially. What they had done was not sanctioned by the true teachings of *shari'ah* about jihâd. They had even dishonored the purity of Islam. He goes even further to accuse those who waged jihâd of following *shaytân* (evil), for they had discredited the true and genuine teachings of Islam by launching jihâd without fulfilling its necessary requirements. The *shari'ah* had laid down that there are several requirements and conditions. If not all of the requirements are met then the jihâd is unlawful (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 24).

Based on such arguments, Sayyid 'Uthmân explicitly states that political disorder and rebellions in Cilegon (Banten) and Bekasi were not jihâd or *perang sabil* (holy wars). On the contrary they contradicted the precepts of the *shari'ah*. For that reason, those who were involved in this kind of jihâd were subject to severe punishment by the legal authorities. Here Sayyid 'Uthmân cites a case in Jeddah in 1858, where the ruler punished a number of Muslims who were held responsible for the killing of some Christians in the name of [unlawful] jihâd (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 24).

Sayyid 'Uthmân further argues that none of the many great 'ulamâ' either of Arab origin who came to the archipelago or of Javanese and Malay origin from time immemorial said anything about jihâd. Despite their erudition in Islamic teachings, they did not teach Muslims in this region to wage jihâd against unbelievers. What they did teach

was how to perform correctly all the obligatory rituals of Islam, and to conduct marriage and the division of inheritance according to the *shari'ah*. If Muslims fully follow the teachings and examples of these great 'ulamâ' then they would live happy lives (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 25).

Sayyid 'Uthmân was wrong on these points. He does seem to have read many works of earlier Malay-Indonesian 'ulamâ', for he refers to some of them in his own works. It is odd, therefore, that he should assert that none of them wrote about jihâd. 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbânî, for instance, is widely known to have appealed to the Mataram sultan in Java to lead a jihâd against the Dutch who increasingly threatened Muslims in this region. He even wrote a special work on the virtue of jihâd (*Faddâ'il al-Jihâd*). Daud bin 'Abd Allâh al-Patânî, another leading Malay scholar in the early nineteenth century is also known to have paid special attention to the issue of jihâd in his many fiqh books (Azra, 1992: 551-9).

So why was Sayyid 'Uthmân so bitter towards Muslims who opposed the rule of the unbelievers—in this case, the Dutch—by launching jihâd? Snouck Hurgronje suggests that the reason is that like many other Hadhrâmî *sayyids*, Sayyid 'Uthmân committed himself only to the strict rules of the *shari'ah* (Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 78). But it is also clear that Sayyid 'Uthmân understood and propagated the *shari'ah* in a very narrow sense. In his view, *shari'ah* was concerned only with rituals; like his close friend, Snouck Hurgronje, he denied any political impulse to the *shari'ah*.

But does this mean that Sayyid 'Uthmân was a non-political person? His personal stand on the issue of unbeliever rulers and of jihâd makes it clear that he was not a non-political person at all. In other words, he was not indifferent as far as political issues are concerned.

This is also obvious in his response to the phenomenal rise of the Sarekat Islam (SI —Islamic Association), the first Islamic proto-nationalist movement in Indonesia, which was founded in 1911. For some, Sayyid 'Uthmân's response to the SI might be surprising. Sayyid 'Uthmân was or could be a close ally of the Dutch, but he made no secret that he was also an ardent defender of the SI, which was, from its establishment, a challenge or even a real menace to the colonial political economic *status quo*. But one may still wonder, why did Sayyid 'Uthmân defend the SI so passionately? Does it have something to do with the fact that among the original supporters of the SI there were

Arab merchants?

Sayyid 'Uthmân wrote at least two works specifically devoted to defending the SI against its opponents: *Sinar Isterlam pada Menyatakan Kebenaran Syarikat Islam* (16pp), and *Selampai Tersulam pada Menyatakan Kebajikan Syarikat Islam* (8pp), both published in 1331. It seems that he wrote the *Selampai Tersulam* first, since his arguments in it are concise. In contrast, he provides quite extensive religious arguments in the second work.

As he explained in his introduction to *Sinar Isterlam*, he wrote this in response to questions posed to him, or more properly, to allegations made by some people against the SI. There were three allegations; firstly, that the SI had gone religiously astray; secondly, that the SI [members] drank Christian water [sic., but most likely alcohol], or followed the way of Christians; and lastly, that the SI created only evil among the population. With respect to these allegations, Sayyid 'Uthmân was asked to give religious consideration (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1331 a: 2).

