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The development of chanting groups in East Java: a case study of the Salawat Wahidiyah group in Pesantren Kedunglo, Kediri

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This is a study of Islamic spirituality, beliefs and practice in East Java. It focuses on a *majlis dhikr* (chanting group) organised with the specific purpose of chanting various Islamic litanics (I: *salawat*, Ar: *salawat*). Although many *majlis dhikr* have developed in the last decade, the study of these groups is a neglected area of research within the study of Islamic ritual groups in Indonesia. In contrast to the abundance of studies of Sufi groups (*tariqa*) carried out by Indonesian scholars, such as Tjiptjah (Mubaimin 1995), Qadiriyyah, Naqshabandiyyah, Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyyah, and Shariatiah (Murthi 1987), there has not yet been any comprehensive study devoted to the examination of *majlis dhikr* in the Indonesian Islamic context. This lack of research is, unfortunately, accompanied by negative images of these groups. The association of *tariqa* under Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) does not accord these groups official recognition (*mu'tabarab*). Many Indonesian scholars and other Muslim groups consider these *majlis dhikr* to be local *tariqa* that lack *siyasilah* (authentic genealogy of transmission, or *isnad*) or to represent unorthodox or pseudo-Sufi organisations. Often these groups have been considered syncretic because they incorporate strong local elements, both in their ritual and in their teachings. For Indonesian Salafî groups, the ritual practices of *majlis dhikr* are considered *bid'ah* (an innovation within Islam) because they have no sanction in the Prophetic tradition.

One reason that *dhikr* groups are not considered to be *mu'tabarab* (recognised) is that they do not meet the criteria laid down by the Jaami'ah Ahl al-Tharigah al-Mu'tabarab. This is the organisation that was established in 1957 by NU to be the forum for recognised Sufi

orders in Indonesia. One of these criteria is that a group can only be regarded as *mu'tabarrah* if its *wirid* or ritual practices can be traced through an unbroken line of links from the Prophet to its *munzirid* (i: spiritual leader). Its teachings and doctrines should be in line with Islamic law (*sharia*) (Turmudi 2003:65). Any Islamic group which does not meet these criteria cannot be regarded as *mu'tabarrah*.

Although the teachings of *dhikr* groups conform to *sharia*, according to the Jaami'ah they do not have an unbroken line of links from the Prophet to their founders. In other words, the Prophet never practised the *wirid* used by these groups and never passed it to the founders through a genealogy of spiritual leaders. As a result, for the Jaami'ah, no *dhikr* groups can be regarded as an acknowledged Sufi order (i: *tarekat yang mu'tabarrah*) because they do not have such links.

A similar response to *majlis dhikr*, especially the Salawat Wahidiyyah group, was given by Kyai Machrus Ali, a prominent *nuhna* with an NU background, who regarded the group as a non-*mu'tabarrah* group because of its lack of direct connection between the Prophet and the founder of the group. According to him, the founder of Wahidiyyah established and practised his ritual based on his encounter with the Prophet in a dream. According to Kyai Machrus, dreams cannot be used as a theological basis for establishing a *tariqa*.

Even the Dutch scholar Martin van Bruinessen has categorised *majlis dhikr*, especially Wahidiyyah groups, as local *tariqa* whose practices and rituals are inseparable from those in some other mystical groups (*golongan kebatinan*). As a result of this notion, seemingly influenced by a Geertzian idea of Javanese Islam, Bruinessen considers Wahidiyyah and the like as spiritualist and syncretic movements (*gerakan-gerakan kebatinan yang sinkretis*). This assessment has eventually prompted several *tariqa*, such as Qadiriyyah, Naqshabandiyyah and other mainstream *tariqa* to establish the NU-affiliated Jaami'ah Ahl al-Tharigah al-Mu'tabarrah as an institution to disassociate themselves from such syncretic groups (Bruinessen 1992:171).

Likewise, Lukman Hakim, one of the members of a prominent *tariqa* group in Indonesia, has maintained that Sufism or *tasawuf* (I) cannot be practised without joining an acknowledged *tariqa*

(*tarekat yang mu'tabarrah*).² He argues that the practice of *tasawuf* without being a member of an acknowledged *tariqa* (*bertaawuf tanpa tarekat*) and without the supervision of a spiritual master (*munzirid*) can only lead to a superficial level of spiritual experience (Ar: *'ilm al-yaghiin*) and can never reach *'ain al-yaghiin* and *haqq al-yaghiin*. In other words, in order to attain the deepest level of spiritual experience (Ar: *haqq al-yaghiin*), Muslims should affiliate with an acknowledged *tariqa* whose ritual is clearly derived through an unbroken line of links from the Prophet. The implication of this notion is that any Islamic spiritual group, including any *majlis dhikr*, which does not have a spiritual genealogy going back to the Prophet cannot be used as a means to practise *tasawuf*. Lukman Hakim has argued that,

Those who practise Sufism without *tariqa* only attain the experience of *'ilm al-yaghiin*. They never reach *'ain al-yaghiin* and *haqq al-yaghiin*. This is because they only believe (*yakini*) based on their theoretical philosophy. They do not believe practically (*yakini amaliyah*), even though they claim that they believe *sewara amaliyah*. In fact, this belief happens only in their imagination, as if they believe *sewara amaliyah*.³

A stronger rejection of the rituals and practices of the *majlis dhikr* which has emerged over the last two decades comes from Indonesian Salafi groups which are strongly influenced by Wahabism, a reform movement aimed at purifying Islam of local accretions. For instance, Abu Amsaka and Jawas, who champion the Islamic puritan movement in Indonesia, have argued that the ritual practice of Indonesian *majlis dhikr* mostly falls into the practice of *bid'ah*. They criticise *dhikr* groups mainly because of the way they recite *dhikr* vocally in a group. In their view, such a practice is not sanctioned by the teachings of the Qur'an, which urges Muslims to recite *dhikr* quietly (Amsaka 2003:85; Jawas 1423/2002:150-1).

In contrast to these various critics, I will argue that although *dhikr* groups have been strongly criticised by other Muslim groups as not *mu'tabarrah*, or as pseudo-Sufi or as *bid'ah*, the existence of these groups is significant. The fact that these groups have attracted many followers demonstrates that the interest of Indonesian Muslims in joining these groups is strong. Despite the increasing popularity of Sufi orders among Indonesian Muslims, these *majlis dhikr* have not only

expanded and introduced their ritual and teachings widely but also have continued to gain new followers in both rural and urban areas. In this article I will argue that although this group is considered non-*mu'tabaruh* by other *tariqa* groups, its ritual practices and teachings are still within the frame of orthodox Sufi teachings and should be accepted.

Research for this article was conducted during twelve months of fieldwork in the East Javanese city of Kediri beginning in 2004. Kediri is home to dozens of *pesantren salaf* (traditional *pesantren*) ranging in size from very large to very small; it is also host to several Islamic ritual groups whose branches spread through many regions of Indonesia. In Kediri there are two big *majlis dhikr* known as Dhikr al-Ghaflin and Ihsaniyah, which have many branches in many provinces in Indonesia. Furthermore, an Islamic organisation known as Lembaga Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (LDII, Indonesian Islamic Institute for Proselytisation) established its headquarters in this city and has many branches in many provinces and overseas. The research on which this article was based focused on one of the *dhikr* groups in Kediri known as Salawat Wahidiyah. It has an organisational structure from provincial level right down to village level and has established branches internationally (see below).

