

Martin van BRUINESSEN

AFTER THE DAYS OF ABÛ QUBAYS: INDONESIAN TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE NAQSHBANDIYYA- KHÂLIDIYYA

JABAL ABÛ QUBAYS AND THE LANDS BELOW THE WINDS

The Naqshbandiyya-Khâlidiyya reached the Indonesian Archipelago from Mecca around the middle of the nineteenth century.¹ There had been earlier incursions of the Naqshbandiyya, usually in combination with other *turuq* (Shattâriyya, Khalwatiyya, Qâdiriyya), but these had never given rise to more than small circles of practitioners that disbanded again after one or two generations. This time around the order found a mass following, another popular order, the Qâdiriyya wa-Naqshbandiyya.² There was a third Naqshbandî branch in Mecca that spread to Indonesia in the late nineteenth century, the Mazhariyya, but this had a much more modest and regionally confined following.³ Until the Saudi conquest

¹ Martin van Bruinessen, "The origins and development of the Naqshbandi order in Indonesia," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): pp.150-179; idem, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia. Survei historis, geografis, dan sosiologis* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992); revised edition 1994; Werner Kraus, "Some notes on the introduction of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâlidiyya into Indonesia," in M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic and Th. Zarcone, eds, *Naqshbandis: Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order* (Istanbul and Paris: Isis, 1990), pp. 691-706.

² This composite order is probably unique to Indonesia; it was founded by the Indonesian Shaykh Ahmad Khaṭīb al-Sambasī, who resided in Mecca in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. See: M. van Bruinessen, "Shaykh `Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî and the Qâdiriyya in Indonesia," *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1-2 (2000): pp. 361-395, at 376-384.

³ The Mazhariyya is a major branch of the Indian Naqshbandiyya; it takes its name from Mîrzâ Mazhar Jân-i Jânân (the shaykh of Mawlânâ Khâlîd's shaykh `Abdallâh Dihlawî). The reference here is, apparently, to the Indian shaykh Muhammad Mazhar al-Ahmadî (three generations after `Abdallâh Dihlawî), who immigrated with his father, Ahmad Sa`îd, to Hijaz and died in Medina in the late nineteenth century. At the present time, the Mazhariyya has a following only in the island of Madura and among the Madurese diaspora, elsewhere in the Archipelago. Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah* (rev.ed.), pp. 69-75, 119-123, 185-198. The Dutch scholar Snouck Hurgronje struck up a warm relationship with the Meccan shaykh of the Mazhariyya, Muhammad Sâlih al-Zawâwî, and his son `Abdallâh. In his study of Mecca he compares them very favourably with the shaykhs of Jabal

of Mecca in 1924, the zawiya established by Mawlânâ Khâlid's khalifa 'Abdullâh al-Arzinjânî, often called al-Makki, on Jabal Abû Qubays remained the centre of the rapidly expanding Indonesian Naqshbandiyya Khâlidiyya. Numerous Southeast Asians took a retreat in this zawiya and learned the basic principles of the order under the guidance of the shaykhs of Abû Qubays and their Malay-speaking assistants. Dozens, perhaps even hundreds, returned to their islands with a hand-written *ijâza* to teach the tariqa, certified with a stamp that said Jabal Abû Qubays. More than the individual shaykhs, the name of Abû Qubays acquired the connotation of supreme authority in Khâlidiyya spirituality.

The Indonesian khalifas appointed by Abû Qubays could and did appoint their own khalifas, and a dense network spread across the Archipelago as each new teacher instructed two, four, a dozen, or even more deputies, who in turn instructed a next generation of teachers. However, an *ijâza* from Jabal Abû Qubays was considered as more prestigious than one acquired locally, and many teachers who had received their first initiations and *ijâza* to teach from an Indonesian shaykh made the voyage to Mecca in order to acquire another *ijâza* at the source, thereby cutting short their silsila and increasing their proximity to the Prophet as well as, their prestige back home.

The earliest Indonesian Khâlidiyya teacher on record was Ismâ'îl al-Mînakabawî or al-Bârûsî (named for his ethnic group, the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, or for the district of Baros on Sumatra's west coast).⁴ This is because 1) he was the subject of polemics; 2) because his writings are still read; and 3) because his name is listed in some later silsilas. Ismâ'îl was initiated into the Naqshbandiyya Khâlidiyya in Mecca in the 1820s and to have remained in the zawiya on Jabal Abû Qubays as a deputy to successive shaykhs. He briefly returned from Mecca to the Archipelago in the early 1850s, settling in Singapore rather than his Dutch-occupied homeland, making disciples among the indigenous aristocracy and engaging in anti-colonial agitation.⁵ Perhaps because of conflicts with local religious authorities – the influential Singapore-based Arab scholar Sâlim b. Sumayr denounced him in a fierce tract. Perhaps it was because the worldly authorities did not like his anti-colonial tone that he only stayed for a short time. In any case, he returned to Mecca and stayed there for the rest of his life.⁶

Abû Qubays, who appeared more interested in the number than the quality of their disciples. Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1931), *passim*.

⁴ Two Malay treatises by Ismâ'îl are still in print: *Kifâyat al-ghulâm*, a simple textbook on basic points of doctrine and the canonical obligations, and *Muqârana*, a brief treatise on prayer. He also wrote two brief treatises on the Naqshbandiyya that may no longer be extant but that are briefly discussed in K. F. Holle, "Mededeelingen over de devotie der Naqsjibendijah in den Ned. Indischen Archipel" [Notes on the devotional movement of the Naqshbandiyya in the Dutch Indies Archipelago], *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 31 (1886): pp. 67-81.

⁵ Husayn b. Ahmad al-Dawsarî al-Basrî, *Al-rahmat al-hâbita fî dhikr ism al-dhât wa'l-râbita* (in Arabic and Malay) (Mecca: 1907). This version, first published in 1306/1889, contains additions by al-Dawsarî's disciple Abû Bakr al-Basrî and describes Ismâ'îl's activities in Singapore.

⁶ A later tract by the leading Arab scholar of the Dutch Indies, Sayyid 'Uthmân b. 'Abdallâh b. 'Aqîl b. Yahyâ, *Arti thariqat dengan pendek bicaranya* [The meaning of the tariqa in a nutshell] (Betawi: 1883), reiterates Sâlim b. Sumayr's attacks on Ismâ'îl and presents his return to Mecca as a flight. On Sayyid 'Uthmân and his anti-Naqshbandî polemics, see Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, "Een Arabische

Ismâ'îl al-Mînankabawî was the first important intermediary between the shaykhs of Jabal Abû Qubays and their Southeast Asian disciples. These shaykhs were, successively, 'Abdallâh al-Arzinjânî (from Erzincan in present Turkey), Sulaymân al-Qîrîmî (from the Crimea), Sulaymân Zuhdî, and the latter's son or son-in-law, 'Alî Ridâ. It was especially Sulaymân Zuhdî (a.k.a. Sulaymân Efendî), flourishing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who initiated large numbers of Indonesians and issued numerous *ijâzas*. For several surviving branches of the Naqshbandiyya, Zuhdî was the last Meccan teacher; others derive from his successor 'Alî Ridâ or from another khalifa at Abû Qubays, 'Uthmân Fawzî. After 1924, the days of Abû Qubays are over. As far as I have been able to ascertain, no Indonesians took *ijâza* there after that date. My Indonesian informants were unclear as to what happened to the last shaykh of Jabal Abû Qubays. Some claimed he left Mecca for India while others say that he even died before 1924. What we do know is that after 'Alî Ridâ there was no widely recognised Khâlidiyya teacher in Mecca and that the Indonesian Khâlidiyya lost its centre, and it fell apart to a large number of independent local centres, each with its network of khalifas.

For a period of time, there existed a competing line of Khâlidiyya shaykhs in Mecca. In the 1870s and 1880s there was a fierce rivalry between Sulaymân Zuhdî and the shaykh of this other line, Khalîl Pâshâ (Khalîl Hamdî), of which Snouck Hurgronje gives an amusing account.⁷ This second lineage also began with 'Abdullâh al-Arzinjânî, who appointed Khalîl Hamdî's father, Yahyâ al-Dâghistânî, as his khalifa, contrary to the usual practice of not appointing more than one khalifa to the same place.⁸

Sulaymân Efendî accused his rival of introducing heterodox practices, including dancing and violent bodily movements, into the Naqshbandî devotions, and he warned the Malay community, in word and in writing, that Khalîl Pâshâ was leading his followers astray. The latter owed his title of pâshâ to his previous government service and could draw upon powerful political allies to defeat Sulaymân. He enjoyed the support of the governor of Mecca as well as the head of the Meccan ulama, Ahmad b. Zayni Dahlân. The latter issued a *fatwâ* declaring Sulaymân a heretic because he falsely slandered a pious divine, upon which the former had Sulaymân jailed. Khalîl Pâshâ sent letters with copies of the *fatwâ* to various Malay rulers in Sumatra. Sulaymân Efendî, however, had the benefit of controlling the prestigious zawiya of Abû Qubays and was far more popular among

bondgenoot der Nederlandsch-Indische regeering" [An Arab ally of the Dutch Indies Government], *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* 31 (1887): pp. 41-63; A. F. von de Wall, "Kort begrip van de beteekenis van de tarekat, naar het Maleisch van Sajid Oesman bin Abdoellah ibn Akil ibn Jahja, adviseur honorair voor Arabische zaken" [Brief account of the meaning of the tariqa, after the Malay of Sayyid 'Uthmân ..., honorary advisor for Arab affairs], *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 35 (1892): pp. 223-227.

