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# Kurdish `Ulama and their Indonesian Disciples

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## Traces of Kurdish influence in Indonesia

The Indonesian archipelago, which is the largest island group in the world and very rich in natural resources, has been visited by sailors and traders from many parts of the world as long as there has been seaborne traffic. Wave upon wave of migrants arrived from mainland Southeast Asia; the monsoon winds brought Chinese from the north, Indians and Arabs from the west, and smaller numbers of people from numerous other nations. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in Indonesian Islam the traces of many other Islamicised cultures. Besides words and expressions derived from Arabic, we also find terms in use that are derived from Persian, Sanskrit, Tamil and various other Indian languages; there are clear Chinese influences in the architecture of certain mosques and Muslim shrines; Indianised mystical ideas have long been prominent, and, during the last century and a half especially, there has been a pervasive influence of Arabs from Hadramawt, who settled in the archipelago in large numbers.

To my initial surprise, I discovered that there is also a distinct Kurdish influence, especially among the most pious segments of the population. It is remarkable, for instance, that in Java, the most populous island of the archipelago, there are quite a few people named Kurdi. This name is so common, especially in strict Muslim circles, that few outsiders are aware that it is not an indigenous name. I have never encountered anyone named Turki, Farsi or Hindi to match all those Kurdi — although I have

come across a few Misri and Malibari. I shall return to the significance of these personal names below.

Another sign of Kurdish influence is even more striking, because it is so prominent in the religious life of the masses. The most popular religious text throughout the Archipelago, second only to the Qur'an itself, is a work commonly known as the *Barzanji*. This text, a *mawlid*, is recited not only on the 12th of Rabi` al-awwal, the Prophet's birthday, but on numerous other occasions: at life cycle ceremonies such as the first cutting of a baby's hair (*`aqîqa*), in crisis situations, as a part of an exorcising ritual, or routinely as a regular communal expression of piety. There is probably not a single Indonesian Muslim who has not attended a reading of the *Barzanji* at least a few times in his life. Surprisingly, it has never been noticed before that Barzanji is the name of the most influential family of `ulama and *tariqa* shaykhs in southern Kurdistan.

In several regions of the archipelago known for their strong attachment to Islam, such as Aceh, West Sumatra and Banten, one finds remnants of an invulnerability cult known as *debus*. Its practitioners stab themselves with large skewers, swords and other sharp objects without suffering wounds. At present degenerated into a popular entertainment, *debus* is derived from the well-known practices usually associated with the Rifa`iyya sufi order (known in the west as the “howling dervishes”). However, in northern Banten *debus* is also associated with the Qadiriyya order.<sup>[1]</sup> Although the Qadiriyya shares with the Rifa`iyya its loud and ecstatic *dhikr*, its followers do not as a rule stab or cut themselves. I know of only one other place where the Qadiriyya engage in these practices, and that is Kurdistan.<sup>[2]</sup> The most influential Qadiri shaykhs of Kurdistan, in fact, belong to the said Barzanji family. Interestingly, one observer noted that the *Barzanji* was recited during a *debus* performance that he

witnessed.<sup>[3]</sup>

The final surprise of my first year in Indonesia occurred when I began making a survey of the traditional Islamic books that were for sale in the market. In the major Islamic bookstore of Bandung, in West Java, I found a large pile of copies of Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi's *Tanwîr al-qulûb*, a well-known compendium of the Naqshbandi order written about a century ago.<sup>[4]</sup> Later I was to discover that this book is not only studied by Indonesian Naqshbandi but also is widely used as a *fîqh* textbook in Southern Sulawesi. Muhammad Amin was one Kurdish `âlim who clearly exercised a considerable influence in Indonesia. I was to discover that several other Kurdish `ulama had been at least as influential in Indonesia.

Kurds then have made an impact on Indonesian Islam at least comparable to that of some other reputed Islamisers.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Kurds had ever visited the Archipelago until very recent times. It can be shown, however, that at least from the mid-seventeenth century on, Kurdish `ulamâ have played a significant part in the Islamisation of the Archipelago.

Much of the debate on the origins of Islam in Indonesia appears to proceed from the assumption that this must have been a one-time event with a single identifiable actor. This assumption is contradicted by all the available evidence: Islamisation is better understood as an ongoing process, beginning at different times in different parts of the Archipelago and under a host of different influences.<sup>[5]</sup> The various Muslim peoples having commerce with Indonesia — and these included Arabs, Persians, Indians from all along the coast as well as Cham and Chinese — have all left their impact, in some cases more lasting than in others. But it was not only these foreign visitors who contributed

to the Islamisation of the Archipelago.

Once the first steps towards Islam had been taken, a major role in the ongoing process of Islamisation was played by Indonesians themselves, who travelled to Mecca and the other holy cities in search of magical knowledge and understanding of Islam. In spite of the great distance and the arduousness of the journey, many Indonesians performed the *hajj*, often staying several years in Arabia to study. (Visiting magically potent centres in search of spiritual powers, *kasektèn*, had been a major aspect of religious life before the advent of Islam; Mecca soon came to be considered as the most potent of all cosmic centres.)

In the seventeenth century, the first period for which we have somewhat substantial information, there was a very distinct Indian flavour to Indonesian Islam. The most popular mystical order then was an Indian one, the Shattâriyya; the best known mystical text was a brief work by the almost contemporary Indian author Burhanpuri, and the other religious texts studied in the region were those that were also popular in India at that time.

[6] This Indian influence, however, did not reach the Archipelago directly from the subcontinent but came by way of Medina and Mecca. It was teachers in Medina who initiated the first Indonesians into the Shattâriyya. The most influential of these teachers was a Kurd, Ibrahim al-Kurani.

Ibrahim al-Kurani was not the only Kurdish scholar in the Hijaz who had Indonesian disciples. Southeast Asians studying in Arabia often sought out Kurdish `ulamâ as their teachers. In part this may have been because the Indonesians, at least by the seventeenth century, were Shafî`i like most of the Kurds. But this can hardly have been the sole reason for this attraction towards Kurdish teachers. It is as if there was a spiritual kinship between Indonesians and Kurds. It was in mysticism and pious devotion that Indonesian and Kurdish Islam were or became

most closely akin.

## The Kurds as cultural brokers

Geopolitical accident has made the Kurds into mediators between three great cultural traditions of Islam. Kurdistan lies in between, and partly separates, the centres of Persian, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish culture. For many centuries, Kurdish men of letters have had a knowledge of all three languages besides their own Kurdish (or Gurani or Zaza). Due to this linguistic competence, they have often acted as mediators between these various cultures. Many of them studied in one part of the Muslim world and later taught in another.