Understanding *tasawuf*, *tariqa* and *majlis dhikr* in Indonesian Islam

For the purpose of this study, it is important to explain important terms such as *tasawuf*, *tariqa* and *majlis dhikr* (or *jama'ah dhikr*), which have been used interchangeably by researchers of Indonesian Islam. This explanation is necessary in order to understand the proliferation of Islamic spiritual groups within the context of Indonesian Islam and the development of studies about Islamic spiritual groups in Indonesia. The term *tasawuf*, commonly understood as mysticism, has been defined by various Sufi scholars. Al-Qushairi (d. 475/1074) (2002:337–41), in his book *al-Risalah*, and Al-Hujwiri (d.1082) (1997:43–55), in his book, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, enumerated the various definitions of *tasawuf* put forward by different Muslim Sufi. These diverse definitions demonstrate how difficult it is to provide an exact definition of *tasawuf*. Perhaps because of this difficulty, Chittick argues

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that it is difficult to distinguish which Muslims have been Sufi and which have not (Chittick 1995). Closer examination of these definitions shows that they are concerned with the practical aspects of the inner life which have eventually formed a body of knowledge. When *tasawuf* became a particular form of knowledge, like other categories of Islamic knowledge such as *fiqh* (jurisprudence), Hadith, and Islamic theology (*kalam*), it comprised theoretical teachings that needed to be put into practice. Therefore, as a form of knowledge, *tasawuf* was named *'ilm al-haqiqin* (Ar., knowledge of the inner self), a term used in opposition to other traditional sciences, such as the study of Hadith or *fiqh*, which were known as perceptible knowledge (Ar., *'ilm al-zahiri*).

The word *tasawuf* is frequently defined in broad terms in Indonesian Islam. For instance, citing Trimmingham, Syaifi Mufti defines *tasawuf* as the spiritual teaching, knowledge and practices of Muslim individuals or groups for the purpose of purifying the spirit in order to approach God (Mufti 2006). Another definition is given by Julia Howell. She has defined *tasawuf* as personal intensification and interiorisation of Islamic faith and practice (Howell 2001). These broad definitions thus encompass not only the spiritual practices of *tariqa* (Sufi groups) but also the practices of others, including *dhikr* groups, as well as study groups and intensive courses on practical *tasawuf* which all aim at the purification of the soul in approaching God.

Thus, the term *tasawuf* is able to accommodate a range of meanings which are put forward by different groups. Expanded terms such as modern *tasawuf* (I: *tasawuf modern*), and positive *tasawuf* (I: *tasawuf positif*), have recently been introduced in the literature of *tasawuf* study in Indonesia. Thus *tasawuf* is no longer restricted to the description of practices by *tarekat* (Sufi groups).

The term *tasawuf modern* was first introduced by the Reformist Hamka in the study and practice of *tasawuf* in Indonesia. Using this term, Hamka tried to disengage the concept of *tasawuf* from the concept of *tariqa*. Moreover, by introducing this term, Hamka criticised Muslims who practise *tasawuf* as a way of avoiding worldly matters, regarding them as unimportant (Hamka 1990:5–6). For Hamka, *tasawuf* should be understood in its original meaning; that is,

as a method to 'leave off offensive behaviour and to take on praiseworthy manners' ... to purify the self, to train and uplift the stature of the human personality, to renounce greed and caprice, and to control the sexual appetite from exceeding what is normal for the sound individual (cited in Fealy and Hooker 2006:103-4)

Inspired by the idea of *tasawuf* put forward by al-Ghazali (d.1111) in his book *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, Hamka urged Muslims to cultivate the inner spiritual life within the outer forms of religiosity. Hamka considered this an urgent need, particularly to achieve a deeper emotional richness of devotion. Based on his interpretation of *tasawuf*, Hamka is regarded as the person responsible for popularising *tasawuf* to the educated urban middle class in Indonesia.

Another term introduced by Indonesian scholars is *tasawuf positif* (positive *tasawuf*). This term has become popular within the study of Indonesian Islam following the increasing interest in *tasawuf* among urban Muslims and well-to-do cosmopolitan Muslims. Similar to the idea of *tasawuf modern*, the concept of *tasawuf positif* aims to make the practice of *tasawuf* the responsibility of the individual rather than heavily relying on the guidance of *murayid* (masters) of particular *tariqa*. This kind of *tasawuf* stresses individual effort to mold praiseworthy manners without joining a particular *tariqa*. Those who champion *tasawuf positif* actively promote what they regard as practising *tasawuf* without *tariqa* (i: *tasawuf tanpa tarekat*). Instead, they can independently practise and actively learn *tasawuf* teachings through intensive courses, workshops and religious study clubs as is evident in urban organisations such as Yayasan Paramadina, Yayasan Tazkiyah, ICNIS (Intensive Course and Networking for Islamic Science), Pusat Pengembangan Tasawuf Positif dan Klinik Spiritualitas Islami (Centre for the Development of Positive Tasawuf and Clinic for Muslim Spirituality), and IIMAN (the Indonesian Islamic Media Network). According to the initiators of *tasawuf positif*, Muslims can practise *tasawuf positif* since many Muslims *tasawuf* scholars have actively practised and deeply understand the teaching of *tasawuf* even though they never joined any *tariqa* (Anwar 2002:13-16).

Another term that is important to elaborate further in this study is *tariqa*. This term is widely used in Indonesian Islam to refer to

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the practice of *tasawuf*, in particular, in communal ritual through 'an organised Sufi order'. According to the pesantren tradition, *tariqa* can be divided into two kinds: *tariqah ammah* (Ar: the general way), pious acts which are continually practised with good intention, and *tariqah khalassah* (Ar: the specific way), relying on certain ritual *dikir* which are performed with the guidance of a *murayid* who is linked in his knowledge through a spiritual genealogy going back to the Prophet Muhammad. This form of *tariqa* has formal requirements. For example, in order to become a member of such a *tariqa*, disciples should make a oath of allegiance (i: *bai'at* or *talqin*) to the master of the *tariqa* concerned. Through this *bai'at*, disciples (*murid*) put themselves under the guidance of the *murayid* to purify themselves in their approach to God (Aqib 1999:98). The *bai'at* is an important condition for the validity of the spiritual journey of the *murid*. It is commonly believed in the *tariqa* world that following the *tasawuf* path without the guidance of a *murayid* is like following this path under the guidance of Satan.

The proponents of *tariqa* are convinced that a *murayid* has an important role in the spiritual development of his *murid*. Without the guidance of a *murayid*, a *murid* cannot obtain authentic spirituality. The proponents of *tariqa* claim that if there are Muslims who claim that they have achieved *muqamalat* (Ar: attainment, arrival) or *ma'rifat* (gnosis) in the absence of a *murayid* to guide them, what they have achieved consists of the whispers and tricks (i: *tipu daya*) of Satan. It is believed in the *tariqa* world that without the guidance of a *murayid*, Muslims cannot distinguish between the whispers of God and his Angels and the whisper of Satan.

In this study, I use the term *majlis dikir* to refer to groups who practise reciting *dikir* and *salawat* in unison (i: *berjamaah*) in order to achieve perfection and closeness to God with no structural connection to any *tariqa* order. Comprehending the term *majlis dikir* as used in this study is important, particularly in order to analyse the current proliferation of Islamic spiritual groups in Indonesia.

Unlike *tariqa*, *dikir* groups do not require followers to take an oath of allegiance (*bai'at*) to a leader. In other words, exclusive membership is not recognised. People are able to join *majlis dikir* groups

and practise their *dhikr* without taking an oath of allegiance to the leader of any particular group. As a result, people can voluntarily join one group while also being members of other *dhikr* groups, something which is not, generally, possible for members of *tariqa* in Java.⁴

Another obvious difference from *tariqa* is in the *dhikr* recited by *majlis dhikr*. The *dhikr* text recited by these *majlis dhikr* are generally created by their leaders or taken from *dhikr* formulas taught by the Prophet or widely practised by previous prominent *ulama*. In contrast, *dhikr* formulas recited by *tariqa* orders are claimed to have been transmitted by a series of unbroken links from the Prophet to the *murshid*. Unlike the practice in *tariqa*, the members of *majlis dhikr* are able to practise the group's ritual intermittently without any sanction, even though the leaders of these groups recommend that members practise the ritual continuously.

Distinguishing clearly between the *majlis dhikr* and other Islamic spiritual groups in Indonesia is critical to an analysis of the position of these *majlis dhikr* in the context of current Indonesian Muslim life. The proliferation of *majlis dhikr* in many Indonesian regions indicates that they have been accepted by Indonesian Muslims as an alternative vehicle for the practice of the teachings of *tasawuf*.