⁷ Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, pp. 176-179. The rivalry, in this account, concerned primarily the Southeast Asian and Turkish pilgrims, who as murids constituted a considerable source of income.

⁸ 'Abdullâh al-Arzinjânî is not known to have appointed many deputies; the only other khalifa of whom I know was Terzî Bâbâ (Hayyât Efendî, d. 1847) whom he appointed to be his deputy in Erzincan, his place of birth. See Bursalı Mehmed Tâhir, *Osmanlı Mü'ellifleri* (Istanbul: Meral Y.), I, p. 212.

the Indonesians. Khalîl Pâshâs ‘victory’ in the conflict, due to his political allies, and the letters sent from Mecca to Malay rulers in East Sumatra who patronised the Naqshbandiyya do not appear to have had any effect on the network of Sulaymân Efendî’s deputies there.⁹

AFTER THE RUPTURE OF THE UMBILICAL CORD WITH ABÛ QUBAYS

For a long time after ‘Alî Ridâ, there was no new incursion of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâlidiyya into Indonesia. There was no other centre that replaced Jabal Abû Qubays as the prestigious external centre of the order. Only in the late 1990s was there a new impulse from outside when Shaykh Hishâm Kabbânî of the Haqqâniyya, the most dynamic and most highly publicised branch of the Khâlidiyya, visited Indonesia and appointed several khalifas.¹⁰ For three quarters of a century the Indonesian branches of the Khâlidiyya had to be self-sufficient, without the possibility of regular rejuvenation at the external source. Some of the local branches died out; others gradually adopted a local colouring, adapting their practices to local conditions and demands. The most significant developments were in the areas of organisation and communication. Some branches were very successful in adapting themselves to changing social and political circumstances and in finding themselves new constituencies by adopting more modern discourses.

In this article I shall not attempt to provide a general overview of these developments but focus on three successfully expanding networks centred in the island of Sumatra (but the latter two spreading across the Archipelago). The first is the oldest, established as early as the 1870s by the Malay scholar Abdul Wahab Rokan and based in what may be the country’s only Naqshbandî village, Babussalam in Langkat near Medan. The second network was built up by the West Sumatran schoolteacher Jalaluddin, who wrote a series of remarkable textbooks on the doctrines and practices of the Naqshbandiyya and in the 1950s established a Naqshbandiyya-based political party. The third network emerged as an offshoot or rival of the second and was led by Jalaluddin’s son-in-law, Kadirun Yahya, a university teacher of allegedly strong spiritual powers, whose claims for the development of metaphysics into an empirical psychic science attracted varied audiences. These three networks also represent various degrees of adaptation to Indonesian spiritual traditions.

⁹ This correspondence is mentioned by Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, pp. 178-179. Among present-day Naqshbandis in the region I found no living memory of the conflict, and Khalîl Pâshâ’s name was unknown. Snouck Hurgronje (ibid., pp. 241, 289) mentions yet a third Naqshbandî shaykh in Mecca with Malay disciples, also named Khalîl (Efendî), of whose activities I have not found any surviving traces either.

¹⁰ In the 1980s, several Indonesian ulama who visited Mecca received an *ijâza* from the traditionalist scholar Muhammad b. ‘Alwî al-Mâlikî, who taught the whole range of classical Islamic sciences and occasionally dispensed *ijâzas* for a number of different tariqas (details in Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, pp. 196-197). This did not have a significant impact on the Naqshbandiyya networks in Indonesia. The Haqqâniyya, on the other hand, appears determined to spread its influence in Indonesia and to bring existing branches of the Naqshbandiyya and other sublineages under its umbrella. Kabbânî’s visits to Indonesia are documented on the website www.naqshbandi.org.

THE SHAYKH OF BABUSSALAM AND HIS SUCCESSORS

Shaykh Abdul Wahab Rokan (d. 1926) was probably the most successful of the Indonesian graduates of Jabal Abû Qubays.¹¹ He was born into a religiously-minded Malay family in the district of Rokan in Central Sumatra, studied at various surau (as the local variety of madrasa is known) in Central Sumatra and then travelled to Mecca to continue his studies. He stayed there for five or six years during the 1860s, studying fiqh in the Masjid al-Harâm, with distinguished Arab scholars such as Shaykh Hasaballâh and the Shâfi'î mufti, Sayyid Ahmad b. Zaynî Dahlân, but also especially with Malay scholars resident in Mecca. It was one of these Malay teachers, M. Yûnus b. 'Abd al-Rahmân Batu Bara, who told him to learn the Naqshbandiyya practices from Sulaymân Zuhdî. The hagiography presents Abdul Wahab as a dedicated meditator, who spent many hours daily in dhikr and made rapid spiritual progress, for which he was rewarded with an *ijâza* to spread the order all over the eastern part of Sumatra, from Aceh to Palembang. Unlike most other khalifas, whose *ijâzas* bore only one stamp, Abdul Wahab was given an *ijâza* with two stamps, marking him as a khalifa of a higher rank.¹²

Returning to Sumatra he first settled in Kubu (Riau), where he inducted the local elite into the Naqshbandiyya. A few years later he moved north to the region around Medan, where a booming estate economy was developing. He won the favour of the sultans of Deli and Langkat, the most prominent indigenous authorities of the entire East Coast.¹³ Sultan Musa al-Mu'azzam Syah of Langkat became a faithful murid and granted Shaykh Abdul Wahab a stretch of land as a *waqf*, where in 1883 he built a madrasa and established a village that he named Babussalam (or, in the local Malay pronunciation, Pesilam). The village was peopled by his rapidly expanding family and disciples who decided to stay with him, and under the shaykh's leadership the inhabitants planted fruit trees and other crops that made them self-sufficient.

¹¹ The following notes are based on the biography/hagiography written by Abdul Wahab's descendant, H. A. Fuad Said, *Syekh Abdul Wahab. Tuan Guru Babussalam* (Medan: Pustaka Babussalam, 1983). A more elaborate summary of this book is given in D. Lombard, "Tarekat et entreprise à Sumatra: l'exemple de Syekh Abdul Wahab Rokan (c. 1830-1926)," in M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic and Th. Zarcone, eds, *Naqshbandis*, pp. 707-715. See also Lombard's earlier notes on Babussalam in "Les Tarekat en Insulinde," in A. Popovic and G. Veinstein, eds, *Les Ordres mystiques en Islam* (Paris: EHESS, 1985), pp. 152-154, and Abdullah Syah et al., "Tarekat Naqshbandiah, Babussalam, Langkat", in *Sufisme di Indonesia* [special issue of the journal *Dialog* of the research department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs] (Jakarta: 1978), pp. 51-68.

¹² Said, *Syekh Abdul Wahab*, pp. 28-36. The two stamps and their meaning are discussed on p. 33. Sulaymân Zuhdî allegedly told Yûnus Batu Bara that he expected Abdul Wahab to initiate local Indonesian rulers into the order. Another explanation of the two stamps was given me by the Naqshbandî Shaykh Amir Damsar Syarif Alam in Medan: the first stamp represents the licence to lead the communal dhikr sessions (sing: *tawajjuh*), the second the more advanced licence to lead also the retreat (*khalwat* or *suluk*). Amir Damsar's own *ijâza* also had two stamps from Abû Qubays, for it had been his teacher's. He had his own stamps made to certify his own khalifas' *ijâza*. Interview, Medan, 5 November 1993.

¹³ These two sultans must have been the main addressees of Khalîl Pâshâ's letters announcing his victory over Sulaymân Efendî (see note 9 above). Their relationship with Shaykh Abdul Wahab may have been the reason why the letters had no noticeable effect.

In 1889-90, the shaykh allegedly ran into problems with the Dutch authorities – he was apparently accused of involvement in the counterfeiting of money – and had to leave Babussalam. He crossed the straits to Penang, later settled in Batu Pahat in Johor, and from there made extensive visits to various districts in Central Sumatra, until he finally was invited back to Langkat and settled again in Babussalam, where he stayed until his death in 1926. Wherever he went, he received great respect from the highest native authorities, married well-connected local women, and appointed influential men as his khalifas. By the end of his life, he had appointed some 120 khalifas, all along the eastern coast and hinterlands of Sumatra, from Aceh down to the south, with a heavy concentration in Riau and other regions of Central Sumatra, a few in West Sumatra, and eight in Malaya.¹⁴ After his death, all of these deputies and their successors continued to recognize the authority of Babussalam and to respect Abdul Wahab's successors there as their superiors.