Up to the nineteenth century, the major language of Indian Islam was Persian. It is therefore not surprising to find Kurdish `ulama in the holy cities teaching — presumably in Arabic — somewhat indianised versions of Islam. They had easy access to the Persian-language literary tradition of India and several Kurdish `ulama, in fact, had more direct contact with the subcontinent. Probably, the most striking case, is that of Mawlana Khalid, of whom more below.

One region of southern Kurdistan, Shahrazur, deserves special mention in this connection, because it produced numerous `ulama who were to have an impact on Indonesia. Shahrazur is the region in Iraq that includes Kerkuk and present Sulaimaniya; most of the `ulama in question belonged to an ethnic sub-group living in that region, the Gurani.<sup>[7]</sup> The Gurani speak an Iranian language different from Kurdish proper and may have different ethnic origins, but they have nevertheless long been considered, and have considered themselves, as Kurds. Their culture is pervaded with mysticism and metaphysical

speculation. The heterodox *Ahl-i Haqq* sect first emerged among the Gurān, and various outlandish mystical and millenarian movements found strong support among them. Their receptivity to new religious ideas is somewhat reminiscent of the syncretism of the Indian subcontinent and Indonesia. There is, however, also a strong tradition of orthodox learning among the Gurān. Several Gurān `ulama gained international renown as the authors of important works in Arabic; we find them listed in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. They had an even greater impact as teachers, the greatest among them, Ibrahim al-Kurāni and Mawlana Khalid, deeply influencing entire generations.

One of the earliest Gurān `ulama with such an international career was the celebrated Molla Gürāni, who for the last eight years of his life (1480-88) served as the *muftî* of Istanbul. He was born in Shahrazur and received his early education from local teachers. He continued his studies in Baghdad, Diyarbakır, Hisn Kayfa, Damascus and Jerusalem, finally arriving, "in a state of extreme poverty", in Cairo, where he studied with, among others, the great Shafī`i legist Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. From Cairo his fame gradually spread over the world. After a conflict in Egypt he was exiled to Syria, whence he went over to the Ottomans, diplomatically changing from the Shafī`i to the Hanafi *madhab*. Such was his reputation that he soon became the preceptor of the future Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, which no doubt helped him in ultimately reaching the highest religious position in the Empire.<sup>[8]</sup>

Several other Gurān have made their mark as teachers in Cairo or Medina. I shall mention in this article only those who had a significant impact on Islam in Indonesia.

**Doyen of the `ulamâ of Medina, teacher extraordinary:**

## Ibrahim b. Hasan al-Kurani (1615-1690)

One of the earliest Indonesian Muslim authors about whom we know more than the barest outline is the Achehnese `Abd al-Ra'uf of Singkel (al-Sinkilî, also known as al-Fânsûrî), who lived ca. 1620-1695. He composed a Malay adaptation of the *Tafsîr al-Jalâlayn* that is still read in some parts of the Archipelago. He also wrote a now forgotten minor work on fiqh, but he is mostly known as the teacher who first introduced the Shattariyya sufi order to Indonesia. `Abd al-Ra'uf spent not less than nineteen years in Mecca and Medina, and his work *'Umdat al-muhtâjîn* gives glimpses of life in the holy cities, names the teachers he listened to, and lists the mystical orders that he became

acquainted with.<sup>[9]</sup> He first studied the Shattariyya with the nominal head of the order, the Palestinian Ahmad al-Qushashi in Medina, and continued under his successor Ibrahim al-Kurani. It was especially with the latter, to whom he owed his *ijâza* to teach the *tariqa*, that `Abd al-Ra'uf established a close relationship.<sup>[10]</sup>

`Abd al-Ra'uf was not al-Kurani's only Indonesian student. Another was `Abd al-Ra'uf's most famous Indonesian contemporary, Yusuf of Makassar. Yusuf spent even more time in Arabia, and he is primarily known in Indonesia as the propagator of the Khalwatiyya and as a *mujâhid* against the Dutch East Indies Company. In his *Safînat al-najâh* he lists the orders into which he was initiated, including the Shattariyya, for which he also received an *ijaza* from Ibrahim al-Kurani.<sup>[11]</sup> Although Yusuf does not mention it here, al-Kurani's teaching went beyond instruction in *dhikr* and the other mystical techniques of the order and covered the more intellectual dimensions of *tasawwuf* as well. We know that under Ibrahim's supervision Yusuf studied a difficult text by `Abd al-Rahman Jami, *Al-durra al-fâkhira*, which compares the views of the

philosophers, the theologians and the sufis on questions regarding God's existence, His unity, His knowledge, etc. Two copies of this work in Yusuf's hand have come to light. The second of them was copied on Ibrahim's orders and contains glosses by the master himself.<sup>[12]</sup> Yusuf must have been studying this work over an appreciable period of time.

There are indications that Ibrahim al-Kurani had many more Indonesian students besides these two, although we know none of the others by name. Johns gathers that they must have been numerous and that Ibrahim spent much energy guiding them, but the evidence for this claim is only indirect. At least two of al-Kurani's numerous writings (Brockelmann lists forty titles, Johns speaks of a hundred) were written especially for an Indonesian audience. One of these was composed in 1675 in response to questions from several Indonesians and dealt with a dispute that had raged in Acheh four decades earlier. Nuruddin Raniri, who was then the most influential `âlim in Acheh, had condemned as heretical the *wahdat al-wujûd* mysticism adhered to by followers of the mystic Shamsuddin, as a result of which one mystic was burnt at the stake. In his *fatwâ*, al-Kurani refutes Raniri's arguments and gives an orthodox reinterpretation of *wahdat al-wujûd*.<sup>[13]</sup> The brief notice on Ibrahim al-Kurani in al-Muradi's biographical dictionary mentions what appears to be another *fatwâ* or perhaps even a collection of *fatwâ* requested by people from "Jawa", i.e. the Malay Archipelago. No copy of this work has come to light.<sup>[14]</sup>