Attaining closeness to God and the Prophet: the spiritual path of Salawat Wahidiyyah

The origin of *Salawat Wahidiyyah* is closely connected with the figure of the late Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf, often simply called Kyai Madjid. He was not only the author of the *Salawat Wahidiyyah* but also the leader of Pesantren Kedunglo in Kediri. Among his followers, he was regarded as 'the source of help of his age' (Ar: *ghayath baadhah al-zaman*), a title accorded to the highest leaders of the Sufi hierarchy who govern the universe. Moreover, one of his followers considered him the reformer of Islam (Ar: *mujaddid*), who comes at the end of every century to revitalise Islam and save society from moral and spiritual decadence.

Before composing the text of the *Salawat Wahidiyyah*, Kyai Madjid was believed to have experienced the highest spiritual moments when he received an invisible order (I: *perintah ghaib*) or invisible caller (Ar: *baatiff*) in a dream from the Prophet Muhammad to improve and

rebuild people's morality by means of a spiritual path that would bring them to the consciousness of God and the Prophet. Divine inspiration is not uncommon among Muslim reformers. Other Sufi reformers such as Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (1703-62) and Usman dan Fudlo of West Africa (1754-1817) experienced visionary dreams before reforming religious practice in their society.

As a *dhikr* group, the Salawat Wahidiyyah group aims at attaining closeness to God and the Prophet Muhammad and achieving *ma'rifah bi-Haqq* (Ar: knowing the Essence or divine truth), or *ungkul* with God. To do that, Wahidiyyah founded its own teachings and rituals. According to Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf, *Salawat Wahidiyyah* is based on the Qur'an and the Hadith, the two basic sources of Islam. The teachings of *Salawat Wahidiyyah* provide practical guidance for both the inner life and the external life, drawing on aspects of Islamic law (*sharia*), and the truth (*haqiqat*) in the improvement of faith (*iman*) and the mystical knowledge of God (*ma'rifat*), the observance of Islam, the actualisation of goodness (*ihsan*) and the implementation of morals (*akhlak*).

Thus, the teaching of *Salawat Wahidiyyah* includes Islamic law (*sharia*), morality (*akhlak*), and the transcendent truth (*haqiqat* or *ma'rifat*). These three aspects of the teachings are similar to the tripartite path to God which is widely known in Sufi tradition, that is *sharia*, *tariqa* and *haqiqat* or *ma'rifat*. These three aspects are thought to be like an essence and its nature, or like sugar and sweetness, neither of which can be separated. Therefore people cannot ignore one of these three aspects and stress the other two (Madjid 2000:20). According to Kyai Madjid, *sharia* without *haqiqat* is emptiness, while *haqiqat* without *sharia* is invalid (Madjid 1423:20-5). In other words, the Salawat Wahidiyyah group still considers the observance of *sharia* as a bridge to attaining *ma'rifat*. Thus, although the Salawat Wahidiyyah group has been regarded by other *tariqa* groups as non-*ma'ribat*, it is in line with the teaching of orthodox Sufism, which requires the unity of the tripartite path to God.

In the guidance book of the principal teachings of Wahidiyyah, published by Yayasan Perjuangan Wahidiyyah (Anonymous n.d.), Kyai Madjid Ma'ruf quotes a large number of verses from the

Qur'an and Hadith to support his teachings. In addition to this, he refers to the thoughts of several famous Sufis such as Abu Hasan al-Shadhili⁵ (1196–1258), al-Ghazali⁶ (1058–1111) and Imam Ibn 'Azzallah al-Iskandarī⁷ (d. 1309), whose teachings have also been widely recognised among Sufi orders in Indonesia. Ibn 'Azzallah in particular inspired and influenced Kyai Abdul Majid Ma'ruf's views in establishing the teachings of Wahidiyyah. By quoting these authoritative references, Wahidiyyah cannot be regarded as a deviant group. In addition, this gives the impression that the teachings of Wahidiyyah do not contradict the basic teaching of Islam, nor is it an addition to these teachings.

Indeed, Wahidiyyah teachings have very strong roots in Islamic doctrine. This is important since Wahidiyyah, as a new Islamic spiritual group, needed to clarify its position among other Islamic spiritual groups to avoid being regarded as deviant. This explanation was evidently effective because none of the Muslim organisations in Indonesia, including NU and Muhammadiyah, the two biggest Muslim organisations, officially criticised the existence of Wahidiyyah. In 1977, the conference of Jam'iyyah Ahl al-Thariqah al-Mu'tabarah (Federation of Recognised Tariqa of NU), the official Sufi order group established by NU, decided that Wahidiyyah could be practised by all members of *tariqa* as long as this was in accordance with Islamic law (Qomari 2003:85). Furthermore, strong support was received from the government, which provided an official letter issued by the head of the Attorney General's Office (I: Kantor Kejaksaan Negeri) in East Java and the Religious Research and Development Unit of the Ministry of Religion in Jakarta. This Unit of the Ministry of Religion maintained that Wahidiyyah was allowed to be taught and spread to ordinary people due to the fact that it is not part of Islam Jama'ah,⁸ the name of a Indonesian Muslim organisation which was officially banned by the Indonesian government. Strong criticism of Wahidiyyah only came from local Muslim scholars, the effect of which was not significant in the spread of Wahidiyyah.

To begin our discussion of these mystical teachings, we will consider the book entitled *Kalilah wahidiyah mine menteribikan hati dan ma'rifat bilah wahidiyah S.A.W.* (The Wahidiyyah Teaching for Purifying

the Soul and for Gnosis of God and His Prophet). In this book, Kyai Abdul Majid Ma'ruf emphasises the importance of the teachings of Wahidiyyah including *Lil'Ilah*, *Bi'llah*, *Lil-Rasul*, *Bi'r-Rasul*, *Lil-Ghannh*, *Bi'r-Ghannh*, *Yat'i kulla thini haqqin haqqahu*, and *Taqdīm al-ahammi fa al-ahammi thumma al-anfua' fa al-anfua'*. He insists that these teachings should be implemented in the hearts of Wahidiyyah followers during every activity and deed categorised as *'ibadah* (worship).

Lil'Ilah (For God), the first doctrine of Wahidiyyah, is considered the entry point for followers to practise the mystical path within Wahidiyyah. According to Kyai Abdul Majid, the meaning and the application of *Lil'Ilah* adheres to every inward and outward deed (I: *amal lahiriah dan batiniah*), whether obligatory (Ar: *majib*), recommended (Ar: *sunnah*) or permitted (Ar: *mubah*), whether or not it has a connection with God and His Messenger or is related to public affairs, as long as it does not break the law of God but does involve a pious intention (Ar: *ikhlās*) to worship God without expecting any worldly and eschatological reward. In other words, Kyai Abdul Majid Ma'ruf here stresses the importance of pious intent in every devotion to God without expectation of attaining paradise or in fear of hell (Anonymous n.d.:317). But Kyai Abdul Majid Ma'ruf argues that followers are still allowed to hope for paradise and to fear hell, providing that the hope is within the context of worship. In this sense, sincere and pure intentions are required to transform activities into worship. In contrast, every deed that is not performed solely to worship God falls to the desire of the lower soul (Ar: *li'l-nafs*). Hence, if Muslims' deeds are filled with this *nafs*, it will prevent them from attaining the consciousness of God and His Prophet. He argues that this first doctrine can be compared with the doctrine of *sharia*, the first path of the tripartite path to God (Anonymous n.d.:381). With this explanation, Kyai Abdul Majid Ma'ruf stresses the importance of *sharia* as the initial state for those who wish to enter the mystical path. His view on the importance of *sharia* is not unusual, as most traditional *santiri* (students of Islam) in Java maintain that all the requirements of *sharia* should be fulfilled prior to entering upon the mystical path. Moreover, they argue that the mystical path should be cultivated on the basis of outward piety (*ibarat*) (Woodward 1989:81).