The village of Babussalam is to this day exclusively inhabited by descendants of Shaykh Abdul Wahab and their disciples. Everyone is a practising Naqshbandî and the rhythm of life is patterned by the regular practice of Naqshbandî devotions including the *mu'adhdhin's* recital of a lengthy invocation calling for God's blessing through the saints of Abdul Wahab's silsila before the call to the *subh* and *maghrib* prayers.¹⁵ The centrality of Naqshbandî practices in this village is also indicated by the presence of two *rumah suluk*, houses specially built for the ten-, twenty- or thirty-day Naqshbandî retreat known here as *suluk* (rather than *khalwat*). Such *rumah suluk* used to be a common feature of Indonesian Sufi practices, especially in Sumatra. Every initiate was expected to perform at least one retreat (modern working conditions make this increasingly difficult for many followers). Some teachers had the retreat performed in a corner of the village mosque, separated by a cloth screen; others had a shed built beside their house. The really influential teachers had large *rumah suluk*, the size of which indicated their importance. Elsewhere, *suluk* is performed at specific times of the year, during Ramadan and one or two other months of the Muslim calendar, or following harvest time. In Babussalam, there are retreats throughout the year. The constant stream of pilgrims from all over Sumatra and Malaysia shows that Babussalam has remained one of the major spiritual centres (if not the major centre) of the Malay-speaking world.

Abdul Wahab's first successor as the master of Babussalam was his eldest son, who was not to survive him for long, Yahya Afandi (d. 1929). The latter was succeeded by his own son, Abdul Manap, and he in turn by one of the eldest khalifas, a certain Muhammad Sa'îd, whom he had earlier appointed to replace him in his absence. The next successor was a younger son of Abdul Wahab, Haji Abdul Jabbar. He was elected to become the murshid by a meeting of all khalifas present in Babussalam (1936). This was the last succession that went apparently uncontested. During the following half century rivalries within the family went

¹⁴ These khalifas are listed, district by district, in Said, *Syekh Abdul Wahab*, pp. 134-139.

¹⁵ This *munâjât* was composed by Shaykh Abdul Wahab in the form of a Malay *sha'ir*, a popular literary form; the complete text is given in Said, *Syekh Abdul Wahab*, pp. 70-76.

hand in hand with political conflicts in North Sumatra, as various groups attempted to get control of Babussalam and turn its great prestige into a political asset.

Abdul Jabbar died in 1942; his deputy (and half-brother) M. Daud considered himself as the rightful successor. In the social revolution following the Japanese defeat, Daud took the side of the anti-sultan party, and was therefore forced to take refuge in Aceh after the first Dutch military operation of 1947. He had to stay away as long as the Federated State of East Sumatra existed and could only return in 1951. Meanwhile another khalifa, Pakih Tambah, had assumed the leading position (as murshid and *nâzir*, 'manager') in Babussalam and had been confirmed as such by most of the other khalifas in 1948. He was understandably unwilling to relinquish his position to Daud when the latter returned. A long-lasting conflict ensued. Daud built his own *rumah suluk*, within a short distance of Pakih Tambah's. Attempts at mediation on the part of various Muslim organizations, government authorities, and other members of Abdul Wahab's family remained inconclusive. Until the deaths of Daud and Pakih Tambah, in 1971 and 1972 respectively, both continued to act as if they were the sole murshid and *nâzir* in the village of Babussalam.

A long process of consultation and lobbying among members of the family and other khalifas resulted in the election of another son of Abdul Wahab, Mu'in, as the murshid. He led Babussalam for seven years, from 1974 until his death in 1981, and was succeeded by Abdul Wahab's last surviving son, Madyan. Babussalam remained divided however. Daud's *rumah suluk* was not closed but remained in function under the direction of Daud's son, Tajuddin (who in 1986 was a member of the regional parliament, DPRD, for the government party Golkar).

Madyan's death, in 1986, caused renewed conflicts. His authority had not met with universal acceptance, since he was not considered a scholar, and the khalifas wished to have a successor who was more worthy of their respect. There were two serious candidates, both of them grandsons of the founder of Babussalam: Faqih Shaufi (a son of Haji Bakri) and Anas Mudawwar, a son of Daud. The former was preferred by most of the khalifas because he was a real scholar and a Sufi, but Anas enjoyed the stronger political backing. The governor (*bupati*) of Langkat intervened on his behalf and named him the head of Babussalam. As a result, the leading roles were divided: Anas acted as the *nâzir* but Shaufi controlled the *rumah suluk* and led the communal dhikr sessions (called *tawajjuh* in the Indonesian context, which are performed four times daily here, after each of the prayers except *maghrib*). The rivalry remained apparent to even the occasional visitor, for Anas refused to attend the *tawajjuh*.

These conflicts have somewhat eroded the authority of Babussalam. The real moral authority, among the other khalifas and murids, seems to be that of the few remaining khalifas of the first generation, notably Syekh Abdul Manan of Padangsidempuan in South Tapanuli. Major decisions cannot be taken without his consent. It was he and two other surviving khalifas of Abdul Wahhab, Shaykh Hasan of Air Bangis in West Sumatra and Khalifa Junid of Labuhan Bilik in Panai, on the east coast, who chose Fakhri Shaufi as the new murshid, and this choice was

respected by the other followers of the order, irrespective of the preferences of the local government.¹⁶

The *hawl* or death anniversary of Shaykh Abdul Wahab is the most important event of the year in Babussalam, showing the extent of its spiritual authority as groups of pilgrims come from far to pay their respects. The *hawl* of 1993, which I attended, was combined with an academic seminar at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) in Medan, with some nationally prominent speakers, and with a public ceremony in Babussalam to which many state officials and other dignitaries were invited. A stream of disciples meanwhile visited Shaykh Abdul Wahab's shrine, and yet larger numbers of people from the region came to celebrate at the festive fair that, as at most *hawl*, constituted perhaps the major attraction. The formal occasion gave prominence to Anas Mudawwar, the *nâzir*, but I was told that in the weeks leading up to the *hawl* some eight hundred people had performed a *suluk* of at least ten days – supposedly under Faqih Shaufi's supervision. (see Fig. 1, 2, 3)

It was not only the biological and spiritual descendants of Shaykh Abdul Wahab who came to pay their respects, but also Naqshbandî shaykhs of other affiliations, including Shaykh Kadirun Yahya (discussed below) and Shaykh Amir Damsar Syarif Alam representing the first of these constitutes the subject of the final part of this paper; the second represents the association PPTI, the first formal association of tariqa followers. There exist three independent Naqshbandî networks in North Sumatra, each with ramifications in other parts of the Archipelago and between which a delicate balance is maintained. The shaykhs show each other respect but jealously guard their own congregations. In the past it had not been uncommon for a shaykh to attempt to draw followers away from his colleagues and to aspire to a position of dominance, using political alliances, economic incentives, and modern media. A master of this power game was the schoolteacher and writer turned shaykh, Haji Jalaluddin.

SHAYKH HAJI JALALUDDIN AND THE PPTI

The Minangkabau, the members of the ethnic group originating from West Sumatra, have had an influence on the development of Indonesian Islam (and on Indonesian culture and politics in general) that far exceeds their modest numerical importance. The Minangkabau have been in the forefront of almost every wave of Islamic reform as well as counter-reform. Debates between reformists and traditionalists were nowhere as intense as in West Sumatra and among the Minangkabau settled elsewhere.¹⁷ The first Indonesian khalifa of the Khâlidiyya

¹⁶ These notes on the power struggles in Babussalam are based on Said, *Syekh Abdul Wahab*, Syah et al., "Tarekat Naqsabandiah", and my own interviews during visits to Babussalam and Medan in November 1986 and November 1993.