The other text that al-Kurani wrote expressly on behalf of Indonesian Muslims, *Ithâf al-dhakî*, is an important commentary on Muhammad b. Fadl Allah Burhanpuri's *Al-tuhfa al-mursala ilâ rûh al-nabî*. This simple exposition of Ibn `Arabi's emanation theory, written in 1590, had within a few decades become vastly

popular in the Archipelago, at first in Arabic but soon also in Malay and Javanese adaptations.<sup>[15]</sup> Whereas Ibn `Arabi considered five stages of emanation, his Indian populariser stipulated seven, and it was as the doctrine of the “seven stages” (*martabat tujuh*) that the emanation theory has since been known in Indonesia. Ibrahim's commentary was meant as an orthodox correction to the heterodox, pantheist and *sharî`a*-denying interpretations to which Burhanpuri's text had given rise in the Archipelago.<sup>[16]</sup> Although written at the request of his Indonesian disciples, *Ithâf al-dhakî* has found a readership across the Islamic world and is, for instance, also quoted in a major sufi text from West Africa.<sup>[17]</sup>

Ibrahim al-Kurani was by that time the leading representative of Ibn `Arabi's doctrines in Medina and perhaps throughout the entire Muslim world. When serious controversies erupted in India because Ahmad Sirhindi's rejected certain ideas of Ibn `Arabi, leading Indian `ulama requested a *fatwâ* from Ibrahim on this issue. This affair has been dealt with at some length by Friedmann and Rizvi.<sup>[18]</sup> Voll's study on a later generation of `ulama assigns to Ibrahim an even more central place in the intellectual life of his period and also presents him as an intellectual precursor of the eighteenth-century reform movements.<sup>[19]</sup>

Ibrahim exemplifies the Kurdish cultural broker whose role was sketched in the preceding section. After his native Shahrazur he studied in Iran and in Ottoman Anatolia, Syria and Egypt before settling in Medina. His intellectual autobiography, *Al-amam li-iqâz al-himam*,<sup>[20]</sup> shows the variety of teachers he studied with and the wide range of subjects that he immersed himself in. He was initiated into, and was authorised to teach, several *turuq* besides the said Shattariyya. His primary *tariqa*

was in fact the Naqshbandiyya, and he also held *ijâza* of the Qadiriyya and the Chishtiyya. The Shattariyya and the Chishtiyya are of course typically Indian orders, and Ibrahim's Naqshbandi connection (through Qushashi, who was also his Shattari teacher) was also with an Indian branch of that order. When Qushashi died in 1661, Ibrahim succeeded him as the supreme shaykh of the Shattariyya, in combination with the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya, and became the uncontested doyen of Medina's `ulama.

After Ibrahim's death in 1690, his son Muhammad Abu Tahir, who was then 20 years old, succeeded him as the *tarîqa* shaykh; we find Abu Tahir mentioned as the teacher of several Indonesians.<sup>[21]</sup> The leading position among the `ulama of Medina, however, fell to Ibrahim's student Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rasul Barzanji, the Shafi`i *muftî* of Medina. This student, like Ibrahim himself, hailed from Shahrazur and belonged to a family that was to achieve great renown.

## The Barzanji family of Shahrazur and Medina

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Barzanji family was one of the most prominent of southern Kurdistan, a family of `ulama and Qadiri shaykhs who wielded great political influence.<sup>[22]</sup> In the 1920s, Shaykh Mahmud Barzanji rebelled against the British and declared himself king of Kurdistan. in later years too, the family went on playing an important role in the political life of Iraq. As recently as the Iran-Iraq war, we find one member of the family, Shaykh Muhammad Najib Barzanji, leading a small Iranian-created guerrilla group against the Iraqi government. During those same years, another member of the family, Ja`far `Abd al-Karim Barzanji, held a high position in the

Iraqi government as president of the executive council of the then Kurdish autonomous region. These facts appear to reflect the perception of both the Iranian and the Iraqi governments that they needed the charisma of this family if they wished to exercise influence among the Kurds. Even the Iraqi communists, in the late 1950s, recruited one of the Barzani shaykhs, Shaykh Mahmud's son Latif, into their ranks.

The Barzani family claims descent from the Prophet through the Imam Musa Kazim, and it owes its name to the village of Barzinja in Shahrazur (near the present city of Sulaymaniyah), where the founding father of the family, Sayyid `Isa, is believed to have settled in the mid-13th century. Both Edmonds and Tawakkuli give a sketch of the family's history, based on its own oral and written traditions. It is interesting to note that the reputed founder of the Ahl-i Haqq religion was also a son of the same Sayyid `Isa.<sup>[23]</sup>

Edmonds shows that all Barzani presently living in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Arabia and India descend from one Baba Rasul, who according to the family tree belonged to the seventh generation after Sayyid `Isa and who must have flourished in the early 17th century. This Baba Rasul had eighteen sons, one of whom, Muhammad "Madani", settled in Medina and became the ancestor of all the Barzani of Arabia and India. This Muhammad Madani is of course the same Muhammad b. `Abd al-Rasul Barzani whom we already encountered as Ibrahim al-Kurani's associate.

Muhammad b. `Abd al-Rasul's academic career somewhat resembled Ibrahim's: he received his early education from his father and other `ulama of Shahrazur, continuing his studies with teachers in Hamadan (Iran), Baghdad, Mardin, Damascus, Constantinople, Cairo and Mecca and finally with Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani in Medina. He was an expert on

Ibn `Arabi's metaphysics too, and he translated a book on Ibn `Arabi written by one of his relatives, Sayyid Muhammad

Muzaffar Barzanji. from Persian to Arabic [24] When the Indian `ulama requested a *fatwâ* from Ibrahim al-Kurani on the controversial ideas of Ahmad Sirhindi, the “*mujaddid* of the second millenium”, who was a major opponent of Ibn `Arabi's metaphysics, it was Muhammad Barzanji who, at Ibrahim's request wrote two treatises severely criticising Sirhindi, which were then endorsed by other leading `ulama of the Hijaz. [25]

The Barzanji who made the family name a household word in Indonesia was Muhammad's great-grandson, Ja`far b. Hasan b. `Abd al-Karim b. Muhammad (1690-1764), who was born in Medina and spent all his life there. [26] He wrote a number of devotional works that became extremely popular throughout the Muslim world at the time and have remained so in Indonesia until this day. The work presently known there as “the” *Barzanji* is his *mawlid*, entitled *'Iqd al-jawahir*. This is by far the most popular of all *mawlid* texts and probably after the Qur'an the most frequently recited Islamic text. The Barzanji is recited on numerous occasions and for a variety of purposes; besides the annual commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, it is recited at the `aqiqa ceremony when a baby's hair is first shorn, it is read for expiatory or exorcistic purposes (replacing the *wayang* performance that has this function in the less Islamised environments), and in many localities there are weekly Barzanji recitations that bring the local community together. This *mawlid* continues being reprinted; there are various editions on the market, and several Indonesian `ulama have published their commentaries on the text or translated it into local languages. [27]