Sayyid 'Uthmân maintained that the rise of the SI was in accordance with Islamic injunctions, for one of its aims was to enjoin people to do good and prevent evil. It was an organization of mutual help (*ta'âwun*). There was nothing in the SI that would lead Muslims to crime and evil. Furthermore the constitution of the SI concerned with government regulations. He concluded that Muslims who understood Islamic teachings properly would happily accept the SI; only wicked people would give the SI a bad name (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1331 b: 4-6).

Sayyid 'Uthmân devotes a substantial part of the *Sinar Interlam* to providing religious arguments based on the Qur'ân and Hadîth in his defense of the SI. For instance, he cites a verse of the Qur'ân, *ta'âwanû 'alâ al-birr wa al-taqwâ* to support his argument that the SI was a vehicle for mutual benefit among Muslims. Thus, the SI was an implementation of Islamic teachings. Becoming more critical of the opponents of the SI, Sayyid 'Uthmân maintains that the allegations against the SI were based not on proper understanding of Islam, but on *kejahilan* (ignorance). Those who accused the SI of evil were, in his opinion, seriously wrong (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1331 a: 4-5, 10).

As for allegation that the SI had followed the Christians, Sayyid 'Uthmân cited a famous hadîth of the Prophet Muhammad which states that those who accuse other Muslims of being unbelievers (*kâfir*) could themselves be *kâfirs* (Sayyid 'Uthmân, *ibid*: 11).

In his fervent defense of the SI, Sayyid 'Uthmân concluded that the rise of the SI had resulted, firstly, in the intensification of practical implementation of Islamic teaching (that is, more people performed prayers and other obligatory rituals); secondly, in the establishment of more buildings devoted to religious purposes and more Muslim shops; and lastly, in the decrease of thieves and robberies. Finally, he prayed for the longlasting life of the SI and improvement of its good deeds (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1331 a: 12; 1331 b: 8).

### ***Bid'abs*: Opposition to Local Beliefs and Practices**

As suggested earlier, Sayyid 'Uthmân was a very *sharî'ah*-oriented *âlim*, or even a puritanist scholar, as we will see shortly. One may clearly see this in the bibliography of his works, a good part of which deals with the intricacies of the *sharî'ah*, or more precisely *fiqh*. But, as a puritanist, Sayyid 'Uthmân was concerned not only with *fiqh*, but also with the fundamentals of Islamic belief (*'aqîdah*).

With these distinctive characteristics, it is not surprising that Sayyid 'Uthmân was a bitter enemy of all things he considered *bid'abs* [wicked, unlawful] (religious innovations) (Cf. Fierro, 1992). He strongly condemned a good number of Islamic beliefs and practices originating either from innovatory Islamic practices or from local traditional beliefs and practices. For this purpose he devotes a long section of his *Minhâj al-Istiqâmah*, referred to earlier, to matters perceived to be *bid'abs*.

The starting point of Sayyid 'Uthmân's opposition to various kinds of unwarranted *bid'abs* —to be explained shortly— was the obligation for Muslims to follow the correct and true path of the Prophet Muhammad in every act of their religious rituals and devotion. He points out that by following (*mutâba'ah*) the Prophet, Muslims will keep themselves apart from all unacceptable *bid'abs*. *Mutâba'ah* to the Prophet will prevent Muslims from going astray (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 6-10).

Then Sayyid 'Uthmân cites a famous hadîth of the Prophet: *kullu bid'ah dalâlah wa kull dalâlah fi al-nâr*, every *bid'ah* is error and every error is in hell. Then he dwells on explaining that those who create *bid'abs* are condemned by God, angels and pious people and that their works (*'amal*) will not be accepted by God and, as a result, they will be sent to hell. Sayyid 'Uthmân goes on to quote Shaykh Muhammad Arshad al-Banjârî, a leading Malay-Indonesian *âlim* in the eighteenth

century who, in his book *Tuhfat al-Râghibîn*, states that the people of bid'ah (*ahl al-bid'ah*) are the most wicked creation on earth (ibid: 12).

Before we go much further on Sayyid 'Uthmân's condemnation of Muslims who practised bid'ahs, it is important to delineate his detailed exposition of various kinds of bid'ahs. Unlike the widely held distinction among Muslims that bid'ahs are of two kinds, that is, *bid'ah hasanah* (good or lawful innovation), and *bid'ah dalâlah* (wicked or unlawful innovation), Sayyid 'Uthmân divides bid'ahs into five kinds.

The first are the forbidden bid'ahs (*bid'ah yang harâm*) which will lead those Muslims who practise them to unbelief (*kufûr*) and heresy (*murtad*). The *bid'ah harâm* include every innovation or addition to Islamic rituals that contradicts the Qur'ân, Hadîth, *Ijmâ'* (consensus) and *âthâr* (practices) of the companions and successors of the Prophet Muhammad (Ibid: 14).