¹⁷ B.J.O. Schrieke, "Bijdrage tot de bibliografie van de huidige godsdienstige verschijnselen ter Sumatra's Westkust" [Contribution to the bibliography of the current religious phenomena on Sumatra's West Coast], *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 59 (1921): pp. 249-325; Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971).

was, as noted above, Ismâ'îl al-Mînankabawî, and Shaykh Sulaymân Zuhdî as well as his successor 'Alî Ridâ appointed numerous Minangkabau as his khalifas.¹⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s, West Sumatra probably had a higher proportion of practising Naqshbandî among its population than any other region in Indonesia. Anti-Naqshbandî polemics also began first among the Minangkabau, notably with the Mecca-based moderate reformist Ahmad Khatîb al-Mînankabawî, who in the years 1906-08 wrote three tracts against contemporary Naqshbandî practices that have been frequently reprinted, in various parts of the Archipelago.¹⁹

In order to defend themselves and the beliefs and practices they represented more effectively against reformist propaganda, madrasa-based traditionalist ulama in West Sumatra in 1930 established their own association, Perti (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah, Association for Islamic Education), as traditionalists in Java had done a few years before when they established the association Nahdlatul Ulama. All of Perti's leading members were ulama who were heading their own surau (the local term for a traditional madrasa), and quite a few of them were also Naqshbandî teachers. In fact, most if not all Minangkabau Naqshbandî teachers joined Perti, which gave them their first experiences in modern association as well as moderate nationalist activities. Soon after Indonesia's declaration of independence (of 17 August 1945), Perti transformed itself into a political party.

Haji Jalaluddin, who was an active member of Perti during the 1930s, was a different type of Naqshbandî teacher. Unlike his colleagues, he lacked a madrasa education and knew very little Arabic; he had passed through the Dutch educational system and had become a schoolteacher himself. This had given him knowledge of the modern world that complemented the more bookish traditional learning of his Perti colleagues. Through associating with the leading Naqshbandî ulama in Perti he acquired a considerable knowledge of the history, literature, doctrines, and practices of the order. He claimed to have received an *ijâza* from Shaykh 'Alî Ridâ at Jabal Abû Qubays when he performed the hajj. This claim has been contested by various people including his own son-in-law and later rival, Kadirun Yahya, but his numerous writings show that he was highly knowledgeable indeed. Around 1940 he wrote the first of a long series of polemical tracts defending the Naqshbandiyya against its detractors and explaining in detail its practices.²⁰ Jalaluddin became a prolific and effective writer, whose clarity of style and didactic exposition of subject matter distinguished him from his colleagues,

¹⁸ A report by the Dutch resident in 1891 mentions 24 Naqshbandî teachers, strategically distributed through the province (*Mailrapport* 1891, no. 760, reproduced in Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, pp. 126-8. Sulaymân Zuhdî's predecessor Sulaymân al-Qirimî had appointed the first influential khalifa in West Sumatra, Shaykh Ibrahim Kumpulan.

¹⁹ Summarised in Schieke, "Bijdrage". One of these tracts was translated into English by William G. Shellabear as "An exposure of counterfeiters", *The Moslem World* 20 (1930): pp. 359-370. On the polemics in general, see: M. van Bruinessen, "Controversies and polemics involving the Sufi orders in twentieth-century Indonesia", in F. De Jong and B. Radtke, eds, *Islamic mysticism contested: thirteen centuries of controversies and polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 705-728.

²⁰ H. Jalaluddin, *Pertahanan ath-thariqat an-naqsyabandiyah* [Defence of the Naqshbandiyya], 4 vols, Malay in Arabic script (Bukittinggi: 1940). By the time of his death in 1976, he had written altogether well over a hundred booklets and tracts.

reflecting his education and profession as a schoolteacher and indicating a modern, pragmatic attitude.

Several of Jalaluddin's colleagues were not very happy with his defence of their order, for his writings contained, in their view, a number of errors and heterodoxies. He was after all not trained as an alim, and one senses in their attitude a certain irritation at this upstart venturing in the field that they considered as being uniquely theirs. Shaykh Sulaiman ar-Rasuli, the doyen of the Naqshbandî teachers in Perti, demanded that Jalaluddin correct certain errors of doctrine and fiqh in his books. When he did not oblige, he was expelled from Perti. This apparently happened around 1945, the year that the struggle for independence began and Perti declared itself a political party. Undeterred, Jalaluddin established his own political organization, PPTI (the initials of which initially stood for Partai Politik Tarekat Islam) and a paramilitary force consisting of Naqshbandî followers that later merged with other nationalist forces. The conflict with Perti was not resolved, and in 1954 Sulaiman al-Rasuli and a number of other West Sumatran Naqshbandî shaykhs and ulama issued a joint fatwâ condemning Haji Jalaluddin's books as containing serious errors and several reprehensible innovations (sing. *bid'a*) of the tariqa – the latter especially concerning the elaborate initiation ritual that surrounds the *bay'a* in Haji Jalaluddin's version.²¹

The concerted attack of Perti's Naqshbandî ulama on Haji Jalaluddin was probably not unrelated to the approaching national elections of 1955, in which Perti and the PPTI were to compete for broadly overlapping sections of the electorate. The outcome of these elections showed that Sulaiman ar-Rasuli's efforts to discipline and subject Haji Jalaluddin had been far from successful and that the latter had been able to build considerable support. His PPTI contested the elections in two of Sumatra's then three provinces; in Central Sumatra (which included the Minangkabau heartland) it won 35,156 out of 1,571,133 votes, or 2.2%, and in North Sumatra 27,084 out of 2,134,817 votes, or 1.3%. In certain districts, however, it performed much better: in Solok, one of the Minangkabau districts, the PPTI received 11 per cent of the vote, and it attained the same percentage in the district of South Tapanuli in North Sumatra (inhabited by the Mandailing ethnic group). The table below allows comparison with the reformist Muslim party Masyumi and the other traditionalist party Nahdlatul Ulama (which had only support among the Mandailing).²²

²¹ Bruinessen, "Controversies and polemics", pp. 722-725. A summary description of this initiation ritual as expounded in detail in Jalaluddin's *Rahasia mutiara*, vol. 1 is given there at p. 724.

²² Data adapted from: Alfian, *Hasil pemilihan umum 1955 untuk Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* [Results of the General Elections of 1955 for the People's Representative Assembly] (Jakarta: Lembaga Ekonomi dan Kemasjarakatan Nasional, 1971), pp. 105, 121.

	Central Sumatra	Solok	North Sumatra	S.Tapan uli
Eligible voters	1,795,955	135,3 84	2,458,732	200,800
Total votes cast	1,571,133	122,0 84	2,134,817	175,932
Masyumi	797,692	71,00 0	789,910	65,319
Perti	351,768	24,50 7	78,358	680
NU			87,773	48,108
PPTI	35,156	13,31 3	27,084	19,549

The number of votes was sufficient to give the PPTI a single seat in parliament. Haji Jalaluddin moved to Jakarta and made good use of the opportunities this national platform gave him to expand his own and the PPTI's influence. He made sure everyone in Sumatran Naqshbandî circles knew that the PPTI enjoyed official recognition and had powerful connections. In his writings he repeatedly referred to his meetings with Sukarno, the first of which had taken place as early as 1942. Many khalifas, who were perhaps not fully convinced of Haji Jalaluddin's superiority as a teacher, joined his PPTI in order to feel politically secure. He certainly succeeded in giving them protection and patronage.²³ He showed himself a staunch supporter of Sukarno and remained so when many others became disaffected with the President. In 1960 when Sukarno dissolved the elected assembly and replaced it with a handpicked new parliament (excluding all critics) and people's congress, Jalaluddin was made a member of both. During the final Sukarno years, Haji Jalaluddin showed great flexibility in adapting his language to the political climate of the day, declaring the ultimate aim of the devotions of the tariqa to be the unity of the Muslim world and the struggle against NEKOLIM (neo-colonialism and imperialism).²⁴ Whereas Sukarno declared himself President for life, Jalaluddin styled himself 'chairman of the PPTI for life', a title that he gave up some time after Sukarno had been forced to resign. (see Fig. 4, Sukarno and Jalaluddin)

By that time, the PPTI was no longer only an organization of Sumatran followers of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâliidiyya. Haji Jalaluddin succeeded in bringing

²³ One story that I have not been able to verify has it that khalifas who registered themselves as members of the PPTI were given a membership card with a photograph of Haji Jalaluddin that entitled them to free transportation in state-owned buses in Sumatra.

²⁴ Introduction to the pamphlet *Tiga serangkai* [Three inseparable friends] (Jakarta: 1964), which is another defence of the Naqshbandiyya against accusations of *bid'a*.

shaykhs and followers of other orders into his organisation as well, which allowed the PPTI to establish branches throughout the country. His major ‘acquisition’ was the still young shaykh of the Qâdiriyya wa-Naqshbandiyya, Abah Anom of Suryalaya in West Java; other regional representatives were relative unknowns in Malaysia, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Jakarta and most parts of Sumatra. Some of these had been established as Sufi teachers before joining the PPTI, but many others were recruited directly by Shaykh Haji Jalaluddin’s innovative methods of propagating the tariqa, in which printed communication gradually replaced personal contact.