Of Muhammad Barzanji's other works, the one that has acquired great popularity in Indonesia is his hagiography of

Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir, *Lujjayn al-dâni fî manâqib `Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî*, a work that has penetrated into even the most remote corners of the Archipelago.<sup>[28]</sup> Reading a *manâqib* for protective, expiatory or exorcistic purposes, or simply as an act of devotion, has long been a common and widespread practice in Indonesia. The anniversary of the saint's day of death, on the 11th of the month Rabi` al-akhir, was and still is commemorated in many places with a reading of the *manâqib*; in many parts of Java this used to be done also on the 11th of every other month. Printed editions of this hagiography are widely available in Indonesia, in the original Arabic as well as in Javanese, Sundanese and Indonesian adaptations. Half a century ago, Drewes and Poerbatjaraka published a study of a Javanese *manâqib*, which they showed was based on al-Yafi`i's *Khulâsat al-mafâkhir*.<sup>[29]</sup> However, almost all the *manâqib* of Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir that I have found in current use appear to be based on Barzani's *Lujjayn al-dâni*.<sup>[30]</sup>

Nowadays it is especially, though not exclusively, among the followers of the Qadiri order (or more precisely, of the *tariqa* Qadiriyya wa-Naqshbandiyya, a specifically Indonesian combination of orders) that the *manâqib* is regularly read. The most popular and authoritative version of the *manâqib* is the adaptation made by Kiai Haji Muslih b. `Abd al-Rahman of Mranggen in Central Java, who by the time of his death in 1981 was the most respected teacher of this *tariqa*. His two-volume *Al-nûr al-burhânî fî tarjamat al-lujjayn al-dâni* contains, besides the full text of the *manâqib*, instructions on the *tariqa*, indicating the close relationship of this text with the order. In earlier times, however, the *manâqib* seems to have been read in much wider circles than those of the Qadiriyya alone. Before the order gained a mass following, there already existed a devotional cult centred on the miracle-working saint `Abd al-Qadir Jilani.<sup>[31]</sup>

The Qadiriyya was known in Indonesia from at least the late 16th century on, but it did not gain a mass following there until the mid-19th century. Shaykh Ahmad Khatib of Sambas (in West Borneo), who taught in Mecca in the first half of the 19th century, initiated numerous Indonesians into his combination of the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya, and he appointed *khalifa* who spread the order throughout the Archipelago. There is insufficient evidence, however, on the position of the order in the preceding two centuries. We do not know whether Shaykh Ja`far Barzanji himself played any part in popularising the *tarîqa* or the *manâqib* among Indonesians visiting Medina. The precise relation between this most famous Barzanji and his first Indonesian readers remains obscure.

We do not even know with certainty whether Shaykh Ja`far was a Qadiri himself. The Barzanji family in Iraq are the most prominent shaykhs of the Qadiriyya in Kurdistan, but the family's affiliation with this order is of relatively recent date. The last common ancestor, Baba Rasul, was allegedly affiliated with two other orders, the Nurbakhshiyya and the Khalwatiyya-`Alawiyya, and one of his grandsons, Isma`il Qazanqaya (who must have been a contemporary of Ja`far), is said to have been the first to join the Qadiriyya.<sup>[32]</sup> There is, however, an tantalising similarity between Qadiriyya practices taught by the Barzanji shaykhs in Kurdistan on the one hand and an invulnerability cult known as *debus* in certain parts of Indonesia on the other. Following the communal *dhikr*, Kurdish Qadiri cut themselves with skewers and knives, a practice that elsewhere is not associated with the Qadiriyya but only with the Rifa`iyya.

<sup>[33]</sup> *Debus* in Indonesia (from Ar. *dabbus*, “needle”) is clearly derived from these same Rifa`iyya practices — the skewers have the same form as in the Middle East, with a wooden head to which small metal chains are attached. In Banten, *debus*

practitioners acknowledge an association with Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir as well as with Shaykh Ahmad Rifa`i; some groups even recite the Barzanji for protection during their exercises.<sup>[34]</sup> It is tempting to believe that these similarities must be due to contacts between the regions and that Ja`far Barzanji or his students have provided this link, but there is no supporting evidence.

Subsequent generations of the Barzanji family in Medina remained influential there as teachers and authors, and the office of Shafi`i *mufti* of the city was often in their hands (as it had been in those of Muhammad b. `Abd al-Rasul and Ja`far b. Hasan). A recent study of Arabia under Ottoman rule (i.e., the 1840-1908 period) notes that members of the Barzanji family held the Medina muftanship for most of those 67 years.<sup>[35]</sup> Given this position, it is likely that several of these Barzanji had Indonesian students, but there is little documentation. From a book listing numerous *isnâd* (chains of transmission of Islamic texts) we can conclude that at least two leading Indonesian `ulama studied at least one book each with Ahmad b. Isma`il Barzanji (d. 1914).<sup>[36]</sup> One or two decades later, another prominent Indonesian Muslim, Muhsin Musawwa, the founder of the Indonesian *madrasa Dâr al-`Ulûm al-Islâmiyya* in Mecca, studied in Medina with Zaki b. Ahmad Barzanji.<sup>[37]</sup> The relative paucity of biographical materials on Indonesian `ulama does not allow us to draw any conclusions about the impact of the family on the other Indonesians studying in Medina and Mecca.

## **Why are many Indonesians called Kurdi ? Muhammad b. Sulayman and his commentaries on Ibn Hajar**

In the introduction, I noted that Kurdi has become a personal

name in Indonesia and that it occurs almost exclusively in self-conscious Muslim families. This can again be traced to the influence of one particular Kurdish scholar, whose works have had a major impact in Indonesia.