The second are the reprehensible bid'ahs (*bid'ah yang makrûh*), that is, all practices that are *makrûh* according to the *sharî'ah*. Citing the *Fath al-Mubîn* of Ibn Hajar, Sayyid 'Uthmân notes that among bid'ahs of this kind are decorating mosques or the Qur'ân with artistic flowery motifs and the like. He goes on to quote the *Nûr al-Zullâm* of Shaykh Nûrî al-Bantânî (?) which states that among the *bid'ah makrûh* is to regard a particular day as religiously better than other days of the week (Ibid: 15).

The third are the permissible bid'ahs (*bid'ah yang mubâh*). The bid'ah of this type include having delicious meals or drinks, or widening the sleeves of one's shirt. All these practices, according to Sayyid 'Uthmân, did not exist during the Prophet's lifetime; and it is permissible for Muslims to enjoy delicious meals or drinks, or to widen the sleeves of their shirts (Ibid: 15-6).

The fourth are the recommended bid'ahs (*bid'ah yang sunnah*) which, in Sayyid 'Uthmân's view, are the same as the *bid'ah hasanah*. Among bid'ahs of this kind are establishing *waqf* houses for *sûffis* and seekers of knowledge; and other good deeds that were not practised during the time of the Prophet (Ibid: 16).

The last type, which are very interesting, are the obligatory bid'ah (*bid'ah yang wajib*). Sayyid 'Uthmân argues that bid'ah of this type are among the *fard al-kifâyah* (collective obligations) of Islamic devotion and rituals. The *bid'ah wâjib* includes deeds like studying the *'ilm al-'âlât*, such as Arabic grammar, for the purpose of understanding the Qur'ân; and opposing *Ahl al-Bid'ahs* such as the Qadârîtes, Jabârites,

Murji'ites and Mujassimites (Ibid: 17).

More interesting still in Sayyid 'Uthmân's discourse about bid'ah is his long list of *bid'ah harâm*. He devotes a special chapter of the work to giving detailed examples of forbidden bid'ahs which were (as some still are) practised by some Muslims in the archipelago. In this respect, Sayyid 'Uthmân's account of *bid'ah harâm* is a reflection of the prevalence of un-Islamic beliefs and practises among Muslims in the Malay-Indonesian world during his time.

Sayyid 'Uthmân lists 22 examples of prohibited *bid'ahs* practised on various occasions in Muslim personal and social lives. They include belief in auspicious days for marriage, building a house or travel; belief in *dukun* (local traditional healer or shaman), *jimat* (amulets) and *jampi* (un-Islamic supplication); presentation of *sesajen* (sacrifice in the form of flowers or meals) to *makhluk halus* (unseen beings); sacrifice of the heads of animals as *sadaqah bumi* (earth giving); prevention of rain by dukuns; reading books written by the *Ahl al-Bid'ah* or by those acclaimed to the *Ahl al-Tarîqah* (people of the *Tarîqah* of Sufism) belief in the *hikayat* (traditional pseudo-historical narratives) such as the *Hikayat Nabi Bercukur*, *Hikayat Muhammad 'Ali Hanafiyah* or *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*; competitions of Qur'ân recitals according to the seven methods of recital (*qirâ'ât al-sab'ah*); division of inheritance (*pusaka*) according to local *adat* (customary laws) instead of according to Islamic law; prolongation of discussion on *tawhîd* with ignorant people (*jâhil*), etc.

What is interesting in Sayyid 'Uthmân's list of the forbidden *bid'ahs* is the absence of such hotly debated issues —whether or not they are *bid'ahs*— that occurred in the immediately subsequent periods of Islamic history in the archipelago, especially among the “modernists” (represented by the Muhammadiyah) and the “traditionalists” (represented by the Nahdatul 'Ulama —NU), such as the *qunût* (additional supplication in the Subh prayer), the *talqîn* (teaching the newly buried Muslim how to answer questions posed by angels in his burial place), or the number of *raka'ât* (sections in the prayer) of the *Tarâwîh* prayer. All the examples given by Sayyid 'Uthmân are primarily not to do with fiqh issues as such but rather with the *'aqîdah* (fundamental beliefs) of being Muslim. In other words, so far as his discussion of the *bid'ah harâm* is concerned, Sayyid 'Uthmân's main objective is to purify Muslims' *'aqîdah* from any mixture of un-Islamic beliefs, which can result in associationism (*shirk*). *Shirk* is, of course, one of the car-



dinal sins in Islam.