Jalaluddin was probably the first Naqshbandî shaykh ever to teach the basics of the order in the form of a correspondence course. The primary teaching materials consisted of the six-volume treatise *Rahasia mutiara ath-thariqat an-naqsyabandiyah* [The secret of the pearl: the Naqshbandî order], which gives more explicit and detailed instructions for the practitioner than I have found in any other Naqshbandî text.²⁵ The explanations of how to perform the various dhikr are accompanied by suggestive illustrations that show where in the body the dhikr is localised or how the devotee should, on the breath, draw it through the body and beat it into the heart. The elaborate initiation ritual that was critiqued by rival Naqshbandî shaykhs as a reprehensible innovation is also described in detail — without these explicit descriptions it would probably have been much more difficult to find fault with Shaykh Jalaluddin. (see Fig. 5, 6, 7)

The booklets warn against practicing their contents without proper guidance and permission — in fact, the first volume begins with a section giving advice on how to find an appropriate spiritual guide — but Shaykh Jalaluddin appears to have initiated several devotees without ever physically meeting them. Graduates of the course were given the title of ‘Dr.’ (doctor kerohanian or doctor of spirituality) and appointed as khalifas and/or local officers of the PPTI.²⁶ This method resulted in an unprecedented expansion of the Naqshbandiyya throughout Indonesia. By 1975 Shaykh Jalaluddin claimed that the PPTI had no less than three million followers — an oblique reference perhaps to the Indonesian Communist Party, which had a decade earlier claimed the same number of members. Even if the PPTI estimate was too high by a factor of 10, as I believe, this was no mean achievement.

Dr. Shaykh Haji Jalaluddin died in 1976, and with him the PPTI lost its dynamism. It had successfully survived the major political changes of the 1950s and 1960s, formally transforming itself from a political party into a ‘functional group’ (the corporatist alternative to the party system with which Sukarno experimented in the 1960s). Just in time it became a component of the Functional

²⁵ Dr. Shaykh Haji Jalaluddin, *Rahasia Mutiara ath-Thariqat an-Naqsyabandiyah*, 6 vols, Malay in Arabic script, originally published in the 1940s(?), frequently reprinted by the author, with minor additions.

²⁶ One Naqshbandî teacher whom I met, Mustafa Zahri of Ujung Pandang (presently Makassar) in South Sulawesi, was even made a khalifa and a doctor without following the course. He was a self-taught man with a great interest in Sufism and had written several books on the subject, one of which he sent to Haji Jalaluddin. In response he was sent an *ijâza* as a khalifa and a diploma with the title of Dr.

Group Joint Secretariat (Sekber Golkar), which under Suharto became the dominant political machine and government party Golkar. Thereby it remained throughout the Suharto years the only officially recognised vehicle for politically ambitious tariqa followers. No new leader of Jalaluddin's stature emerged within the organisation, however. Rivalries split the organisation in two competing wings, each of which claims to be the 'real' PPTI. Neither of them has any significant influence; the leaders are functionaries interested in Sufism rather than real spiritual teachers.²⁷

PROF. DR. SAYDI SHAYKH KADIRUN YAHYA AL KHALIDI AND HIS 'SCIENTIFIC' SUFISM

In many respects, Shaykh Jalaluddin's real successor as the most publicly prominent Naqshbandî in the country was another Sumatran, his alienated son-in-law Kadirun Yahya (born in South Tapanuli and of Mandailing origin). The two men had much in common: both had attended Dutch schools rather than *surau* (madrasa) and both worked as schoolteachers in the West Sumatran town of Bukittinggi in the mid-1940s. It is likely that Kadirun owed much of his first acquaintance with the Naqshbandiyya to the older and more experienced Jalaluddin, whose daughter he married in 1947. In retrospect he downplayed his father-in-law's importance and mentioned only three other Sumatran shaykhs as his teachers, denying ever to have been one of Jalaluddin's khalifas.²⁸ Both men successfully sought the patronage of the politically powerful, and both established nation-wide networks of devoted followers. If anything, Kadirun was even more successful in these respects than Jalaluddin had been. Some of the most powerful civilian and (retired) military politicians were known to be his devoted disciples, apparently attributing their political careers and economic success to his spiritual support. In 1992 President Suharto appointed him to the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), as one of only two shaykhs in that body.²⁹ In 1997 he claimed to have 347 local groups of followers, each with their own lodge (*surau*), all over the country from Aceh to Irian Jaya (Papua).³⁰

Whereas Shaykh Jalaluddin had owed much of his success to his prolific

²⁷ The history of PPTI is sketched in some detail in Djohan Effendi, "PPTI: eine konfliktreiche Tarekat-Organisation," in W. Kraus, ed., *Islamische mystische Bruderschaften im heutigen Indonesien* (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1990), pp. 91-100.

²⁸ Much of the following sections is based on a long interview with Kadirun Yahya himself (3 November 1986), correspondence and interviews with his son and spokesperson Iskandar Zulkarnain (30 January 1989, 7 November 1993), and on biographical/hagiographical material in two booklets produced by the shaykh's closest associates on the occasion of his birthday, KH. Ahmad Rivai Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah thariqah Naqshabandiyah Al Khalidiyah* (Medan: Panitia Peringatan Hari Guru, 1974); and R. Hamdani Harahap, ed., *Memperingati sepuluh windu usia Al Mukarram Ayahanda Prof. Dr. Saidi Syekh Kadirun Yahya Al Khalidi* [Commemorating the eightieth birthday of the Venerable Father Prof. Dr. Saydi Shaykh Kadirun Yahya] (Sawangan Jakarta: Baitul Amin), 1997.

²⁹ The other shaykh in the MPR was Abah Anom (K.H.A. Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin), the West Javanese master of the Qâdiriyya wa-Naqshbandiyya.

³⁰ Harahap, *Memperingati sepuluh windu*, p. 10. This includes 25 *surau* in Aceh, 149 in North Sumatra, 34 in other parts of Sumatra, 89 in Java, 15 in Kalimantan, 18 in Sulawesi and 2 in Irian Jaya.

writing, Shaykh Kadirun owed most of his to a reputation for supernatural prowess that he carefully cultivated. Many people whom I met actually feared him and believed he controlled dangerous and possibly evil forces. In the perception of many of his followers he had reached such proximity to God that he could employ divine energy to carry out the most miraculous feats. In the one long meeting I had with him, and even more from discussions with his faithful followers, he struck me as a typical representative of the Indonesian syncretistic mystical-magical style. His boastful self-presentation, with tall tales of his magical powers and unashamedly monetary evaluation of his services, appeared more appropriate to a Javanese kebatinan teacher than to an orthodox Muslim mystic. It was, as I discovered over the following years, especially among the adherents of syncretistic mystical sects, which are numerous in Indonesia, that Kadirun Yahya was recognised as a man of great spiritual powers, whereas many other Sufis looked upon him with some suspicion.

It was perhaps in response to suspicions about the orthodoxy of his teachings that Kadirun emphasised his links with Jabal Abû Qubays and distanced himself from Shaykh Jalaluddin. He called his father-in-law a liar and a cheat, who claimed to have an *ijâza* from Abû Qubays whereas in reality all his knowledge came only from books. Kadirun therefore only mentions his connections solely with other, more legitimate teachers with proper *ijâzas* from Abû Qubays. He received his first *ijâza* from Shaykh Abdul Majid of Batu Sangkar (in West Sumatra) in 1949 and his second *ijâza*, which allowed him to initiate disciples himself, a year later from Shaykh Muhammad Hasyim of Buayan (also in West Sumatra), a shaykh whom he had first met in his father-in-law's house. Kadirun claimed that Muhammad Hasyim had been the favourite Indonesian disciple of Shaykh 'Alî Ridâ in Mecca and that he in turn was the favourite of Muhammad Hasyim, who praised his ability to perform *suluk*.³¹ Kadirun also claimed that after the Wahhabî conquest of 1924, 'Alî Ridâ had left Mecca for India and named Shaykh Muhammad Hasyim the only lawful successor of Abû Qubays in Indonesia – which would give Shaykh Kadirun a strong claim to authority over the other Naqshbandîs. This claim was strengthened by his acquisition of an important heirloom, the crown (*mahkota*) of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâlidiyya. The 'oldest' line of affiliation with Jabal Abû Qubays in West Sumatra was the Kumpulan branch of the Naqshbandiyya, whose founder, Ibrahim Kumpulan, had been a khalifa of Sulaymân al-Qirîmî. In 1971, a shaykh of that branch, Mohammad Said Bonjol, presented Shaykh Kadirun with the crown that he had been given by his own teacher, with the instruction to pass it on to the most deserving person.³² Shaykh Kadirun donned the crown on special occasions

³¹ Harahap, *Memperingati sepuluh windu*, p. 6 lists four proofs of Shaykh Hasyim's recognition of Kadirun as his favourite disciple: 1) the shaykh praised his prowess as a meditator; 2) Kadirun was the only disciple who was given the title of Saydi Shaykh in a ceremony at the grave of his teacher's great-grandfather; 3) Shaykh Hasyim predicted that he would be a teacher of modern educated men and a healer; and 4) he gave him permission to adapt Naqshbandî practices to contemporary conditions.

