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The focus of this journal is to provide readers on understanding of Indonesia and International affairs related to religious literature and heritage and its present developments through publication of articles, research reports, and books reviews.

Heritage of Nusantara specializes in religious studies in the field of literature either contemporarily or classically and heritage located in Southeast Asia. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines.

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## THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SUNNISM AND ITS RELATION WITH JAVANESE SUFIS

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### Abstract

*This study is tracing the origins of early Sunnism and its relation with Javanese Sufis. Based on primary sources, it is not useless to trace the origins of Sunnism back to the seventh century. By this quest, the portrait of later Sunnism will be, at least, better understood. Besides, following this framework enables one to understand how the Sunnis viewed their own history. Ibn Taimiyya, a very prominent Sunni scholar, for instance, claims that the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama`a is an eminent classic mazhab (mazhab al-qādim). It existed before Allah created Abu Hanifa, Malik, Syafi`i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal. Indeed it belongs to the mazhab of certain Aṣḥāb who consistently emulated the Prophet. Those who opposed the Jama`a deserved to be called muḩtadi`ūn.*

**Keywords:** *early Sunnism, Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama`a, Abu Hanifa, Malik, Syafi`i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal, Walisongos, Sufism, Javanese.*

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini membahas asal-usul paham Sunni pada masa awal dan hubungannya dengan masyarakat Jawa. Dengan berlandaskan sumber-sumber primer, adalah sangat bermanfaat untuk melacak asal usul paham suni pada abad ketujuh Masehi. Dengan cara seperti ini, gambaran tentang paham suni masa berikutnya akan dapat dipahami lebih baik. Di samping itu, dengan kerangka pikir seperti ini seseorang dapat memahami bagaimana kaum Suni memandang sejarah mereka. Ibn Taimiyya, seorang pemuka Sunni ulung, mengklaim bahwa Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a adalah mazhab klasik yang terkenal (mazhab al-qādim). Ia sudah ada sebelum muncul Abu Hanifa, Malik, Syafi'i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal. Adalah logis dan masuk akal bahwa kelompok tersebut milik dari satu mazhab yang secara konsisten meniru Rasulullah. Mereka yang menolak jamaah ini disebut dengan kelompok mu'tadilūn.*

**Kata Kunci:** *paham Sunni masa awal, Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a, Abu Hanifa, Malik, Syafi'i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal, Walisongos, tasawuf, masyarakat Jawa*

### Introduction

Sunnism is a very broad topic entailing political, theological, legal, and Sufi dimension. The writer intends to restrict the discussion on the very early development of Sunnism, primarily its connection with the development of the concept of the Sunna, Ḥadīṣ and jama'a among the Sunnis.

A modern scholar such as Montgomery Watt is somewhat late to hold that Sunnism began its history from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He starts presenting Sunnism by dividing the triumph of Sunnism from 850 to 945, (Watt, 1973: 253-268) without relating some relevant elements considered as seeds or prototypes of Sunnism. It becomes a common sense that an Islamic thought is a product of an unending dynamic process resulted from internal and external struggle for certain purposes. It is not appropriate to perceive that the "agreed" ninth century Sunnism is an idea which emerged by itself. Due to apparent clues from primary sources, it is not useless to trace the origins of Sunnism back to two centuries before. By this quest, the portrait of later Sunnism will be, at least, better understood. Besides, following this framework enables one to understand how the Sunnis viewed their own history. Ibn Taimiyya, a very prominent Sunni scholar, for instance, claims that the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a is an eminent classic *mazhab* (mazhab al-qādim). It existed

before Allah created Abu Hanifa, Malik, Syafi'i, and Ahmad bin Hanbal. Indeed it belongs to the *mazhab* of certain *aṣḥāb* who consistently emulated the Prophet. Those who opposed the Jama'a deserved to be called *mubtadi'un*.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Syafiq Mughni strengthens Watt's thesis by restating that the term Ahl al-Sunna was only created in the 9th century. To him, the first writer who coins Ahl al-Sunna is Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855) to distinguish themselves from Ahl Ra'yi or Mu'tazila and also to oppose Ahl al-Kalam and Ahl al-Bid'a. He contends that it is ahistorical to understand that Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a existed in the period of the Prophet. (Mughni, 1990: 259). However Sunni ideas, their root and embryo, can be found from the very beginning among the Aṣḥāb or the Companions of the Prophet. This Sunnism was not institutionalized, rather it was reflected in the manners of the individuals. Or it can be asserted that before Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic to the Caribbean in 1492, which is largely known as when Columbus reached the New World, indeed, the world is no longer new, the world is there before he discovered it. In other word, Sunnism was there before the people coined the term.