### The *Ahl al-Tarîqah*: Criticism of Sufism

As a puritan Sayyid ‘Uthmân has very strong reservations about, not to say opposition to, Sufism. In many of his writings he devotes pages and pages to criticizing people who claim themselves to be or are regarded by others as *ahl al-tarîqah*—people of mystical brotherhoods. In the *Minhâj al-Istiqâmah*, for instance, he argues that people who claim to be *ahl al-tarîqah* are in fact *ahl al-bid’ah*. He includes the practices of *ahl al-tarîqah* in his list of forbidden bid’ahs (Sayyid ‘Uthmân, 1890: 48).

One should not be surprised by Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s attitude to Sufism. Several studies have shown that many Hadhrâmi scholars in the diaspora, particularly in the Indian sub-continent and the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, were opposed to Sufism as understood and practised by local Muslims. They considered the Sufism that was practised by local Muslims to be “unorthodox” or even “heretical” (Eaton, 1978: 127-9; Azra, 1992: 356-7).

Sayyid ‘Uthmân, however, more than any other Hadhrâmî scholars in the archipelago in his time, was a bitter enemy of what he called *orang yang mengaku ahli tariqah* (people who claim to be the adherents of the *tariqah*). This attitude may originate from his genuine leaning within a more pristine and *sharî’ah*-oriented Islam as mentioned earlier. In other words, he may have inherited a long-held tradition among many Hadhrâmî scholars of opposing any Sufism which they regarded as being contradictory to the *sharî’ah* teaching.

His opposition to Sufism may also in one way or another have been influenced by Snouck Hurgronje’s fear of activist and rebellious *Sûfi* brotherhoods in other parts of the Muslim world. Snouck Hurgronje makes no secret of his fear of political repercussions for European rule created by such *tariqahs* as the Sanûsiyyah in North Africa. He might not oppose Sufism as such, but he did (rightly) warn European colonizers that the organization of *tariqahs* can be readily transformed into an effective means for waging jihâd against the Europeans. In the case of the archipelago, Snouck Hurgronje, like Sayyid ‘Uthmân, singles out the Naqshbandiyyah *tariqah* as the most dangerous, because, he argued, the blind obedience of the *murids* (disciples) to *Sûfi shaykhs* was far stronger than in other *tariqahs*.

Sayyid ‘Uthmân wrote at least three special works on Sufism. The

first is *al-Nasîhât al-Anîqah li al-Mutalabbisîn bi al-Tarîqah* or *Nasihat yang Elok kepada Orang-orang yang masuk Tariqah*, in Malay (n.d. [a], 19pp). This work is in fact a commentary on earlier work written in 1269 by another Hadhrâmî scholar, Sâlim bin Sumayr, who is mentioned earlier. The second is *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah fi 'Uluww Sha'n Tariqah al-Sûfiyyah*, in Arabic, which was later translated by Sayyid 'Uthmân himself into Malay under the title *Kepercayaan yang Menyampaikan Segala yang Haq di dalam Ketinggian Tariqah Sufiyyah* (1303, 20pp). The third is *Ini buku Kecil buat Mengetahui Arti Tariqah dengan Pendek*, in Malay (1891, 16pp).

The first book, *Nasihat yang Elok*, was written, as Sayyid 'Uthmân explains in the introduction, after several people came to ask him repeatedly about matters surrounding the Naqsabandiyah and other *tariqahs*; whether or not it is obligatory for Muslims according to the *shari'ah* to learn *tariqahs* before studying and practising rituals like prayers. According to those who asked him, at that time many people had entered the *tariqahs* (Sayyid 'Uthmân, n.d. [a]: 1).

Sayyid 'Uthmân begins by repeating the advice of Ibn Sumayr to Shaykh Ismâ'îl al-Minangkabâwî not to induce common people to become adherents of *tariqahs*, because there are several requirements that they have to meet before they can be allowed to enter the Islamic mystical path. Otherwise their adherence to *tariqahs* is unlawful (Ibid: 3-4).

He then dwells at length on the requirements one has to meet before entering *tariqahs*. First of all one should seek knowledge, particularly in three branches of Islamic sciences, that is, *'ilm tawhîd*, *fiqh* and *'ilm of the emotions (ilmu sifat hati)*. *'ilm tawhîd* is important for the understanding of God and all His attributes. *Fiqh* is crucial for the correct implementation of all Islamic rituals and devotion in their proper sequence, that is, *fard al-'ayn* (individual obligations), *fard al-kifâyah* (collective obligation), and *sunnah mu'akkad* (strongly recommended). As for the *'ilm sifat hati*, this is indispensable for the adoption of a good inner character in oneself. The most important good inner characteristics to be adopted and practised by any aspirant in the mystical path are; firstly, *ikhlâs*, sincerity in performing every deed for the pleasure of God only; secondly, *wara'*, abandonment of all forbidden things and acts; thirdly, *zuhd*, abandonment of greed and love of beautiful and enjoyable things; and lastly, *taqwâ*, obedience to all God's orders —enjoying good and preventing evil (Ibid: 4-5).