The second doctrine of Wahidiyyah is *Bi'llah*. What is meant by the doctrine of *Bi'llah* (Because of Allah) is that every person's outward and inward aspects are nothing but the creation and action of God. This definition is derived from the verse of the Qur'an that states that 'God has created you and what you make' (al Qur'an 37:96). As a consequence, one cannot claim to have the strength and power to act and to do something good or bad, since the power and strength belongs to God Himself. This verse is not interpreted from the perspective of predestination, but from the Sufi point of view. In fact, this doctrine is practised as the implementation of the phrase, *laa hamlah na laa qunwatalah illaa bi'llah*. There is no power and might save in God (Anonymous n.d.:98). Quoting Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine Javanese Muslim saints reputed to have brought Islam to Java, Abdul Laif Madijid explains that according to this doctrine 'a human is like a puppet and the God is like a puppeteer' (Madijid 1423:29-33). As far as bad deeds are concerned, Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf maintains that like good deeds, bad deeds should be based on the doctrine of *Bi'llah*. Therefore, one should keep in mind that every bad deed can only happen because of God. This does not necessarily mean, however, that people are permitted to do bad deeds, even though they are performed through *Bi'llah*. Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf defines this doctrine as *hakeikat*, another of the tripartite stages towards a knowledge of God.

Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf's explanation of this doctrine largely follows Ibn 'Ata'ullah's mystical teachings on the importance of relying on the Divinity rather than people's own actions and deeds, as he explains in *al-Hikmah*. In elucidating the doctrine, Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf maintained the following:

As a matter of fact, when we see, hear, feel, find, move, stay, imagine, think, and so on and so forth, we should feel within our heart that all of these can happen because of God's command ... [I]f all activities are based on *Li'llah/ Bi'llah*, they will be regarded as worship. In contrast, if all activities, including prayers, *dhikr*, are not based on *Li'llah/ Bi'llah*, they will be worthless. They are just like a dead body which cannot give any benefits or harm (Anonymous n.d.:98)

With this explanation, Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf argues that if this doctrine is absent from the heart of someone, they will tend to follow

their own desire (*bi'l-nafs*). As a result, they can easily claim that everything they do is because of their own strength and power. Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf is convinced that if this feeling increases every day, people will become egocentric and proud (Ar: *njb, amaniyyah*), which is believed to be the cause of moral decadence, deviation, hostility and quarrels. In addition, people's reliance upon their own strength and power will lead them to commit hidden polytheism (Ar: *shirk khafiy*) (al Qur'an 12:106). Therefore, he insists that it is incumbent upon every follower to purge the *nafs* of its evil attributes by applying the doctrine of *Li'llah/ Bi'llah*, reciting *Salawat Wahidiyyah* and striving (Ar: *mujahadah*) to ask forgiveness and guidance from God. He further maintains that once people manage to purge the *nafs* from their own deeds, they will come to a spiritual stage called *muqim* (union) and *ma'rifat* (gnosis), both of which are the ultimate goal of Wahidiyyah.

The third doctrine of Wahidiyyah is *Li'l-Rasul*, which means that every deed categorised as worship must be preceded not only with the doctrine *Li'llah* but also with the intention to follow the Prophet's guidance. The aim of this doctrine is not only to improve the purity of intention (*kelias*), but also to keep in touch with the Prophet. Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf is convinced that if people apply this doctrine, God will bestow the feeling of having an intimate relationship with the Prophet, enabling them to imitate the Prophet's ethics (Ar: *tahabul bi-akhlak al-rasul*) in every situation. Moreover, since the essence of observance requires the understanding of the observed in every situation, such an intimate relationship will lead people to achieve the intended observance of the Prophet (Anonymous n.d.). Like the doctrine *Li'llah*, this doctrine can be categorised as *sharia*.

The fourth doctrine of Wahidiyyah is *Bi'l-Rasul*, which means that every person's inward and outward deeds which do not violate the law of God have to be believed to be the product of the Prophet. Moreover, Kyai Abdul Madijid Ma'ruf explains that all the creatures in the world were created by God's mercy, which is given through the Prophet. Without Him, the world would not have been created. The merit of the Prophet is not confined to the time during which the Prophet lived, but continues to the present. If the merit of the Prophet

had stopped just for a second, people would have been nothing (Anonymous n.d.). This doctrine is basically elaborated from the concept of Nur Muhammad (the Light of Muhammad), and it is also called (in Arabic) *al-Haqiqah al-Muhammadiyah*. It was first introduced by Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240)⁹ who developed more completely the doctrine of the pre-existence of Muhammad before creation. According to the *Hadith Qudsī*,¹⁰ all creatures are created from the Light of Muhammad, which was created from the light of God (Ar: *kelahatke min nuru wa kelahatu al-kehalga min nurika*). Therefore, the world is a manifestation of that Light, and it emanated to Adam, the Prophets, and the *Aghab*, the axes, each of whom is an example of the Perfect Man (Ar: *al-Insan al-Kamil*). The concept of the Light of Muhammad in the Wahidiyyah, however, is conceived only as a basis on which the followers of Wahidiyyah should relate to the Prophet. In his attempt to explain the concept of the Light of Muhammad, Kyai Abdul Latif Madjid describes it as follows:

Wahidiyyah can be regarded as a Sufi group which follows the concept of Nur Muhammad. Not all Sufis, such as Hamka,¹¹ can receive the teaching of Nur Muhammad. In Wahidiyyah, it can be described as the connection of cotton, thread and fabric. The cotton is God, the thread is Nur Muhammad and the fabric is all creation. In fact the fabric is nothing without the thread and the thread is nothing without the cotton.¹²

Unlike the application of the doctrine of *Bi'llah*, the application of this doctrine is confined only to good deeds which are relevant to the law of God. In contrast, bad deeds which violate the law of God cannot be deemed to be the merit of the Prophet. Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf argues that the application of this doctrine, therefore, leads people to always feel that God and His Prophet will watch them, and as a consequence they will not dare to do something which violates the law of God (Anonymous 1999). This teaching reminds us of the concept of *hisan* which means, according to traditions of the Prophet, 'that you worship God as if you see Him, for even though you do not see God, God always sees you.' (Zulkifli 2001:32).

The fifth doctrine of Wahidiyyah is *Li'l-Ghanth* (For the Saint). The definition of this doctrine is that every good deed should be based on *Li'llah* and *Li'l-Rasul*, followed by an intention to follow the

guidance of the *ghanth baadhah al-yaman*. The application of this doctrine in Wahidiyyah is confined to good deeds, not to bad deeds. This doctrine is derived from the following verse of the Qur'an:

... and follow the way of those who turn to Me (in love): in the end the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that ye did (Qur'an 31:15).

Here Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf interprets the word 'those who turn to me (in love)' in this verse as the *Ghanth* (the Help), a friend of God and the highest spiritual authority possessed by saints. Although they have passed away, they are believed still to be able to give spiritual guidance to people. The names of the *Ghanth* are not mentioned, however, in this doctrine, so we do not know how many *Ghanth* exist in this world according to the doctrines of Wahidiyyah. According to some followers, though, the *Ghanth* are Kyai Abdul Madjid and his son, Kyai Abdul Latif Madjid.