To explain this, something has to be said about the peculiarities of name-giving in Indonesian Muslim circles. There are roughly three types of name that are felt to be appropriate for a child of pious Muslim parents. The first is the well-known combination of `Abd with one of the divine names, the second type consists of the names of the Prophet and his relatives and companions. The third category is more typically Indonesian. Religious-minded people in the Archipelago — especially those who have studied in a *pesantren*, the traditional Muslim boarding school, often name their children after the authors of important religious texts that they have supposedly studied. Thus we find in Indonesia many people who are named Sanusi, Ramli, Malibari, Ghazali, etc.; I even have a friend whose full name is Muhammad Ibn Ataillah Shohibul Hikam (M. b. `Atâ>illâh, author of *al-Hikam*). Such names sound more learned and pious than the ordinary Muslim names of the other two types. The name Kurdi belongs to this category; it refers to the author of a *fiqh* work that has long been studied in Javanese *pesantren*. Both the author and his work used to be popularly known as *Sleman Kurdi*.<sup>[38]</sup>

Sleman Kurdi or, more correctly, Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Kurdi, was born in Damascus in 1715 and at a very young age followed his father to Medina, where he spent most of his life and died in 1780. He became the city's Shafî`i *mufti* and wrote several important *fiqh* works. The one that is best known in Indonesia (and is still being reprinted there) is his *Al-hawashi al-madaniyya*, an extensive commentary on Ba-Fadl's *Al-muqaddima al-hadramiyya* — or rather a supercommentary on

an earlier commentary by Ibn Hajar, *Minhaj al-qawîm*. There also exists an even more substantial version of Kurdi's commentary, incorporating many additional glosses, that is entitled *Al-mawâhib al-madaniyya*. This book is not in general use now but it has a great reputation among specialists. It appears to have appealed especially to Indonesian `ulama studying or resident in Mecca and Medina, for it was printed together with the major Indonesian contribution to the subject, Mahfuz al-Tarmasi's commentary on the *Minhaj al-qawîm*.<sup>[39]</sup>

Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Kurdi and his works on *fiqh* became known in Indonesia because he had a number of influential Indonesian disciples. Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari, the author of the most important Malay *fiqh* work, *Sabîl al-muhtadîn*, was one of his students, and Arshad's biographers present al-Kurdi as the teacher who made the greatest impact on him during his studies in the Hijaz. Local biographers relate that Arshad, when still a student, requested a *fatwâ* from al-Kurdi on a local practice in his native South Borneo. The local sultan, whose protégé Arshad was, tried to improve public attendance at the Friday prayer in the state mosque by fining those subjects who absented themselves. Arshad asked his teacher whether this practice was legitimate; the answer to this question was later included in al-Kurdi's collected *Fatâwâ*.<sup>[40]</sup> Oral tradition in South Borneo has it that not only Arshad but his major Indonesian contemporaries as well studied with Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Kurdi. One account that appears to derive from Arshad's descendants has the famous `Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani as well as two less well-known `ulama, `Abd al-Wahhad Bugis and `Abd al-Rahman Masri from Batavia join Arshad in attending al-Kurdi's lectures in Medina, and return to Indonesia together in the 1770s when the master sends them there to instruct their compatriots.<sup>[41]</sup> However this may be, al-Kurdi continued to exert his influence indirectly as well, through a

particular milieu in Mecca and Medina in which his works were transmitted. This milieu included major Indonesian `ulama resident in Mecca, such as the great Nawawi of Banten.<sup>[42]</sup>

## **Two great Kurdish Naqshbandi masters: Mawlana Khalid and Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi**

The Naqshbandi order has been known in Indonesia at least since the 17th century, but it only became really popular there in the late 19th century. The branch of the order that then rapidly spread across the Archipelago was the Khalidiyya, thus named after the charismatic teacher and reformer Mawlana Diya' al-din Khalid al-Baghdadi (or al-Kurdi), who single-handedly engineered the revival of the order in the early 19th century.

Khalid was a Kurdish cultural broker in the traditional mould. Like so many other great Kurdish `ulama, he was born in Shahrazur, into a sedentary section of the Jaf tribe, in 1776 or 1779. He studied with the great `ulama of Kurdistan and travelled to Damascus and Mecca and Medina to meet the great `ulama of his day. Following a vision, he went to India to study with the leading Naqshbandi master, `Abdallah al-Dihlawi (also known as Shah Ghulam `Ali al-Ahmadi), whose most remarkable disciple he became. After a year in Delhi, he returned to the west, equipped with an *ijâza* and explicit instructions from his master to spread the Naqshbandiyya in the Ottoman Empire. In the years between his return to Iraq in 1811 and his death in 1827, he lived consecutively in Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad and Damascus and appointed at least 67 *khalîfa* in different parts of the Empire — Kurds, Turks and Arabs. He left writings in Persian, Arabic, his mother tongue Kurdish and Gurani, which in his time still was the literary language of southern Kurdistan.<sup>[43]</sup>

One of these *khalîfa*, `Abdallah al-Arzinjani, was dispatched to Mecca, where he and his successors attracted a large number of disciples among the Indonesians, many of whom stayed on for a considerable period after performing the *hajj*. The first well-known Indonesian affiliated with this branch of the Naqshbandiyya was Isma`il Minankabawi (of the Minangkabau ethnic group in West Sumatra), who was a student and deputy of Arzinjani and his successor Sulayman al-Qirimi. In the 1850s Isma`il returned to the Archipelago for a few years and there made many proselytes, among whom the ruling family of the island kingdom of Riau-Johor. The attraction that the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya exerted on the Indonesians visiting the holy cities was so powerful, their knowledge of Arabic so inadequate, and the shaykhs' interest (financial and otherwise) in these potential disciples so great, that a permanent Malay-speaking staff was established at `Abdallah al-Arzinjani's *zawiya* on Jabal Abu Qubays to instruct Indonesian disciples in the principles and techniques of the order.<sup>[44]</sup>

While the *zâwiya* on Jabal Abu Qubays gradually developed, especially under Sulayman al-Qirimi's successor Sulayman al-Zuhdi, into a machine churning out *ijâza* for every Indonesian eager to acquire one, it was again a Kurdish `âlim who wrote the book that has become the major literary guide for Indonesian Naqshbandi. In the 1880s and 1890s, Indonesians who had entered the Naqshbandiyya in Mecca brought home copies of Ahmad Gümüşkhanawi's *Jâmi` al-usûl fi'l-awliyâ* or the collected treatises of Sulayman al-Zuhdi, who was the most successful of the Meccan teachers. However, Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi's *Tanwîr al-qulûb* soon replaced these works as the most useful handbook on the order, and currently by far the most widely used Naqshbandi text in Indonesia.