Citing the *Nubdhah al-Sûfryyah* of Ahmad Dahlan, one of his teachers who was the Shâfi'ite *Mufîi* of Mecca, Sayyid 'Uthmân notes that Islam consists of three inseparable parts; *sharî'ah*, *tarîqah* and *haqîqah*. *Sharî'ah* is all orders and prohibitions from God; *tarîqah* is the implementation of all *sharî'ah* precepts; and *haqîqah* is the adoption of inner consciousness that all creations belong to God only, and that their destiny has been predetermined by God. Furthermore, *tarîqah* has two aspects; exoteric, that is implementation of all *sharî'ah* injunctions and esoteric, that is possession of all the good inner characteristics mentioned earlier. A *tarîqah* is lawful if it has these two aspects. If not, it is unlawful and, therefore, those who enter it would follow *shaytân* rather than the Prophet Muhammad (Ibid: 10-13).

According to Sayyid 'Uthmân all these requirements are very hard for Muslims to fulfil in Arabia let alone in the Jawi lands. Correspondingly, many Muslims not only misunderstand (*ghurûr*) Islamic teachings but also behave in ways that opposite of what has been laid down by *sharî'ah*. In other words, they do not fully follow the way (*sunnah*) of the Prophet Muhammad or totally commit themselves to the *sharî'ah*. As a result, their adherence to *tarîqah* is not valid and they even become sinful. Worse, they bring into disrepute the respected founder of the *tarîqah* itself. When they perform *khalwah* (contemplation) and *riyâdah* (spiritual exercises) what they get is the blessing (*barâkah*) not of God, but of shaytan (Ibid: 14-7).

Up to this point, it is clear that Sayyid 'Uthmân's attitude to *tarîqahs* is a puritan one. His emphasis on the importance of thorough knowledge of Islam and total commitment to the *sharî'ah* before one enters the *tarîqah* is not new in the history of Islamic mysticism. But it is important to note that the tone of his language is by and large very harsh. His insistence on what he calls *orang jabil pada tarîqah* (people ignorant on the matter of *tarîqah*), or more appropriately his suspicion of sufi shaykhs who are only pseudo-sufi seems to be overemphasized.

Thus in *al-Wathîqat al-Wâfryyah* he accused *sûfi* teachers of the time of creating *bid'ah* or religious confusion as well as political disorder. In this manner, contemporary sufi teachers have contradicted the true *sûfi shaykhs* and their *tarîqahs* of the past.

In *al-Wathîqat al-Wâfryyah*, Sayyid 'Uthmân for the most part repeats his explication of the requirements to be met before entering a *tarîqah*. But in this book he provides additional arguments derived

from various authorities such as al-Qushayrî, al-Tasturî, Ibn Hajar, 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlanî, al-Suhrâwardî, al-Sha'rânî, Mustafâ al-'Aydârûsî and Ahmad Dahlân.

One of the most interesting things in this book is Sayyid 'Uthmân's exposition of the names of *tariqahs* he considers the most lawful (*mu'tamad*). In the Arabic edition of the work (p. 2, but curiously he drops them in its Malay translation), he maintains that the valid *tariqahs* have their origins in the teachings of al-Junayd bin Muhammad al-Baghdâdî (d. 297). And then comes the list of the most valid *tariqahs*, among others those of Imâm al-Junaydî (al-Junaydiyyah), al-Sâdah al-'Alâwiyyah (al-'Alâwiyyah), al-Ghazâlî (al-Ghazâliyyah?), 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jaylânî (Qâdiriyyah), Shaykh Ibn al-Madyan al Ghurâbî, Shaykh Abi Hasan al-Shadâlî (Shadaliyyah), Sayyid Ahmad al-Rifâ'î (Rifâ'iyyah), Shaykh Ishâq al-Kazrûnî, Shaykh al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badâwî, Shaykh 'Umar al-Qarkhî, Shaykh Bahâ' al-Dîn al-Naqshbandî (Naqshbandiyyah), Shaykh Ibrâhîm al-Khalwâtî (Khalwâtiyyah), Shaykh Ibn 'Arâbî, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Qushâshî. Sayyid 'Uthmân argues that despite their differences, all of these *tariqahs* are in agreement (*muwâfaqah*) on the importance of *shari'ah* in Muslim *tariqah* practises.