The next doctrine is *Bi'l-Ghanth*. This is similar to *Bi'llah* and *Bi'l-Rasul*, but also includes the belief that the *Ghanth* gives spiritual guidance to Muslims, leading them to the consciousness of God and His Prophet, which in Wahidiyyah is usually called (in Arabic) *fa'firun ilaa 'Allah wa ra'nuhili salla 'Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam* (Turn to God and his Prophet, peace and blessing be upon Him). This consciousness is inherent within the hearts of Muslims who cultivate the ethics of God and His Prophet in themselves (Ar: *takabbal bi akhlaq 'Allah wa al-rasul*). The application of this doctrine in Wahidiyyah is intended not only to express gratitude to God but also to express gratitude to the *Ghanth* who transmit the grace of God to people. This is partly because the perfect expression of gratitude (Ar: *shukr*) to God requires gratitude to those who cause the grace of God to be given. According to Kyai Zainuddin, this teaching is based on the Prophetic tradition, 'Those who are unable to express gratitude to people, will not be able to express gratitude to God.'¹³ In this sense, a *Ghanth* is regarded not only as a *wasilah* (Ar: intercessor) but also as a *na'ili al-rasul* (Ar: successor of the Prophet), and the Prophet is regarded as *wasilah al-'uzma* (Ar: the Great Intercessor) who brings people to *ungai* (union) with God (Anonymous n.d.). In the case of Wahidiyyah, Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf as well as his son, Abdul Latif Madjid, are regarded by

their followers not only as the *Ghanth* but also as perfect teachers (Ar: *kaamil mulkamil*) who are able to be intercessors between humans and God and the Prophet. In his speech on the occasion of the *Majidabadu Kibraya* ritual in 2000, Abdul Latif Madjid also regards himself as a point of intercession for Wahidiyyah followers. He said this:

Some one asked me, 'Uncle, I recited this liany, why has it not been successful?' I said to him, 'Therefore you should take me as a mediator.' He answered: 'I did.' And I said to him, 'In that case, you have not given absolute submission to me. If you do not understand what total surrender means, simply recite this in the way I recite it' (Madjid 2000)

If Kyai Madjid Ma'ruf and his son are considered to be *Ghanth*, their followers then have to submit absolutely to their guidance.

Another doctrine of Wahidiyyah is *Yahii kulla dhi bagin bagqabu* (literally, in Arabic, to accord rights to those who deserve them), which is interpreted to mean that people should give priority to fulfilling their obligations rather than to claiming their rights. The fulfillment of obligations will result in the fulfillment of rights. For example, children must fulfill their obligations to their parents, and parents have to fulfill their obligations to their children without claiming their rights. In fact, this doctrine is reminiscent of al-Ghazali, who defines justice as giving rights to those who possess those rights. According to Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf, this doctrine will give a balance between the esoteric life and exoteric life. He puts it this way:

It is not enough for us just to study *iman mubshabada*, as the early Sufis who merely focused on their ascetic life (*qanbihi*) and their isolation (*taji'ih*) so that they could not fulfill their duty as people of their nation. (Anonymous 1425c/2004)

The last doctrine of Wahidiyyah is (in Arabic) *taqdim al-ahammi fa al-ahammi thumma al-anfaa' fa al-anfaa'*. This doctrine is described as giving priority to fulfilling the most important matters as well as the most useful matters. This doctrine applies especially when people are faced with two important options. In this case, they should choose which is the more important. If both options are important, then one should choose the option which is more useful. According to this

doctrine, everything that leads to the consciousness of God and His Prophet is regarded as most important (*ahammi*) and everything which gives benefits to others is regarded as the most useful (Anonymous 1425b:30). This doctrine is derived from Islamic legal theories which state that preventing damage should be prioritised over seeking benefit (Ar: *dar'u al-mafasid muqaddam 'alaa jalb al-ma'afid*) and that lesser injuries should be prioritised between two injuries (Ar: *fi al-dararin akbaru akhaffilinnah*).

It is clear that the teachings of Wahidiyyah stress the importance of the internal components of religious life as well as the necessity of observing the outward ritual forms of Islam and of avoiding *shirk khafiy* (hidden polytheism). The first six doctrines are closely related to managing one's heart and intentions by emphasizing *dhamqiyat* (mystical taste or sense), while the last two doctrines are concerned with daily activities which should also be fulfilled by Wahidiyyah members. Practising the doctrines of Wahidiyyah will not prevent practitioners from being involved in social activities. Instead of encouraging passivity and withdrawal from worldly affairs, the followers of Wahidiyyah are required to become involved in public life, not only by performing their daily tasks but also by spreading Wahidiyyah to the community. In this sense, Wahidiyyah appeals to Muslim activism, since the fulfillment of worldly duties is seen as an integral part of its followers' progress in their spiritual journey.

The practices and ritual of Wahidiyyah focus on the continual recitation of *salawat* based on *muja'abadah*. In Sufism, *muja'abadah*, which means striving, refers to an intense spiritual effort that may lead to levels of spiritual ecstasy. In the case of Wahidiyyah, *muja'abadah* is conceived as a method of reciting *Salawat Wahidiyyah* in accordance with the methods and ethics taught by the author of the *salawat*, including the implementation of the doctrines of Wahidiyyah, the imagination of the Prophet's presence, and the deep feeling of sinfulness before God (Anonymous 1989). In other words, in Wahidiyyah, *muja'abadah* refers to an optimal effort to defeat passion (I: *nafsu*, Ar: *nafs*) in order to establish the consciousness of God and His Prophet (Ar: *ma'rifah bi'llah wa Rasu'llihi* or *iman mubshabada*) and to achieve *muqmul* with God.

It is strongly recommended that members of the group should follow the *adab* (here, protocols) imposed by the group before practicing *mujahadah* or reciting the *salawat*. First, people should be purified either from *badas besar* (major impurity)¹⁴ or *badas kecil* (minor impurity).¹⁵ Second, they should face the direction of Ka'ba in Mecca (i: *keblah*). Third, if people perform *mujahadah* together (i: *berjamaah*), they should form a circle facing inward. Fourth, this practice should be based on the teaching of Wahidiyyah. Fifth, people should be inspired by the greatness of the Prophet by imagining that they sit in front of him. Sixth, people should feel full of sin, hoping for forgiveness from God and regretting their sinfulness. Seventh, people should be obedient to Abdul Latif Madjid, the leader of the Salawat Wahidiyyah group. Eighth, people should be inspired by the meaning of the text of the *salawat* while reciting it. Ninth, people should not be in a rush when they recite the *salawat*. When women menstruate, they are allowed to join the ritual and they can recite everything in the text of the *salawat* but they should not recite the opening chapter of the Qur'an, *al-Fatihah* (Anonymous 1425a:23).

During *mujahadah*, the followers of the Wahidiyyat group in Ngoro, Jombang, are urged to visualise their master (Ar: *tasawwur al-shayekh*), Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf. In contrast, I did not find that the members of the Wahidiyyah group in Kediri practised the visualisation of their leader. This practice is very important to the Ngoro group, particularly to increase their love of the *mursyid* (Yusuf 2003:61). This is partly because, although Kyai Abdul Madjid Ma'ruf has died, he is believed to still be able to watch his followers as well as educate them spiritually. If the followers doubt the late founder's ability to watch and educate them, they will be prevented from receiving his blessing. By visualising the *mursyid*, the followers become conscious of his presence, which will save them from *nafs* (passion) and increase their spiritual achievement. However, the ritual practices of Wahidiyyah do not determine the method for visualising the *mursyid*. Bruinessen (1992:85) points out that the visualisation of the *mursyid* is also practised by other international Sufi orders such as the Ni'matullah order in Iran, the Naqshabandiyyah order, and the Shattariyyah order.

The development of chanting groups in East Java

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The strategy of preaching Salawat Wahidiyyah to implement tolerance: the role of *pesantren*

As Howell points out, 'the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) have been both the loci of *tarekat* and important sources of recruitment for them, with former pupils returning later in life to their old *pesantren*, or to another in the *pesantren* network, to undertake more weighty spiritual regimes' (Howell 2001:705). This view might be considered to apply only to those *pesantren* which provide the teaching of *tarekat* or a Sufi order. As Howell (2001), Zulkifli (2002) and Dhofter (1980) argue, however, although most *pesantren* in Java do not have particular *tarekat* branches, the life in most *pesantren* still involves the practice of intimate elements of Sufism such as the reciting of *dhikr* (religious litanies) and *wirid* (religious formula). This is valid if Sufism is seen to be present not merely in the form of a Sufi order but when there are ascetic and devotional practices that need not involve mysticism. Therefore, many students (*santti*) in *pesantren* who join in the performance of collective *dhikr* and perform a particular *wirid* may not be members of a Sufi order. This is explained in this expression: 'a follower of *tarekat* is also a Sufi, but a Sufi does not have to be a follower of *tarekat*' (Zulkifli 2001:30). Thus, *pesantren* have played an important role in the maintenance of Sufi practices from the early days of *pesantren* in Indonesia.