Muhammad Amin was born in Arbil towards the middle of

the 19th century, and he studied the Islamic sciences with local `ulama. He was initiated into the Naqshbandiyya by the famous shaykh `Umar Diya> al-din of Biyara (in Shahrazur), a second-generation *khalîfa* of Mawlana Khalid. From Biyara he left for Medina, where he remained for ten years, teaching in one of the local *madrasa*. Then he moved on to the Azhar in Cairo, where he held a modest position as the overseer of the Kurdish *riwâq* (college) until his death in 1914. He wrote some twelve books, of which the *Tanwîr al-qulûb* is the most important and best known.

[45] True to the Kurdish tradition of polyglot scholarship, he also translated Persian works of Ghazzali into Arabic. [46]

I have not been able to discover whether Muhammad Amin had, during his ten years in Medina or the following period at al-Azhar, any Indonesian students. In none of the numerous Indonesian Naqshbandi *silsila* that I have seen does his name figure. It is quite likely, nevertheless, that there were some direct contacts, for both in Medina and at the Azhar there always were numerous Indonesian students. Such connections are not necessarily reflected in *silsila*. There is at least one case of a later, indirect contact of an Indonesian Naqshbandi with Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi. One of the present Naqshbandi teachers on Java's north coast, Kiai Haji Abdulwahhab Chafidz of Rembang, told me that he had become acquainted with Muhammad Amin's son, Najm al-din al-Kurdi, when he studied at al-Azhar in the 1960s. He held Najm al-din in high esteem and considered him as his teacher — but he continued to trace his *silsila* through his own father, who had been his first teacher.

## Why did Kurdish `ulama become so influential in Indonesia ?

An earlier version of this article was published in an Indonesian Muslim journal under the provocative title “Was it perhaps the Kurds who Islamised Indonesia?”, by which I intended to mock the rival mono-causal theories privileging Indian or Arab or Chinese Muslim merchants, and to emphasise the role of the pilgrimage to the Hijaz in the process of Islamisation.<sup>[47]</sup> There have obviously been numerous other `ulama who had a great impact, directly or indirectly, on Indonesian Islam, and the sceptic may think that my exclusive focusing on Kurdish `ulama results in an exaggerated representation of the “Kurdish” influence. The Indonesians who studied in Mecca and Medina must have had teachers of many different regional and ethnic origins. In fact, at the time of Snouck Hurgronje's stay in Mecca in 1885, there was apparently not a single Kurd among the teachers who were popular with the Indonesians.<sup>[48]</sup> The same has been true for the 20th century. Looking back at earlier periods, however, one does not encounter many `ulama in Mecca or Medina who had an influence among Indonesians comparable to that of Ibrahim al-Kurani, Ja`far al-Barzani, Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Kurdi or, indirectly, Mawlana Khalid. In fact, the teachers who attracted the largest number of Indonesian disciples at the time of Snouck's visit were the two rival successors to Mawlana Khalid's *khalifa*, `Abdallah al-Arzinjani. Their students were taught to establish a direct spiritual link (*rabita*) with Mawlana Khalid through a concentration exercise in which he was visualised.<sup>[49]</sup>

One partial explanation of the importance of Kurdish teachers among Indonesian Muslims might be the fact that Indonesians have adhered to the Shafi`i *madhhab* since at least the 16th century, as did the Kurds (as well as the Arabs of Hadramawt and many Egyptians, but unlike most other Arabs, Turks and Indians). Present-day Indonesians studying in the Middle East find it somewhat easier to associate with Kurds than

with Arabs because of this commonality of *madhab*.<sup>[50]</sup> This factor may have played a part to some extent, although the question of *madhab* is only relevant in *fiqh*-related matters, not in other aspects of Muslim belief and practice. In fact, some of the most influential Arabian teachers with whom Indonesians have studied in this century were not Shafi`i but Maliki. Of the scholars of non-Wahhabi persuasion active in Mecca, those most respected by the Indonesians were Sayyid `Alwi b. `Abbas al-Maliki and his son Muhammad b. `Alwi al-Maliki. Indonesians studied all subjects with them, including Shafi`i *fiqh*! The *madhab* alone can therefore hardly explain why Kurdish teachers were so influential with Indonesian students.

I think that there is yet another common characteristic that attracted Indonesian students to Kurdish teachers or to their written works. There appears to be a similarity of religious attitude between Indonesian and Kurdish Muslims, a common attraction to mysticism and metaphysical speculation and a firm belief in miracles and sainthood. It has been suggested *wahdat al-wujûd* metaphysics appealed to Indonesians because the doctrine resembled, or could be assimilated to, mystical beliefs held prior to the arrival of Islam. The same can probably said of Kurdistan, and *a fortiori* of the Gurân, among whom pantheist, emanationist, illuminationist and reincarnationist heresies always found a rich breeding-ground.

‘Ulama such as Ibrahim al-Kurani and Mawlana Khalid held mediating positions between heresy and orthodoxy. Against the endemic heresies of their native region, they represented an orthodox reaction. But rather than rejecting wholesale the mystical doctrines and practices that so easily lapsed into heresy, they upheld them and proffered interpretations which reconciled them with orthodoxy. It is this that must have made their thought appealing to numerous Indonesian Muslims, who also tried to find a middle way between dry legalism and pantheist mysticism.

Another aspect of traditional Indonesian Muslim spirituality is the veneration of saints, a firm belief in their miracles and in the benefits to be had by making a pilgrimage to their graves. This attitude of course is found all over the Muslim world, but it was again Kurdish `ulama who expressed it in words, and in a form that appealed to the Indonesian heart. As said before, no author is more popular in Indonesia than Ja`far Barzinji with his *mawlid* and his *manaqib* of Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir. Barzinji is not the only Kurdish author whose expositions of miracles have kept Indonesian audiences spell-bound. There is at least one other Kurdish author on the subject, almost a contemporary of Barzinji, who has been appropriated by Southeast Asians as culturally close. In recent years, two different East Javanese *pesantren* have reprinted, for the benefit of their students, a text in defense of the cult of saints and belief in miracles, *al-Fajr al-sadiq fi'l-radd `ala munkiri'l-tawassul wa'l-karamat wa'l-khawariq*. The author of this polemical treatise against Wahhabism, originally published in 1905, is the Iraqi Kurd Jamil Afandi Sidqi al-Zahawi (1863-1940). Like the other Kurdish `ulama mentioned so far, he too hailed from southern Kurdistan.