One might be surprised by the fact that Sayyid 'Uthmân includes the "*tariqah*" of Ibn 'Arâbî in the list of the most valid *tariqahs*, for every scholar of Sufism knows that Ibn 'Arâbî's mystico-philosophical thought has been regarded by many 'ulamâ' as "unorthodox" or even "heretical". It is also of interest that the *tariqah* of Ahmad al-Qushâshî, a reformed brand of Shattâriyyah, is included as well. We are not sure whether Sayyid 'Uthmân was aware that the Qushâshîyyah *tariqah* had been introduced to the archipelago by 'Abd al-Ra'ûf al-Sinkilî, a leading Indonesian 'âlim, in the seventeenth century, who had been a student and *khalîfah* (representative) of Ahmad al-Qushâshî (Cf. Azra, 1992: 412).

Not least interesting is his list of the most valid tasawwuf books (pp. 5-6). Again he drops the name of the books in the Malay edition of *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah*. The list includes books like the *Ihyâ' 'Ulûm al-Dîn* of al-Ghazâlî; *Kitâb al-Qût* of Abî Tâlib al-Makkî; *al-'Awârif* of al-Suhrâwardî; *al-Hikam* of Ibn 'Atâ' Allah; *Risâlah* of al-Qushayrî; *Tanbîh al-Mughtarîn*, *al-'Uhûd* and *al-Tabaqât* of al-Sha'rânî; *Kitâb Nasb al-Mahâsin* of al-Yâfi; *Asrâr 'Ulûm al-Muqarrabîn* of Muhammad bin 'Abd Allâh al-'Aydârûsî; and *Muwâhib al-Quddûs* of Shaykh

Bahraq. Again, one might be curious why Sayyid 'Uthmân does not include Ibn 'Arâbî's works, whereas he considers the Shaykh al-Akbar as originator of one of the most valid *tariqahs*.

Snouck Hurgronje tells us that *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah* was written by Sayyid 'Uthmân as a response to contra-arguments put forwards by the proponents of the *tariqahs* in the archipelago. According to Snouck Hurgronje, they argued that by criticizing *tariqahs* and their shaykhs, Sayyid 'Uthmân had been disrespectful to many honorable and respected *sûfi shaykhs*. They also accused him of being jealous of Malay-Indonesian *sûfi shaykhs* who exerted enormous influence among the Muslim masses. Moreover, he was said to have attacked *sûfi shaykhs* and their *tariqahs* in order to gain a "good name" with the Dutch authorities. In short, they asserted that what Sayyid 'Uthmân did was simply carry out a smear campaign against the *sûfi shaykhs*, their *tariqahs* and their followers (Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 82-2).

Thus, in *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah*, Sayyid 'Uthmân offers a long apology to what he regards as the true and correct *sûfi shaykhs*, their *tariqahs* and works, as mentioned above. He defends himself by saying that when he criticizes some *sûfi shaykhs* and their *tariqahs* he is not motivated by "poor opinion" (*sû' al-zann*), but by *shari'ah* injunctions to prevent evil. Furthermore, one should not have a "good opinion" (*husn al-zann*) when one clearly sees that other Muslims have transgressed *shari'ah* (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1303: 11).

He argues that someone who prevents Muslims from following the lawful *tariqahs* will be regarded as having deserted Islam and, therefore, will be doomed to hell. But the *shari'ah* has ruled that it is obligatory for the 'ulamâ' to prevent Muslims from following pseudo-*sûfi shaykhs* and their unlawful *tariqahs*. They cannot remain silent when Muslims are being led astray (Ibid: 7, 15). Sayyid 'Uthmân is resentful that many pseudo-*sûfis* and those who entered *tariqahs* without meeting the necessary requirements refuse to listen to good advice. On the contrary, they attack and curse one who reveals their falseness (Ibid: 11).

According to Sayyid 'Uthmân several mistakes are made by *sûfi shaykhs* and their followers. The first is the claim of certain *sûfi shaykhs* that they are able to transfer the secrets of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) to their followers (Ibid: 8). A second mistake is the assertion that they have met the Prophet Muhammad either in their dreams

while sleeping or in their *jaga* —when awake (Ibid: 9). A third mistake is the assertion that they have become acquainted with God and therefore know His secrets, because they have reached the status of *awliyâ'* (friends of God) (Ibid: 10). A fourth mistake is the presence of *ajnabiyyah* women in the night in order to practice *tarîqah*. A fifth mistake is the claim that one can become invulnerable (*sakti*) and *keramat* (having the ability to perform miracles) by entering a *tarîqah* or following certain *sûfi shaykhs* (Ibid: 13; cf. 1891: 13-5).