Despite the fact that Wahidiyyah is not a Sufi order, it nevertheless teaches and practises Sufi teaching as practised by Sufi orders. Wahidiyyah realises that *pesantren* are a strategic means through which to disseminate its teaching. Therefore, *pesantren* are used not merely to teach basic religious knowledge, the Qur'an, law and theology, and to mould Wahidiyyah *ulama* who are the inheritors of Prophets (Ar: *warithat al-anbiya*), but also to create Wahidiyyah cadres active in every aspect of life. To be more specific, the education system in the *pesantren* strives to mould *wali yang intelek, intelektual yang wali*, 'intellectual saints' (*wali* or *'arif* who also master secular knowledge), and 'saintly intellects' (scholars of modern knowledge who also have achieved *ma'rifah*). A similar vision is used by *pesantren* which adopt a secular system of education as well as *salafi pesantren*¹⁶ methods. *Pesantren* Tebuiteng in Jombang, for example, aims to train its students to become *ulama intelektual* and *intelektual ulama* (Dhofter 1980:81).

To implement the vision, Pesantren Kedunglo offers two types of education. The first type is an educational system which is in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, ranging from elementary level to university level (SD (*sekolah dasar*, primary school), SMP (*sekolah menengah pertama*, junior high school), SMA (*sekolah menengah atas*, senior high school) and Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (Islamic College) and Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Wahidiyah (Wahidiyah College of Economics). These schools can receive educational subsidies from the Ministry of National Education. The second type is a *dinjah* system which adopts *pesantren* methods. This system consists of several levels from Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (kindergarten for Qur'an Education), Madrasah Ibtidayat (primary school), through Madrasah Thanawiyat (junior high), to Madrasah Aliyat (senior high). The characteristics of the *dinjah* system can be clearly seen from the texts used in the *pesantren*. Most of the texts are classical texts (*kitab kuning*) which are widely used in many other traditional pesantren (*pesantren salaf*) and include Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Arabic grammar (*nahw* and *sarf*), theology (*tauhid*), and the study of Prophetic tradition (Hadith), the knowledge of Hadith (Ar: *ulum al-hadith*), Islamic history (Ar: *ta'rikh*), and Islamic ethics (*akhlak*). The texts are given to students in evening class in accordance with their level of study. In addition to the texts, other local subjects such as Wahidiyah studies of the *mujaahadah* and speech (*Pra'akte Kibinah*) are taught at all levels of education in Wahidiyah. These two subjects, followed by the practice of the *mujaahadah* ritual, give a firm grounding from which students can achieve *ma'rifat*, the ultimate stage of Sufi practice, and mould a cadre of Wahidiyah who can carry out the proselytisation of Wahidiyah.

Although the *pesantren* has adopted the *dinjah* system, there is no segregation between female and male students in the classroom. Both are treated equally in terms of their rights to have access to education. They are often involved together in *pesantren* activities such as sports and boys and girls scouts. Gender segregation is applied within *pesantren* only in the *mujaahadah* ritual, the five daily prayers, and the weekly al-Hikam instruction (I: Pengajian Mingguan Kitab al-Hikam). In contrast, the segregation of female and male students is strictly applied at other neighboring *pesantren salaf*, such as Pesantren

Lirboyo, Pesantren Ploso, and Pesantren Jampes, for most of the students' daily *pesantren* life.

The founder of Wahidiyah realised that a central organisation is an important tool to facilitate the dissemination of Wahidiyah teachings. According to a recent report, Wahidiyah has established many branches in 17 provinces¹⁷ and in over 125 regencies throughout Indonesia, and has 300 cooperatives (*keperasi* Wahidiyah). Kyai Abdul Latif Majid claims that Wahidiyah also has several overseas agencies, such as in Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Netherlands, England, Saudi Arabia, France, Peru, and Australia (Melbourne) (Majid 2001). The exact number of followers and their social background are unknown because no official record has been made by the official board of Wahidiyah, nor are new followers officially registered. However, in several *mujaahadah* rituals held by the group that I attended, those attending the ritual were farmers, small vendors, and workers from villages surrounding the place of *mujaahadah*.

The structure of organisation in Wahidiyah follows the typical territorial structure of other Islamic organisations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, which in turn mirrors the bureaucratic structure of government. It consists of a central board office and representatives in provinces, regencies, sub-districts and villages (see figure 1). The aims of this structure are to build strong ties among the followers, who cannot directly consult with the central board, as well as to help smooth the coordination of activities according to the level of the organisational structure. Since the structure of Wahidiyah combines *organisasi* (organisation) and *yayasan* (foundation) within the central board of Wahidiyah, the same person functions as the head of the foundation, the head of the central organisation and the guardian of the Wahidiyah struggle (*pengasah perjuangan*) and as the head of a number of departments. He is the highest authority in the group. Each department is headed by a *pramu* who is chosen directly by the head of Wahidiyah or *pengasah perjuangan*. The leader of Wahidiyah argues that the structure of Wahidiyah is derived from his concept of 'a state without land'. In other words, he has established a structure which is similar to that of a state government in its function and purpose.

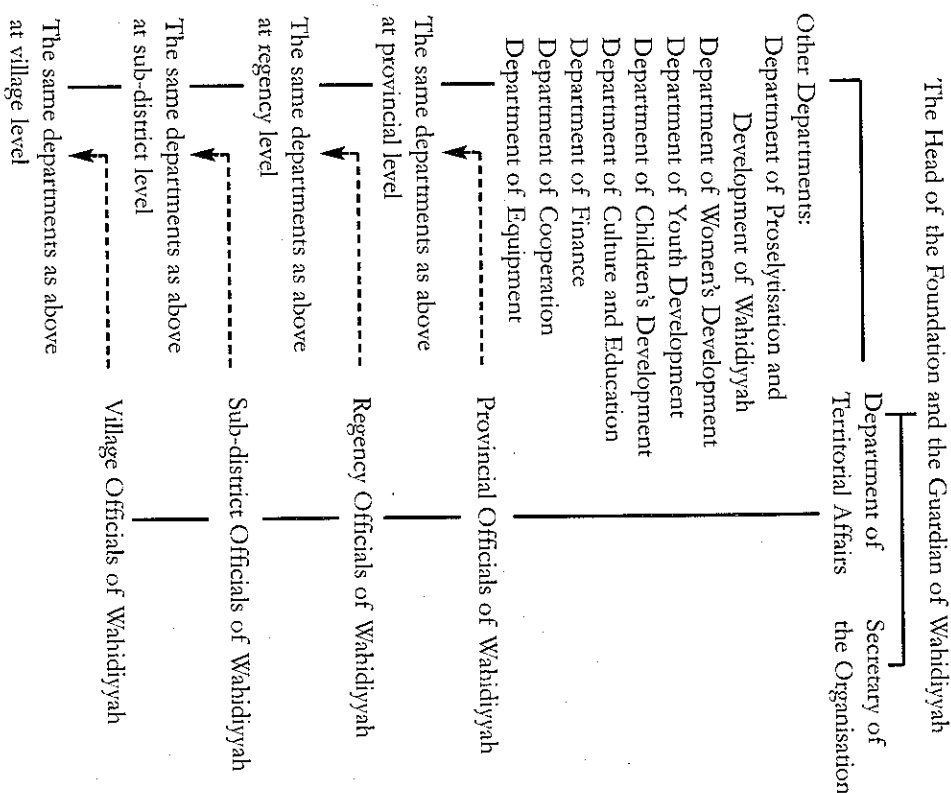


Figure 1: The Organisational Structure of Salawat Wahidiyyah's

In order to support and run the activities of the Wahidiyyah and the *pesantren*, the Department of Finance seeks and develops organisational funding from many sources including agriculture, cooperatives, publishing, raising livestock, stores, financial assistance from government and financial assistance from followers. The financial assistance collected from followers can be divided into three categories. The first category is income contribution (*sumbangan pendapatan*), that is,

at least one percent of the followers' income is taken for the organisation's funds every month. This can be taken from their daily income, monthly income or their occasional income. The second category is contributions from almsgiving (*zakat*) including *zakat* on self (*zakat fitrah*), *zakat* on income (*zakat pendapatan*), and charitable gifts (*sadaqah*). The third category is a donation box to which followers give voluntarily on a daily basis. These three categories of funds should be contributed to the organisation by all followers who have their own income (Anonymous 1424:30-1).