³² The 1974 hagiography stresses the significance of this event, relating that an earthquake occurred when the shaykh of Bonjol passed the crown on to Kadirun Yahya, and that similar quakes had taken place when Sulaymân al-Qirîmî had passed it on to Ibrahim Kumpulan and again when the latter had given it to Moh. Said Bonjol. Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah*, p. 14.

as a symbol of his link with Jabal Abû Qubays.

Two other Naqshbandî lines with which Kadirun claimed a certain affiliation were that of the Mandailing shaykh Syahbuddin Aek Libung, influential in South Tapanuli where Kadirun grew up, and that of Shaykh Abdul Wahab of Babussalam. He owed his first acquaintance with the Naqshbandiyya to a khalifa of Shaykh Syahbuddin, and many years later the shaykh himself acknowledged Kadirun's skills as a meditator and imparted all his knowledge to him.³³ One account of Kadirun's life claims that his mother was a disciple of Shaykh Abdul Wahab and that she took him to be blessed by the shaykh when he suffered frequent illness. It was Shaykh Abdul Wahab who gave him his present name to replace the name his parents had initially given him.³⁴ I shall return below to the possible implications of this given name (Kadirun being the divine name Qâdir in the nominative, not in the genitive as it would be in 'Abd al-Qâdir, 'Servant of the Powerful'). (see Fig. 8, 9)

Given the obvious care Shaykh Kadirun and his circle have taken to present him as the legitimate heir of several major lines of affiliation emanating from Jabal Abû Qubays, it is surprising that in his writings and published talks there is hardly any reference to the Naqshbandiyya. Whereas Shaykh Jalaluddin's writings deal explicitly with the Naqshbandiyya, describing and giving elaborate apologies for its practices, Shaykh Kadirun's purport to speak of the Qur'an, metaphysics and exact sciences.³⁵ He claimed to have found a synthesis of modern science, technology, and Sufism. He uses the textbook physics and mathematics of his 1930s school days as a metaphor for the relationship between humans and God, as well as for the supernatural powers he has learned to control.

The concept of Infinity and its mathematical properties allowed Shaykh Kadirun to explain some essential truths about God and Sufism. Infinity is unlike any other number, which seems to reflect God's uniqueness. God is seated on His Throne ('*arsh*'), which obviously is at an infinite distance from us. Since distance equals speed multiplied by time ($s = v \cdot t$), communication with God either requires infinite speed or will take infinite time (s is Infinite, and therefore v or t must be Infinite). Prophets, who were in regular communication with God, could only do so because their Rohani (their spiritual self) possessed a radiation of infinite frequency with which to reach God. This is the 'light upon light' mentioned in

³³ Harahap, *Memperingati sepuluh windu*, p. 5-6.

³⁴ Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah*, pp. 4-5. Changing one's name in order to overcome adversity or to mark an important transition in life is a widespread practice in Indonesia. When a child is weak and sickly, this is often attributed to its bearing an inappropriate name, and a wise man or shaykh's advice may be sought on a name change.

³⁵ Kadirun Yahya's writings are modest in number and repetitive in content. They include: *Mutiara Al-Quran dalam Capita Selecta tentang Agama, metafisika, Ilmu Eksakta* [The jewel of the Qur'an, in selected chapters on religion, metaphysics and exact sciences], 3 vols (Medan: Lembaga Ilmiah Metafisika Tasawuf Islam, 1981-85), and *Ungkapan-ungkapan teknologi dalam Al Quran* [Technological expressions in the Qur'an, a collection of lectures given in the course of 1983-1985] (Medan: 1985). The proceedings of an international conference on applied metaphysics, organised at Kadirun's university in 1986, were published as *Teknologi Al Qur'an dalam tasawuf Islam* [The technology of the Qur'an in Islamic tasawwuf] (Medan: 1986).

Qur'an 24:35. It is a light of infinite frequency and infinite energy, emerging from God and bestowed upon the Prophet. This light of infinite frequency is the *wasīla* (means or medium) that permits the Prophet and those who are connected to him through a proper silsila, to reach God's presence. The chain of 35 masters of the Naqshbandiyya, of whom Kadirun Yahya was the latest, is a 'Rope of God' (*habl min Allāh*), through which individuals can connect with the Infinite.

God sent down infinite energy in the form of His word. Infinite power inheres in the *kalīmatullāh*, or the special verses of the Qur'an that can destroy everything negative between Heaven and Earth. The ultimate aim of each human being should be to gain access to this Infinite factor, which is only possible by connecting with the Prophet. Just as electric energy has to be carried by a cable from its source to a lamp, this infinite divine energy can only be contacted through the Prophet and the chain of saints. This infinite energy of the *kalīmatullāh* shares in the mathematical properties of Infinity. One divided by Infinity equals Zero, as does any other number divided by Infinity. From this observation, Shaykh Kadirun derived the following algebraic formula, which he calls a clear indication of the *sunnatullāh* ('God's customary way', i.e. the cosmic order):³⁶

Iblis, Satan, ghosts, diseases, cancer, narcotics, atoms, nuclear,
 curses, sin, Resurrection of the world, etcetera etcetera,
 anything physical or metaphysical, coarse or subtle

 = 0

Infinite power, i.e., the *kalīmatullāh* or special Quranic verses

Mastering this infinite power inhering in the *kalīmatullāh*, concentrating it, and directing it to various purposes in this world is what Kadirun's metaphysical technology is about. The stories about his feats in this field are numerous, and he used to relish in recounting them. When in 1982 the volcano Galunggung in West Java erupted, causing enormous damage to the province, a military officer came to Kadirun Yahya to request his help. The shaykh was taken close to the Galunggung in a military helicopter, from which he threw a few handfuls of pebbles he had 'filled' with the *kalīmatullāh* into the crater. The tremendous power thereby directed at the volcano was sufficient to end its activity. Shaykh Kadirun still owns a certificate in which the provincial government thanks him for his services in stopping the eruption.³⁷

The same 'tremendous power' (a phrasing frequently used by Kadirun) can also be harnessed to less benign ends. At the time of the communist insurrection in

³⁶ This paragraph summarises the main argument in *Capita Selecta*, vol. 3. The 'algebraic formula' is translated as literally as possible (p. 115). This formula, with varying terms in the numerator, returns time and again in Kadirun's writings; he apparently considered it as the core of his scientific theory of Sufism.

³⁷ This is one of Kadirun's favourite stories, told many times and to numerous different audiences. When making a public appearance where he wished to remind people of his achievements, he would bring someone along who was identified as the officer who took him to the Galunggung.

Malaysia, an officer of the Malaysian armed forces who knew of Shaykh Kadirun's supernatural prowess came to request his support to eradicate the last bands of communists who were holding out in the forest. A military helicopter took the shaykh to the forest where the communists were hiding. He first poured *kalimatullâh* water in a circle around the area where the communists were believed to be; all who attempted to escape met instant death when crossing that magical circle. Those who remained within the circle and did not move were finished off with a few handfuls of *kalimatullâh* pebbles that, once thrown by Kadirun, became target-seeking projectiles that one by one killed all remaining communists.

Kadirun Yahya told me that he had also played a part in the Iran-Iraq war, because the Iraqi ambassador in Jakarta heard about him and paid him handsomely for a few bottles of *kalimatullâh* water. As a result, Iraqi troops succeeded in pushing back the Iranians. Their military successes ended when the ambassador's tour of duty in Jakarta was over. His successor had no faith in Shaykh Kadirun, with the consequence that the Iranians regained the initiative. The shaykh was also confident about his ability to take on the Palestinian question. If only those Palestinians would recognise him (and remunerate him appropriately, he added), he could help them regain all of Jerusalem in no time at all.³⁸

The water 'filled' with the power of the *kalimatullâh*, among Kadirun's disciples usually called *tawajjuh* water (after the term for the spiritual energy passing from master to disciple in Naqshbandi ritual) or *kalimatullâh* water, is reminiscent of the holy water produced by most Indonesian men of spiritual powers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim. A bottle of water over which a saint has said a prayer or whispered a mantra is taken home as a powerful medicine capable of healing disease or bringing prosperity, like the water from the Zamzam pilgrims take home from Mecca. The high-powered pebbles are called *sijjil* stones by Kadirun's disciples, like the stones that the Abâbil birds dropped upon the army of Abraha in the *sura* 105 in the Qur'an, miraculously destroying the entire train of elephants with these projectiles. Kadirun had yet a third vessel in which he claimed to concentrate divine power, a stick (like the Prophet Mûsâ, he added). He used this stick for various special purposes, including healing such diseases as cancer, and had once brought back to life a person who had already died.³⁹ Many followers were convinced that Kadirun – Kadirun the shaykh, or rather his Rohani, not Kadirun the professor – had power over life and death. Many critics mistrusted the sources of his powers but were cautious not to provoke his wrath.