Finally, on the last page of the Malay edition of *al-Wahîqât al-Wâfiyyah* he draws a ten-point distinction between true and correct *tarîqahs*, and false and unlawful ones. Quite untypically he refrains from criticizing any one particular *tarîqah*. But he cannot leave the Naqshbandiyyah *tarîqah* without comment.

His strongest attack on the Naqshbandiyyah, and on other *tarîqahs* or *sûfi shaykhs* he regards as having gone astray, is put forward in the *Buku Kecil*. He alleges that many *sûfi shaykhs* are nowadays more concerned with wealth and social status than with genuine piety. They do not really commit themselves to Islam but to worldly status and enjoyment. They are "false" *sûfi shaykhs* who exploit their followers for their own interests, claiming to be or regarded by certain people as able to do "*keramat*" things. Because of their ignorance many Muslims believe and pay respect to such false teachers (Sayyid 'Uthman, 1891: 6-8).

Sayyid 'Uthmân recognizes that some *sûfi shaykhs* in the past did possess "*keramat*", for they were indeed *awliyâ'* Allah (friends of God). Therefore, it is anathema to say something bad about them. But now, he maintains, such *awliyâ'* Allah cease to exist. For that reason, those who claim to have or are regarded as having the status of *keramat*, and even of being able to do something against *sunnat Allah* (God's natural law), must be false *awliyâ'* and they will be condemned to hell. Sayyid 'Uthmân urges his fellow Muslims not to readily believe that those who claim to be able to perform extraordinary and miraculous acts are *awliyâ'* Allah. These *ahl al-bid'ahs*, who are actually *fâsiq* (sinful), may indeed have a similar ability called *istidrâj*, resulting from then following *shaytân* and practising *sibir* (magic, witchcraft) (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1890: 21; n.d. [c]: 5-11).

Again, connected to this, he cites the case of Shaykh 'Ismâ'îl al-Minangkabâwî, mentioned earlier, and that of Sulaymân al-Affandî, a Naqshbandî *shaykh* in Mecca, who had many disciples among both

Arabs and Malay-Indonesians. It is said that the latter book which, according to Sayyid 'Uthmân, is full of mistakes, had been widely circulated in the Jâwî lands. As a result, many ignorant Muslims had been led astray by Sulaymân al-Affandî (Ibid: 9-10).

Sayyid 'Uthmân cites the case of Sulaymân al-Affandî in *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah* without mentioning his name (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1303: 11). He states that all 'ulamâ' in Mecca agreed that al-Affandî was wrong; he was jailed and his books were reduced to ashes. Al-Affandî had, it was said, written letters to the rulers of Deli and Langkat in East Sumatra, where he supposedly had many followers, admitting his mistakes (Sayyid 'Uthmân, Ibid; 1891: 10-11).

The point Sayyid 'Uthmân wishes to convey by citing these cases, is that Muslims must take great care not to be led astray by those whom he considers to be "false" *sûfi shaykhs*. In the *Buku Kecil* he again delineates the evils or mistakes of such teachers (pp. 13-5), mentioned previously in *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah*. But he expands somewhat his ideas about these errors in the *Buku Kecil*. For instance, one of the worst errors of these *shaykhs* is that they treat their disciples as dead bodies in the hands of their washers. These slavishly obedient disciples were often led to create disruption in the country, dishonoring government regulations and customary laws (*'âdât*) (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1891: 14).

In conclusion, so far as his attitude to Sufism is concerned, Sayyid 'Uthmân asserts that Muslim predecessors in Jâwî lands, who had more understanding of and more commitment to Islamic teachings, had never taught *tarîqahs*, nor claimed to have entered them (Sayyid 'Uthmân, 1891: 16). He was, however, wrong in this respect. Most Malay-Indonesian 'ulamâ' before his time were *sûfis* and propagators of the *tarîqahs*. In fact, they were the first scholars who introduced a more *sharî'ah* oriented Sufism in the archipelago (Cf. Azra, 1991).