According to informants, followers are not forced by the central Department of Finance to give alms and money to the central organisation of Wahidiyyah. Nevertheless, the followers are strongly encouraged to give donations, *zakat* on self and *zakat* on income for the struggle of Wahidiyyah. The Department argues that the Department, in fact, does not ask for almsgiving and donations from the followers. The Department says it only takes what is the right of the organisation, which is in the hands of the followers.

According to Islamic jurisprudence, there is no obligation for Muslims to give the *zakat* on income to their close neighbours. The *zakat* on self should be distributed directly to the needy and the poor who live nearest to the place where the donors spend the first day of the month of *Syawal*, and it is not be given to an organisation (Qardhawi 1995:411). To resolve this problem, the official members of Wahidiyyah, particularly the Department of Finance, regard themselves as (in Arabic) *fii sabillillah bi jabil al-khayr*, one of the groups which is eligible to receive donations (*mustahiq*)¹⁹, so the followers can give their *zakat fitrah* to the department. This department has representatives at all levels from provinces level to village level (Anonymous 1423b). For this reason, the money collected from *zakat* is used mainly to support the Wahidiyyah struggle, not for other purposes. In this sense, it is clear that in contrast to the hierarchical nature of South Asian Islamic gift-giving described by Werbner (2003:113), the direction of *zakat* in Wahidiyyah is not 'downwards' to the poor but 'upwards', as a religious tribute to the leader of Wahidiyyah, whether alive or dead, through the institution.

Another method of collecting financial support from the followers is through collection boxes provided to followers by the Department of Finance of Wahidiyyah. These boxes should be put in front of the followers' houses. It is highly recommended that the followers put some money into the box everyday, regardless of the amount, with pure intention (*ikhlas*). The boxes are collected by *imam jama'ah* (the village leader of Wahidiyyah) on a weekly basis when the *Majlisbadab* ('*Usbu'iyah* (weekly *majlisbadab*) is held in each village. At the end of every month the funds should be given to the central Department of Finance after deducting the funds for the organisation at regency level (Anonymous 1423a).

According to an informant, the followers should give donations to the organisation to express their gratitude, their sacrifice and their responsibility in helping the organisation bring Muslims to the consciousness of God and His Prophet. This is a hard task for the organisation, which requires not only time and organisational management but also funds. Therefore, followers need to give financial assistance to the organisation not only for the sake of the organisation but also for the direct benefit of the followers themselves, particularly to improve their closeness to God and His Prophet. In other words, in order to achieve (in Arabic) *ma'rifah bil'Allah wa rasulih* (the gnosis of God and His Prophet), the followers of Wahidiyyah should make an effort to use their ability, wealth and knowledge to help the struggle of Wahidiyyah. All of these efforts should be directed according to the guidance of Romo Yahi (the current leader of Wahidiyyah). In this sense, sacrifice is strongly stressed within this Sufi group, and has become a yardstick by which to measure the followers' submission (*Ar-taslim*) to the leader of Wahidiyyah.

As mentioned above, all Wahidiyyah followers have a responsibility to bring all people, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or age, to the consciousness of God and His Prophet. Thus, not only the founder and the official board members of Wahidiyyah but also the followers and other people have a duty to spread the teaching of Wahidiyyah, including the *Salawat Wahidiyyah*, to other people. As a result, those who have received and practised *Salawat Wahidiyyah* can spread the teachings to others without asking for *ijazah* (licence) from

the leader. With this characteristic, Wahidiyyah can be categorised as a missionary *dhiyer* group which strongly urges its followers to spread its teachings and seek new followers. The missionary nature of Wahidiyyah was clearly reflected in the teachings of Kyai Madiq. For instance, he suggested to his followers on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Salawat Wahidiyyah* that, 'Within a month, every Wahidiyyah follower should get new followers, at least one new follower' (Anonymous 1989:70).

In contrast, Sufi orders such as Qodiriya, Naqshabandiyyah and Tijaniyah require *bai'at* (oath of allegiance or initiation) and *ijazah* (licence) for their followers. Only particular disciples who have received *ijazah* from their master are able to spread and seek new followers. In line with this, there are three types of *ijazah*. The first (and lowest) is given to disciples to practise *tarbiqa*. The second *ijazah* gives authority to disciples, as the representative of their master, to guide others in practising Sufism. The third is the highest *ijazah*, and authorises the holder as Sufi master to initiate novices (Bruinessen 1992).

Despite the fact that all followers are responsible for spreading the teaching of Wahidiyyah and the *Salawat Wahidiyyah*, the Wahidiyyah organisation has established the Department of Proselytisation and Development of Wahidiyyah which focuses on spreading the teaching of Wahidiyyah. This Department is responsible for training Wahidiyyah male preachers (*Ar: daa'i*), female preachers (*Ar: daa'iyah*) and cadres so that they can preach and give true information concerning the teaching and the ritual of Wahidiyyah to other people. One of the activities of this Department is to give short courses and regular training for preachers, members of the board of the organisation, and followers at all levels. Such activities not only enhance followers' conceptual and practical understanding of Wahidiyyah teaching, but also prepare them to become skillful cadres who are able to fulfill organisational tasks.

As mentioned in a book entitled *Babun Ulp Crating Dai' Wahidiyyah Bagian B* (Upgrading Materials for Wahidiyyah Preachers, Part B), the importance of proselytising and spreading the teaching of Wahidiyyah can be compared with the duty to spread Islam (*da'wah Islamiyyah*) itself. The rationale for this notion is that the teaching of

Wahidiyyah contains an introduction to God and the Prophet which is also part of Islamic teachings. If that is the case, the duty to spread Wahidiyyah can be considered the same obligation as conducting and spreading Islamic teachings. It is, therefore, claimed that the spreading of Wahidiyyah to other people is sanctioned by Qur'anic verses and the tradition of the Prophet. In turn, those who do not spread the teaching of Wahidiyyah can be regarded as violating Islamic teachings (Anonymous 1989:74).

Other strategies and methods of propagating Wahidiyyah include meeting other people personally, explaining Wahidiyyah in meetings involving many groups of people, writing letters to people, and spreading Wahidiyyah through newspapers, radio and television. Before applying these methods, all Wahidiyyah preachers should perform special *mujahadah* to ask God for success in their efforts. It is also suggested that every follower of Wahidiyyah put symbols of Wahidiyyah, such as a Wahidiyyah calendar, the Wahidiyyah logo and the picture of Kyai Madiid and Abdul Latif, in their home and fly Wahidiyyah flags wherever a ritual of *mujahadah* will be held (Anonymous 1425c). These will all make Wahidiyyah easily recognised by other people.