³⁸ All these miraculous feats, and many more, were told me by Shaykh Kadirun himself during my first (and last) extensive conversation with him, in his house in Medan, 3 November 1986. I found that the stories were well-known among groups of followers in various parts of Indonesia, who were, however, reluctant to discuss them with outsiders because they had apparently led to accusations of the shaykh's practising non-Islamic magic. The deputies with whom I later discussed these miracle tales and Kadirun's conception of spiritual powers did their best to give an orthodox interpretation and insisted that the power was God's, not Kadirun's – or, as one said, Kadirun the professor is an ordinary human being and has no special powers; but when he is Kadirun the shaykh, God's power works through him.

³⁹ Kadirun's son and spokesman Iskandar Zulkarnain later corrected his father and explained that the person in question had been released from the ICU in a Medan hospital as dying and beyond medical help, but had revived after having been taken to Kadirun's house (personal communication).

Kadirun the professor, the exoteric Kadirun, has on different occasions given slightly different accounts of his early education and academic achievements. The following brief summary appears more or less correct. Though born in North Sumatra, he was sent to Java for his education, to Yogyakarta first and thence to Semarang. He completed seven years of (Dutch-language) secondary education there in the 1930s and after an interval of two more years visited the Netherlands in 1940-42, studying chemistry (as he told me) or psychology (as his later official biography has it). During his secondary school years, he was living with the family of a Dutch church minister, who made him an assistant and even occasionally let him preach in his church.⁴⁰ This minister probably belonged to a denomination that was open to eastern spirituality, such as the Free Catholics, who were close to Theosophy.⁴¹ This may have helped him in the study of healing (*ketabiban*, i.e., the practice of a *tabīb* or healer) on which he embarked after secondary school and of which his study in the Netherlands was the culmination, according to the official biography.⁴² He returned to an Indonesia that was then under Japanese occupation (1942-45) and went through the war for independence from the Dutch (1945-49). During those years he lived in West Sumatra, became deeply involved in the Naqshbandiyya, married Shaykh Jalaluddin's daughter, and became the favourite disciple of several other shaykhs. After the war, he took a degree in English teaching and taught languages in school. In 1961 he established a private university in Medan, the Universitas Panca Budi, which was the only university in the world, he claimed, with a faculty of metaphysics. From the date of founding he was its rector and, of course, a professor there. At the same time he taught various classes at the University of North Sumatra. In 1968 his university granted him a doctoral degree in the philosophy of spirituality and metaphysics. Among his work experiences, the biography notes that he was a special advisor – do doubt on 'spiritual' matters – to various military commanders and political authorities.

To many of Shaykh Kadirun's followers, his academic achievements made him superior to other shaykhs and gave legitimacy to his modernised Sufism. More important to them, however, were the signs of his spiritual greatness, some of which are recounted in an esoteric biography circulating among followers.⁴³ They are reminiscent of the *manâqib* of great saints of earlier times but have a distinctly local flavour.

⁴⁰ Kadirun told me about this cleric in my conversation with him of 8 November 1986 (during which several of his followers were present); he is not mentioned in any of the other accounts of his life.

⁴¹ Several clergymen of this denomination, whom I met or of whom I heard, were in fact also Freemasons and active in the Theosophical Society.

⁴² Thus the brief biography in Harahap, *Memperingati sepuluh windu*, pp. 3-7, the last authorised account. Both in Yogyakarta and Semarang there were circles of mixed Dutch, Chinese, and indigenous Indonesian membership with a strong interest in 'spiritual' matters. An earlier account by a disciple mentions that Kadirun followed a written course of psychic healing from Germany (Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah*, p. 5) and read much about other religions, esotericism, and mystical movements (ibid, p.7).

⁴³ Contained in Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah*. I had been given this booklet by close followers of Shaykh Kadirun who wished me to 'correct' the unflattering account (in their view) of the shaykh that I had given in the first edition of my book on the Indonesian Naqshbandiyya.

Even before the Shaykh's birth there were signs announcing that he had been chosen for great things. His mother was a practising Naqshbandiyya, initiated by the great Shaykh Abdul Wahab of Babussalam. One evening as she was performing her dhikr after the evening prayer, a light in the shape of the full moon entered the room, approached her and entered her head through the fontanel, after which she became unconscious. Not long after this event, her husband was visited in a dream by the Prophet, who predicted the birth of a male child of noble nature and told him to name it Muhammad Amin, which was the Prophet's own name (sic!). The parents obeyed, but as a child the boy was always ill, until his mother took him to Shaykh Abdul Wahab, who proposed to change his name to Kadirun Yahya. Only after becoming a shaykh himself did Kadirun add his original name to the one by which he had become known.⁴⁴

When the Venerable Father Teacher (Yang Mulia Ayahanda Guru), as Kadirun is consistently referred to, was still a student in Yogyakarta, he encountered an Indian shaykh who was a murid of the great `Abd al-Qâdir Jaylânî, named Shaykh Rohani, who invited him to stay in his house. This shaykh told him that there was in him a 'fuse' or 'contact' (*suatu skring atau kontak*), capable of direct communication with God. Later that night angels descended from heaven to cleanse him (one is reminded of the legend of angels washing Muhammad's heart prior to his prophetic mission).⁴⁵ Later, when Kadirun first met with Shaykh Hasyim, the latter exclaimed "Ah, this is the one I have been waiting for!" and directly experienced *tawajjuh* with him, without demanding the usual initiation ceremony with ablution and *tawba*. Having been cleansed by angels, the Venerable Father Teacher needed no further ablutions.

In the view of Shaykh Kadirun's most devoted followers, there was not just a 'fuse' in him allowing him to communicate with God, but the connection is even more intimate, which may make it seem as if God does what Shaykh Kadirun wills. The shaykh had attained union (*menyatu*, 'become (as) one'), which they explained with the well-known simile of a white-hot iron in a fire: as long as the iron is in the fire there is no distinction between the radiating iron and the fire, but when it is taken out of the fire and cooling off, it is just a piece of iron. Kadirun the professor is like a piece of cold iron; but the shaykh they know is as a blazing sword in the fire, and the fire and the sword are as one.⁴⁶ Some followers appear to take the union quite literally. One young *petoto* (instructor of a level below khalifa) told me how he had attempted to expel a jinn that was bothering a young woman by letting the woman perform dhikr. This angered the jinn, who took control of her

⁴⁴ The full implications of the name still eludes me. Amin is not known as a name of the Prophet, but for Kadirun Yahya it appears to connote his status as an intermediary between humans and God. All the *surau* that Kadirun and his followers established have names like Darul Amin, Qutbul Amin, Saiful Amin, etc.

⁴⁵ The Prophet was purified, Kadirun tells elsewhere, by opening his chest and washing his heart four times; after that he was given the Burâq (the winged creature that carried him on the nightly journey and ascent to heaven), which is none other than the *wasîla* of infinite energy. Kadirun Yahya in *Teknologi Al Qur'an*, p. 41.

⁴⁶ Various discussions with Ir. Hendro Saptono, Kadirun's representative in Yogyakarta, and with Achmad Mudjib, representative for South Sumatra, June and July 1993.

body and started speaking through her. The *petoto* began himself to perform the dhikr, which angered the jinn even more. Then the *petoto* took out a picture of Shaykh Kadirun and asked the jinn if he knew him, upon which the jinn answered, “of course, for it is he who created me!”⁴⁷

Shaykh Kadirun’s flamboyant self-presentation, and the high spiritual status and the various miracles attributed to him attracted numerous followers and disciples, from all walks of life. In public appearances he was usually accompanied by a select coterie of ‘beautiful people’, including female artists, middle-ranking military officers and one or two academics. Oblique references were made to more powerful patrons – cabinet ministers, generals, high bureaucrats – who were grateful to him for services rendered. The followers whom I met in the few local *surau* that I visited were generally men of a much more modest background and appeared representative of the local population. In North Sumatra, where the network of followers is most dense, many of the *surau* are located in rural districts, and they are mostly attended by farmers and shopkeepers, to whom the rituals of the Naqshbandiyya (dhikr, *tawajjuh* and *suluk*) were simply an integral part of Islamic worship. In Yogyakarta, a city known for its many universities, there were many students and civil servants in the *surau*, with a correspondingly greater interest in metaphysical speculation and extraordinary experiences. Rural followers from East Java whom I met appeared to be fascinated by the conquest of supernatural powers and spiritual contests with the followers of other spiritual disciplines or other teachers.