Considering his misrepresentation of the attitude of earlier Malay-Indonesian 'ulamâ' to the *tarîqahs*, it is not hard to understand why Sayyid 'Uthmân had to face counter-criticism from the proponents of Sufism, as related by Snouck Hurgronje above. But he fervently defends his criticism of *sûfi shaykhs* and their *tarîqahs*. He points out that *Nasehat yang Elok* had been declared correct (*tashîh*) by Shaykh al-Nûrî, and that everything stated in *al-Wathîqât al-Wâfiyyah* is from members of the family of the Prophet; a member who possesses unbroken *isnâd* and *silsilah* to and *ijâzah* from the Prophet himself (Sayyid

‘Uthmân, 1303: 1, 18).

Even though Sayyid ‘Uthmân possessed sufficient religious knowledge to silence his opponents, he felt the need for some support in his own defence. He therefore sent his *Nasehat yang Elok* and several other works to some of the most respected Jâwî ‘ulamâ’ in Mecca, including Shaykh Nawâwî al-Bantânî and Shaykh al-Junayd. We already know that Shaykh Nûrî al-Bantânî (?) gave his *tashîh* to *Nasehat yang Elok*. According to Snouck Hurgronje, Sayyid ‘Uthmân expected that Nawâwî al-Bantânî, who also adhered to a more *sharî‘ah* oriented tasawwuf and disliked the speculative philosophical brand of Sufism, would voice his authoritative opinion in his favor (Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 83; Steenbrink, 1984: 121).

It is not clear whether or not Nawâwî al-Bantânî fully supported Sayyid ‘Uthman. Given his commitment to the Ghazâlian brand of Sufism, he may have agreed with many of the basic points of Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s opinion. As Steenbrink says, it was difficult for Nawâwî al-Bantânî not to support the sayyid and therefore, he voiced some good words about Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s works (Steenbrink, *Ibid*: 121). Similarly, Snouck Hurgronje asserts that both Nawâwî al-Bantânî and Junayd expressed their opinions wisely in good language (Snouck Hurgronje, 1886: 83).

What Snouck Hurgronje calls “Nawâwî al-Bantânî’s response to Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s case” is probably a short comment by Nawâwî on *al-Nasîhat ‘ala al-Niqat* [sic]—which is probably *al-Nasîhat al-‘Anîqab*. It is said that the comment is a *tashîh* of the book *al-Nasîhat al-‘Anîqab* written by Sayyid ‘Uthmân bin ‘Abd Allâh bin ‘Aqil and that the *tashîh* is written by Shaykh Nawâwî, an ‘âlim in Mecca. After he [Nawâwî] had been given the book, he praised it, and further said:

This book *al-Nasîhat al-‘Anîqab* holds a high position, [and] is correct in all of its meaning; why not? Because it gathers the opinions of many great scholars. As for those who join the tariqahs, if their sayings and deeds are in accordance (*muwâfaqat*) with the *sharî‘ah* of the Prophet as [shown by] the true *tariqah shaykhs*, then they are acceptable. And if not, then they will be like many disciples of shaykh Ismâ‘îl al-Minangkabawî.

...they criticize those who do not join the *tariqahs*. They even prevent [other] people from joining in their [collective] prayers...they hate them. Shaykh Ismâ‘îl takes that *tariqah* [Naqshbandiyyah] simply to collect wealth to pay back all his debts. So in this respect he sells religion for worldly [purposes] (Quoted in Steenbrink, 1: 184-5).



It is not clear why Nawâwî al-Bantânî, like Sayyid 'Uthmân criticizes Ismâ'îl al-Minangkabâwî who actually attempted to revive the more *sharî'ah* oriented Naqshbandiyyah *tariqah* at the expense of the decadent Shattariyyah which had been increasingly regarded as tending to transgress some precepts of the *sharî'ah*. Apart from his criticism of Ismâ'îl al-Minangkabâwî, Nawâwî al-Bantânî does not have much to say in defense of Sayyid 'Uthmân. Al-Bantânî's emphasis on the importance of *sharî'ah* in the mystical path adds nothing new to the discourse. Therefore, his comments apparently failed to silence the opposition to Sayyid 'Uthmân.

### Conclusion

Sayyid 'Uthmân is one of the most controversial figures in the history of Islam in the archipelago. Apart from his accommodationist political position *vis-a-vis* the Dutch, his contribution to Islamic discourse in the region cannot be ignored. In this respect it is reasonable enough that Steenbrink should argue that Sayyid 'Uthmân was among the leading exponents of Islamic reformism (*tokoh gerakan pembaharuan*) in Indonesia in the late nineteenth century. His "reformism" lies of course in his ceaseless attack on what he regards as *bid'ah* and un-*sharî'ah tariqahs*.

This preliminary paper has dealt with only some aspects of Sayyid 'Uthmân's thought. There is still much to be done in order for us to gain a better picture of Sayyid 'Uthmân.

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