Although the preaching of Wahidiyyah is likened to the preaching of Islam, this does not prevent this Sufi group from being tolerant of followers of other religions who wish to practise *Salawat Wahidiyyah*. This Sufi group allows followers of other religions to practise the *salawat* without requiring them to convert to Islam. Other Muslim groups might object to this practice, but it can be regarded as part of Wahidiyyah strategy to spread the *Salawat Wahidiyyah* among other people; this is perceived to demonstrate the tolerant nature of Sufism in general toward other religious faiths. In this sense, Abdul Latif Madiid argues that members of other religions are not compelled to convert to Islam by practising *Salawat Wahidiyyah*: they are only asked to approach God. For him, the most important thing is that they want to read *Salawat Wahidiyyah*. When asked whether their good deeds (i: *amal*) would be accepted by God if they were not Muslim, he replies that one should distinguish between good deeds and prayers (i: *doa*). Good deeds are a matter of *fi'el* (Islamic jurisprudence), while prayers

are not. According to *fi'el*, the good deeds (*amal*) of people will only be accepted by God if they are performed by Muslims, not if they are performed by believers of other religions. Prayers invoked by followers of other religions, however, can be granted by God. Kyai Latif further argues that to become a Muslim is a matter of divine guidance (*hidayah*). Since it is a matter of *hidayah*, Muslims cannot compel people of other religious faiths to convert to Islam. For Kyai Latif, people's willingness to recite and practise *Salawat Wahidiyyah* is the result of guidance (*hidayah*) (Madiid 2001:25). It is for this reason that after practising *mujahadah* for forty days, 70 followers of Balinese Hinduism were able to participate in the ritual of *Mujahadah Kalina* in Pesantren Kedunglo (Madiid 1424).

The inclusiveness and tolerance of Wahidiyyah is not quite a unique phenomenon as it is also found among Sufi groups elsewhere. There have been studies showing the inclusiveness and tolerance of Sufi groups and practices in South Asia. Sahab (1998), for instance, observed the inclusiveness and tolerance shown by a Sufi group in Nagore, India, where both Muslims and Hindus celebrated the anniversary of the death of the Sufi saint Sahul Hameed Nagore Andavar, known as *'urs* or *Kandari*, and attended his tomb (Sahab 1998).

Conclusion

It can be seen from the teachings and the ritual of *majlis alihik* that although they do not have an acknowledged chain of transmission from the Prophet, they follow the mainstream of Sufi teachings. Moreover, to judge this group as illegitimate because of its lack of a chain of transmission from the Prophet will not dissuade the followers of this group from the effort to attain the ultimate aim of the practice of Sufism, which is to seek proximity to God and the consciousness of God and the Prophet. I would argue that those who condemn this group as an innovation in Islam or as an impurity (*bida'ah*) need to assess the group by using the *sharia* parameter. In fact, most of the ritual and the teachings of this group are based not only on the Qur'an and Hadith, the two sources of *sharia*, but also on interpretations from mainstream Sufism. In contrast to the negative judgement of this group

by other Muslims, I suggest taking a positive view: that this *dhikr* group can provide an alternative means by which Indonesian Muslims can seek closeness to their God and their Prophet. Further, I would argue that its tolerant attitude and emphasis on spiritual aspects of religiosity make it a model for the plural values that liberal Islamic groups are embracing, to challenge the threatening communalism of extremist Islamic groups.

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Notes

1. In recent decades this term has been used to denote the most strictly puitanical groups within Islam.
2. Interview with Lukman Hakim, Jakarta, 24 July 2005.
3. Interview with Lukman Hakim, Jakarta, 24 July 2005.
4. In the past, there were no clear-cut boundaries between numerous different *tariqa*, either in their doctrines and ritual or in their memberships. Disciples did not necessarily adhere to one *tariqa*; they could become a member of different *tariqa* and take allegiance to the different *unsyid* of those *tariqa*. The best exemplar of this was Muhammad Yusuf al-Makassari (1037–1111/1627–99), the seventeenth century Malay Sufi, who affiliated himself with several *tariqa* such as Qadiriyyah, Khatwariyyah and Naqshabandiyyah (Azra 1992:420–7). Kyai Abbas from Pesantren Buntet, Cirebon, can also be added to this category as a Kyai who joined two different *tariqa*, Shattariyyah and Tijaniyyah.
5. This Sufi leader's full name was Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Ibn 'Abdallah Ibn al-Jabbar al-Shadhili. He founded the *tariqa* called Shadhiliyyah. His teachings are widespread in North Africa and similarly present in most of the Islamic world, as far as Indonesia.
6. Al-Ghazali's full name was Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Tusi al-Ghazali. He was a prominent Muslim scholar, theologian, jurist, Sufi and religious reformer.
7. Among the works of this Sufi sage and scholar of thirteenth century Egypt, *Khiab al-Hikmah* is particularly noteworthy because of its universal value.
8. Because of the ban, this organisation first changed its name to LEMKARI and then later to LDI, Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Institute for Proselytisation).

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9. Al-'Arabi's full name was Muhyi al-Din Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-'Arabi. He was the greatest Sufi in Islam. He was the most prolific of Sufi writers. His works number more than 239.
10. A *Hadith Qudsi* is a tradition containing revelation from God phrased in the Prophet's own words.
11. Hamka's full name was Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (1908–1981). He was author of the book entitled *Tamasya Modern*. He is considered responsible for introducing Sufi teachings to Indonesian Muslim Reformists.
12. Interview with Abdul Latif Madjid, Kediri, November 2004.
13. Interview with Kyai Zainuddin, Kediri, February, 2005.
14. An impurity that requires a Muslim to carry out a full ritual ablution (*Ar: ghusl*), as for example after having a wet dream or sexual intercourse with one's spouse.
15. An impurity that requires a Muslim to carry out a minor ritual ablution (*Ar: wudu*), as for example after passing wind, urinating, or defecating.
16. Pesantren Salafi is a *pesantren* that still preserves the teaching of classical texts as essential education.
17. There are 17 representatives in the following provinces: East Java, Central Java, West Java, Lampung, North Sumatra, South Sumatra, Jambi, Riau, Bali, East Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, Gorontalo, NTT, Papua (Merauke), and South Sulawesi.
18. Interview with Kyai Zainuddin, Kediri, November, 2004.
19. *Musabiq* refers to people who are eligible to receive *zakat*. The Qur'an describes eight groups of people who are able to receive *zakat*, including the poor (*msakin*), the needy (*faqir*), employees of *zakat* (*Ar: amul*), those who just have embraced Islam (*Ar: mu'allaf*), a debtor (*Ar: gharim*), free slaves (*Ar: rigadl*), those who work in the cause of Allah (*Ar: fi sabilillah*) and wayfarers (*Ar: ibn sabil*).

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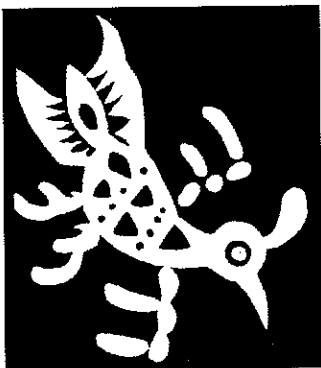
Pesantren in power: religious institutions and political recruitment in Sumenep, Madura

Abdul Gaffar Karim

One of the results of Indonesian decentralisation is the growing role of local community leaders, including religious figures, in many district governments. In the predominantly Muslim island of Madura in East Java, by 2003 three of its four districts saw the elections of *kyai*, leaders of *pesantren*,¹ as district heads (*bupati*). The recent wave of *pesantren* leaders assuming formal political power in Madura was started in Sumenep in 2000 when Kiai Ramdhan Siradj was elected *bupati* by the district parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, the DPRD). This election was part of a broader political current in which *Reformasi* (political reform) has enabled more political actors in this district to intensify their participation in political contestation.

In this article, I will discuss the role of *kyai* and *pesantren* in the local political recruitment process in Sumenep. I argue that *kyai* and *pesantren* played a very central role in the 2000 and 2005 district government elections in Sumenep. I believe, however, that, despite the fact that *pesantren* effectively controlled the political recruitment process, these institutions may not possess very clear goals in their exercise of political power.

This article begins with analysis of some aspects of the Indonesian decentralisation policy with regard to the reform of district elections. In the next section it provides some description of Sumenep and of the position of Islam, *pesantren* and *kyai* in this district. It also discusses the *pesantren* network, mostly based on genealogical factors. Later sections of the article explore the identities of politicians and *kyai*, showing the importance of their genealogical and kinship backgrounds. The final section draws attention to the district government elections of 2000 and 2005, and the role of *kyai* and *pesantren* in those elections.



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