[\[51\]](#)

Finally there are Kurdish authors whose works do not reflect anything specifically Kurdish and who are known to Indonesia purely by accident. Such is for instance the case of Jamal al-Din ibn al-Hajib (d 1249), whose works on Arabic grammar, *al-Kafīyya* and *al-Shāfiyya*, are known in various parts of the Archipelago.[\[52\]](#)

## Conclusion

In this article a number of influential Kurdish `ulama were

discussed, who made a significant impact on Islam as it was received in Indonesia, because they taught in Medina and Mecca in a period when relatively large numbers of Indonesians stayed there for years to study, and because they taught subjects that appealed to those Indonesians. The major subjects these Kurdish teachers and their Indonesian students transmitted included “highbrow” metaphysical and philosophical Sufism as well as — for the masses — popular devotional varieties of Sufism and saint-worship. Ibrahim al-Kurani and Ja`far al-Barzinji are the Kurdish `ulama who most clearly exemplify these two patterns of mysticism. Indonesians in the Hijaz may have been especially attracted to Kurdish teachers because they belonged to the same *madhhab* (school of Islamic law), and it is not surprising that a few *fiqh* works by Kurdish scholars have become key texts in Indonesia. For the learned, these are especially the works of Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Kurdi, and at the more popular level Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi’s *Tanwir al-qulub*. The fact that these *fiqh* scholars flourished in a much later period than the said Sufi authors suggests a gradual shift of the Indonesian students’ interest from Sufism to *shari`a* — but it is perhaps significant that the last-named book is at the same time a Naqshbandi manual. The elective affinity between Kurdish and Indonesian Muslims is reflected in a lasting interest in Sufism — both in its learned and popular varieties — and in respect for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century teachers they have in common.

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## Notes

[1] See Bruinessen 1995, especially pp. 187-9, and Vredenbregt 1973.

[2] The ecstatic dhikr of the Kurdish Qadiriyya and its exercises in invulnerability are described in Bruinessen 1992, 216-22, 234-40. Because these practices are so different from those of the Qadiriyya elsewhere, I suggested that they represented a combination of the Qadiriyya with the Rifa`iyya, adducing as evidence a silsila in which both `Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and Ahmad al-Rifa`i, as well as the Egyptian saints Ahmad al-Badawi and Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, occurred (o.c., 217). The same four saints are listed in a Rifa`iyya ratib that is used by debus practitioners in Banten (Bruinessen 1995, 185).

[3] Monteil 1970, 121.

[4] See Arberry's comments on this work in his Sufism: an account of the mystics of Islam (1950).

[5] The process is sketched convincingly, for the case of Java, in Ricklefs 1979.

[6] See Bruinessen 1994.

[7] On the Gurani, see Minorsky 1943 and Bruinessen 1992, pp. 109-115.

[8] Ahmet Ateş, "Molla Gürani", Islam Ansiklopedisi; J.R. Walsh, "Gurani, Sharaf al-din ...", Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition; and Yıldız n.d. The last-named author, wishing to claim Molla Gurani for present-day Turkey, attempts to argue, unconvincingly, that he may have been born in a village named Gurani near Diyarbakır. Throughout Kurdistan one encounters small tribal groups and villages of that or similar names, whose relationship with the ethnic group Gurani is not entirely clear.

[9] Rinkes 1909.

[10] Johns 1978; cf. the same author's entries “al-Kurani” and “al-Kushashi” in the Encyclopaedia of Islam.

[11] Yusuf's Shattariyya silsila is reproduced in Abu Hamid 1994, pp. 362-3. Only one manuscript copy of Yusuf's *Safînat al-najâh* appears to have survived, in a majmû`a of seven treatises by him. This manuscript, which was in very poor condition, appears to have disappeared, but not before a transcript was made under supervision of Professor Tudjimah of Jakarta. A microfilm of this transcript is deposited in the library of the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology (KITLV) at Leiden.

[12] Heer 1979, pp. 13, 15.

[13] Al-Kurani's argument is summarised in Voorhoeve 1951, pp. 365-8.

[14] Muradi 1301/1883, vol I, 5-6. The title of Ibrahim's work in question is given there as *Jawâbât al-ghurâwiyya `an masâ>il al-jâwiyya al-jahariyya*, which is not entirely intelligible. Rinkes interpreted the last word as “from [the Malay kingdom of] Johor”, which would normally be written as *jawhariyya*, however.

[15] The Javanese version is studied in Johns 1965.

[16] Rinkes 1909, pp. 56-7; Johns 1978, pp. 476-82.

[17] Radtke 1995, p 90.

[18] Friedmann 1971, pp. 98-9; Rizvi 1983, pp. 338-42.

[19] Voll 1975.

[20] Printed in Haidarabad, India, in 1328/1910.

[21]

[22] Numerous travellers and historians mention this family. Major references are Edmonds 1957, pp. 68-79 and Tawakkuli 1980, pp. 133-68; cf. van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 220-1.

[23] Edmonds 1957, p. 68; Tawakkuli 1980, p. 133-4.

[24] The title of this translated work is *Al-jâníb al-gharbî fî hall mushkilât Ibn al-`Arabî*. For details on Muhammad's scholarly career, with names of his teachers and titles of his works, see al-Muradi, *Silk al-durar*, vol. IV, pp. 65-6 and Mudarris 1983, pp. 493-5.

[25] Friedmann 1971, pp. 7-8, 97-101; Rizvi 1983, pp. 339-41.

[26] Biographical notices in Muradi, *Silk al-durar*, vol. II, p. 9; Mudarris 1983, p. 136; Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Band II, p. 384 and Supplementsband II, pp. 517-8.

[27] These works, in Javanese and Indonesian, are listed in the appendix to an earlier Indonesian version of the present article, in van Bruinessen 1995b, p. 111.

[28] Two other works by Barzanji are known, but have never gained a similar popularity: *Qissat al-mi`râj*, an account of the Prophet's nightly journey and ascent to heaven, and *Manâqib sayyid al-shuhadâ Hamza*, the hagiography of a saint who was martyred in 624/1225 (and who should therefore not be confused with his better-known namesake, the Prophet's uncle). These works are occasionally referred to by Indonesian `ulama but they do not appear to be ever publicly recited.

[29] See Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938.

[30] The various editions of and commentaries on the *Lujjayn* by Indonesian authors are listed in van Bruinessen 1995b, p. 111. I found only two printed editions that are based on al-Yafî`i, and two others, in Sundanese and in Indonesian, that are based on a third manâqib, *Tafrîh al-khâtir*. The last-named work was written by another Kurd, `Abd al-Qadir b. Muhyi al-din al-Arbili, or

rather translated into Arabic by him from a Persian original by a certain Muhammad Sadiq al-Qadiri (cf. Mudarris 1983, p. 305).