Besides admirers, Shaykh Kadirun inevitably had his critics and detractors. Naqshbandī shaykhs of other branches were reluctant to criticise him and only indicated their scepticism about his claim of being the most legitimate successor to Jabal Abū Qubays. The strongest opposition came from reformist circles that mistrusted Sufism anyway, but among traditionalists too there were suspicions that what Shaykh Kadirun taught violated the boundaries of orthodox Sufism. In Malaysia, his branch of the Naqshbandiyya was actually banned as a deviant sect by the federal Office for Religious Affairs (which admittedly employs a narrow definition of orthodoxy and has banned many religious movements). In Indonesia too, there have been repeated (but unsuccessful) attempts to have his tariqa declared deviant by the Ulama Council of Indonesia and banned by the government for various reasons. Followers were said to place the shaykh’s photograph in front of them when praying so that they appeared to be worshipping him rather than God.⁴⁸ The initiation ceremony was said to involve the ritual sacrifice of a white chicken, believed to be a heathen practice and the shaykh was accused of having commerce with spirits other than God and the angels. Kadirun’s connections in powerful circles prevented a ban, but the accusations of heterodoxy had their effect. The shaykh and his deputies concentrated increasingly on the standard practices of the Naqshbandiyya and became more secretive about some of their core beliefs.

⁴⁷ Interview, 26 July 1993.

⁴⁸ This accusation may have been based on a misperception of the *rābita* but also resonates with simple followers’ understanding of the shaykh’s having achieved union.

By 1974, it was claimed that Shaykh Kadirun had appointed no less than 195 khalifas, thereby surpassing even Mawlânâ Khâlid.⁴⁹ Their numbers went on increasing in the following years, but the shaykh introduced a name change, suggesting a downgrading of the status of most of them. The new term *petoto* – a Malay-Javanese neologism suggesting the meaning of ‘organiser’ and ‘guide’ – carried none of the connotations of khalifa and thereby prevented accusations such as had been levelled against Shaykh Jalaluddin for giving away that title without proper training. A *petoto* is in charge of a *surau* (in some of the 350-odd *surau* there is more than one *petoto*) and is allowed to lead the *tawajjuh* (the regular communal dhikr meetings) but only a handful of them are allowed to lead *suluk* and initiate new members. This privilege is reserved for a few men of special achievement, including Kadirun’s son-in-law Shahril Malik in Jakarta and Moga Barita Harahap in East Java (both men are fellow Sumatrans: the former a Minangkabau and the latter a Mandailing like Kadirun). Of Harahap, whose appearance and style reminded me more of a martial arts master than of a Sufi teacher, it was said that he is the most advanced of the disciples. He is already close to achieving union and he can produce *sijjil* stones, the pebbles filled with the power of the *kalimatullah*.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, I have the strong impression that in the course of the past twenty years Kadirun’s branch of the Naqshbandiyya Khâliidiyya, if only to avoid being stigmatised as a syncretistic mystical-magical sect, has moved closer to mainstream Naqshbandî practices. Kadirun Yahya died on 9 May 2001, a few years after his eightieth birthday was celebrated, the last major event of his career. He was succeeded by his sons Iskandar Zulkarnain, who died only a few years after his father, and Abdulkhaliq Fajduani (sic!). Both lacked their father’s charisma and interest in the spirit world, and they were administrators rather than spiritual guides. His son-in-law Syahril Malik no longer leads the major lodge in the Jakarta area, which appears to have lost many of its regular visitors.

CONCLUSION: INNOVATIONS AND INDIGENISATION

There have been many more influential shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâliidiyya in Indonesia, but the three discussed in this paper have had more widespread influence than their colleagues. Moreover, they clearly illustrate two developments that may be perceived in other branches of the order as well. One is a trend towards formal organisation and bureaucratisation, with a shift in the modality of affiliation from a personal relationship with the shaykh to membership in an organisation (most clearly so in the case of Shaykh Jalaluddin’s PPTI). As both the later developments of the PPTI and of Shaykh Kadirun’s network suggest, a complete transition from charismatic to bureaucratic legitimization of authority in a Sufi order is unlikely to succeed. The bureaucratic structure of PPTI worked

⁴⁹ A list of the names of these khalifas, with the year and place of their receiving the *ijâza*, is given in Rakub St. Hidayat, *Ahli silsilah*, pp. 23-29.

⁵⁰ I first met Harahap in Medan at the campus of Kadirun’s university in January 1989 when he amused me with stories of supernatural contests he had won thanks to Kadirun Yahya’s applied metaphysics. A *petoto* interviewed in Yogyakarta on 26 July 1993 told me of Harahap’s reputation for spiritual advancement.

properly when Shaykh Jalaluddin was still around. Similarly, there were no structural reasons why the network of *surau* affiliated with Kadirun's Naqshbandiyya would not continue to function, but soon after his death it became clear that it was really his charisma that kept the network together and kept local communities coming to the *surau*. The PPTI has survived as an organisation (although it has hardly flourished) because it enjoys recognition from the government as the only Golkar-affiliated vehicle for tariqa followers. It will surprise me if the less formal and less recognised network of Kadirun's *surau* survives as long – unless a new charismatic leader emerges who brings them all under his control.

The sequence Abdul Wahab – Jalaluddin – Kadirun also clearly illustrates the process of gradual indigenisation of the Naqshbandiyya-Khâlidiyya since the disappearance of the centre at Jabal Abû Qubays. The shaykhs at Babussalam have maintained practices more or less as they were introduced by Shaykh Abdul Wahab. Shaykh Jalaluddin was an organiser and polemicist, who in his enthusiasm invented new forms and new arguments against opponents. It was in the elaborate initiation ceremony that he practised and succinctly described in his books (with a symbolic death and burial, an intermediate stage in which dreams had to appear, and symbolic rebirth) that critics have perceived a typically Indonesian innovation. Shaykh Kadirun represents, in my view, the most extreme example of the process of indigenisation of practices and discourses in the Naqshbandiyya. In spite of his protestations to the contrary, he was in many respects more like a Javanese syncretistic mystic of the first half of the twentieth century than like a sharia-oriented teacher of the Naqshbandiyya. His mysticism was about the acquisition of supernatural powers and magical control of matters of this world rather than about attuning oneself to God's will. These supernatural powers, moreover, were morally neutral and could be harnessed to any end. There was more killing than healing in Kadirun's own accounts of his miracles. Kadirun's powers were very much akin to the Javanese concept of power, *kasektèn* (or, in Indonesian, *kesaktian*), that was central to classical Javanese literature and that has played a significant part in modern politics.⁵¹

It was probably the growing influence of Salafi-inspired Muslim thought and practice that has prevented a continuation of the indigenisation of the Naqshbandiyya. There has been increasing pressure to suppress ideas and practices that could be considered as deviant, and as a result, it appears, the central practices of the order – the joint dhikr, the retreat, and references to the Qur'an and hadith – have been strengthened over the ones that made Kadirun Yahya such a colourful figure.

Martin van BRUINESSEN

University of Utrecht

⁵¹ Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, "The idea of power in Javanese culture," in C. Holt, ed., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1972, pp. 1-69.

Fig. 1 and 2. Visiting the shrine of Shaykh Abdul Wahab in Babussalam

Fig. 3. Prof.Dr. H. Saidi Syekh Kadirun Yahya Al Khalidi (From the 80th anniversary booklet *Memperingati sepuluh windu usia Al Mukarram Ayahanda Prof. Dr. H. Saidi Syekh Kadirun Yahya Al Khalidi, Sawangan* (Jakarta: Baitul Amin, 1970).

Fig. 4. Shaykh Haji Jalaluddin and President Sukarno, on the front page of one of Jalaluddin's treatises, in which he questions himself whether Sukarno could be the Mahdi (adducing some supportive evidence but stopping short of a positive answer).

Fig. 5. The *dhikr ism al-dhât* in the *latîfat al-qalb* ; Fig. 6. The *dhikr latâ'if* in the seven subtle points ; Fig. 7. The *dhikr nafy wa ithbât (lâ ilâha illâ llâh)* and its trajectory through the body (from: Dr. al-Shaykh Haji Jalaluddin, *Rahasia Mutiara ath-Thariqat an-Naqsyabandiyah*, Djakarta: vol. 1, 5th printing, 1961).

Fig. 5



Fig. 6

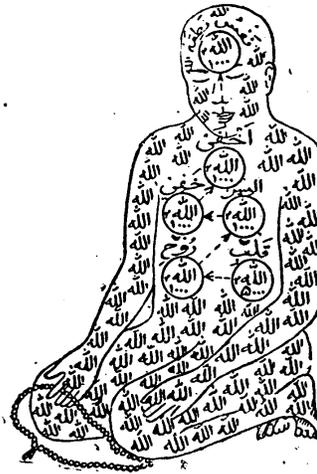


Fig. 7



Fig. 8. Anas Mudawwar addressing the visiting officials (© M. van Bruinessen)

Fig. 8. Syekh Kadirun's crown (*mahkota*), allegedly deriving from Jabal Abû Qubays (detail of Fig. 8).