[31] See the evidence, for the region of Banten in West Java, in Bruinessen 1995a, pp. 185-7.

[32] Tawakkuli 1980, p. 133.

[33] A description of the Kurdish Qadiri dhikr meetings and the playing with sharp objects is given in van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 234-40.

[34] Van Bruinessen 1995a, pp. 187-9.

[35] Ochsenwald 1984, p. 52. `Umar Rida Kahlala's compendium of Arabic authors, *Mu`jam al-mu'allifin*, lists twelve book-writing members of the family, most of them residents of Medina.

[36] Al-Falimbani, n.d., pp. 59-60 and 63.

[37] Abd al-Jabbar 1385/1965-6, pp. 331-3.

[38] It is by this name that we find the said fiqh work listed in a survey of pesantren literature made more than a century ago, van den Berg 1886. A more elaborate and up to date survey of this type of literature is van Bruinessen 1990b.

[39] The Hawâshî (also referred to as *Kurdî Sughrâ*, “the smaller Kurdi”) are still regularly reprinted in Indonesia, the Mawahib (also *Kurdî Kubrâ*, “the greater Kurdi”) were printed, in four volumes, at the Matba`a al-Amira al-Sharafiyya in Mecca, n.d. For bio-bibliographical information on Muhammad b. Sulayman see the entries in Muradi, *Silk al-durar*, vol. IV, pp. 111-2; Brockelmann, GAL II, 389 and S II, 555; and Mardukh-i Ruhani 1364/1985, vol. I, pp. 2522-3. It is an indication of al-Kurdi's lasting popularity in certain circles that a recent collection of fatwa by Indonesian `ulama resident in Mecca refers three times to the Kurdi Sughra and no less than 11 times to the Kurdi Kubra as an authority.

[40] Zamzam 1979, p. 5; Abu Daudi 1980, p. 25. Neither author relates what the answer was.

[41] Khalidi 1968, pp. 14-8. `Abd al-Samad, however, does not mention al-Kurdi in any of his works (although he mentions numerous others), and it is highly doubtful whether he ever returned to the Archipelago. Al-Kurdi is not mentioned either among the teachers of Arshad's other great Malay contemporary, Da'ud b. `Abdallah al-Fatani.

[42] The Sumatran Shaykh Yasin al-Fadani, who until his death in the early 1990s led the Indonesian traditional school Dâr al-`Ulûm al-Dîniyya in Mecca, gives in his *Al-`iqd al-farîd* (1401/1981, pp. 83-4) the chain of transmission (*isnâd*) by which he received instruction in al-Kurdi's Hawâshî madaniyya: the first transmitter after al-Kurdi himself was the well-known mystic Muhammad b. `Abd al-Karim al-Samman, followed by the Sharif `Abd al-Majid al-Ziyadi, two men from Palembang ( `Aqib b. Hasan al-din and `Abd al-Samad) and Nawawi Banten. The chain continued through `Abd al-Hamid Quds (the author of a much-used work on *usûl al-fiqh*) and Sayyid `Ali al-Habshi of Kwitang (Jakarta) to Shaykh Yasin.

[43] There are numerous biographical studies of Mawlana Khalid, of which the most useful are al-Khani 1306/1888-9 and Mudarris 1979, in English Hourani 1972 and in French Hakim 1990 and Chodkiewicz 1997. Al-Khani gives a list of Mawlana Khalid's khâlîfa. A sociological explanation of the rapid spread of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya is given in van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 224-34.

[44] The expansion of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya is treated in greater detail in van Bruinessen 1990a and 1994b.

[45] His only other printed work is *Al-mawâhib al-sarmadiyya fî manâqib al-naqshbandiyya* (Cairo 1329/1911), a collection of biographies of Kurdish shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya.

[46] A detailed biographical notice on Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi is prefaced to most editions of the *Tanwîr*; other notices in Mudarris 1983, pp. 545-7 and Mardukh-i Ruhani 1364/1985, pp. 125-6.

[47] Van Bruinessen 1987.

[48] The second volume of Snouck Hurgronje's work on Mecca (1889) is the richest source on social and religious life in Mecca in the late 19th century. It offers brief vignettes of the major `ulama teaching there then and describes the resident Indonesian ("Jawa") community.

[49] The visualisation of the teacher as a means of establishing a spiritual relationship with him and receiving his guidance (*râbita bi'l-shaykh*) is one of the distinctive techniques of the Naqshbandiyya, which became especially important in the Khalidiyya. See Chodkiewicz 1990. Ordinarily a murîd would visualise his own teacher, but Mawlana Khalid instructed his khalîfa to let their disciples perform the rabita directly with himself — which they continued doing for several generations after his death. The notes summarising instructions for Naqshbandi practice that Indonesian initiates carried back with them from Mecca contained brief descriptions of Mawlana Khalid's physical appearance, so that they would know how to visualise him.

[50] I owe this observation to Abdurrahman Wahid, the chairman of the major association of Indonesia's traditional Muslims. When I first mentioned him my thesis of the Kurdish influence on Kurdish Islam, he found it at once convincing because of his own experience as a student in Baghdad, where most of his friends were Kurds. He attributed this to the fact that, as fellow Shafi`is, they observed the same rules for ritual purity, time of prayer, etc., making it easier to live together.

[51] Jamil was the son of the mufti of Baghdad, Muhammad Faydi al-Zahawi, who was related to the Baban family that long ruled the Sulaymaniya area. He had a successful career as a poet and "intellectual" writer. Bio-bibliography in GAL S III: 483-8. His work was reprinted by the *pesantren* at Lirboyo, Kediri as well as by that of Denanyar near Jombang, both in East Java. The only other recent author in the same vein who is known in Indonesia is the Lebanese Yusuf Nabhani, whose works *Sa`adat al-darayn* and *Jami` karamat al-awliya'* enjoy renown in certain circles. The latter work was also reprinted at Denanyar.

[52] Jamal al-Din Abu `Amr `Uthman .... ibn al-Hajib was born into an aristocratic Kurdish family in Upper Egypt in 1174, studied in Cairo and Damascus, and died in Alexandria. See GAL I: 303; S I: 531 and Ibrahim 1366.