It was Umar bin 'Abd al-Aziz (an Umayyad Khalif from 717-720) who was arguing against the Qadarites. He was the first Umayyad Khalif to take the application of Islamic law seriously and systematically. His attachment to Sunna can be seen from the fact that he sent out emissaries to all the outlying provinces to teach people the sharia law and to record traditions of the Prophet (Rahman, 1979:79). Among the Sunnis he has been largely known as the first century (of Hijra) innovator in keeping with the Prophet's tradition: "Indeed, Allah will send to this umma in every beginning (ra'si) of a century a man who will renovate their religion".<sup>2</sup> Again, to reconsider this idea means to "understand" how the Sunni majority view their own history.

That the founders of *mazāhibu al-arba`a*<sup>3</sup> and Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz were early Sunnis can be easily noticed from broad aspects. To be more courageous to search further on generations affecting their Sunni attitudes and loyalties based on their firm affection to



the Sunna is proposed here by highlighting some *aṣḥāb*'s appearance.

It will not do any harm providing the fact that the *aṣḥāb* probably did not realize what they were performing as prototypes of Sunnism. To refer them as the very early Sunna holders, in a specific time, due to their faithfulness to the Sunna is analogous to attribute the *ʿulama* to those possessing the *ʿulama* quality. The term *ʿulama* refers to men with *ʿilm* (*ʿulama* is plural form *ʿalīm*), while Sunnis stems from the word Sunna. If the Prophet describes *ʿulama* as *Warāṣatu al-Anbiya*, he relates Sunnism to those who follow the Sunna and the congregation, namely the ones who stick to what he and his Companions practice.<sup>4</sup> Some of the *aṣḥāb* were definitely *ʿulama* as the Prophet has just given clue, namely those who have supremacy in religious sciences as will be discussed. It will not be misleading to identify them as having some Sunni features as well after the historical indication is found. Among scholars so far there is an ignorance of associating some *aṣḥāb* with the terms *ʿulama* and Sunnis, but this does not mean that it is irrelevant to carry such an "inventive" inquiry. The concept of *ʿulama* became apparently "relevant" coinciding with the emergence of Hasan al-Basri (d. 728), about a century after the Prophet died. His popularity as an *ʿalīm* is partly caused by the definition of the given period which enables one to see different figures apparently. It is not necessary, however, to suggest Hasan Basri be the first *ʿalīm*. Unless there is objection to denote the Prophet as the first Sufi in Islam,<sup>5</sup> the attempts to identify Sunnism in the early period of Islam doesn't seem to be an exaggeration.

One can still debate why categorization needs to be made unless there was consciousness among the umma to name themselves Sunni, and the danger of the classification will be much greater than that of the "new picture" that has been targeted. It should be remembered that to deal with history unavoidably requires identification, classification, interpretation, and critique. The question is not why but how to reliably identify and classify. To identify the origins of Sunnism is completely different from dichotomizing and stereotyping varieties, for the latter venture signifies generalization and simplification.

Therefore, It is appropriate to represent some companions of the Prophet below, in particular, Abu Huraira, Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn Abbas, Mu'az bin Jabal, Ibn Umar whose principles share the future Sunnis in terms of their loyalties in holding the Ḥadīṣ, Sunna, jama'a, and in terms of their life style which are more "*ukhrawī* or other world oriented", such as their negligence of taking part in political dispute and their preference in enriching themselves with religious knowledge based on the Qur'an and Sunna standards.

### Definition

Some people say that it is easy to criticize but difficult to create. As a matter of fact it is not purposed here to censor any findings. What to be done here is to try to follow Sunni principle: "*al-muḥāfazatu `alā al-qadīm ṣāliḥ wal akhḍu `alā jadīd al-aṣḥaḥ*" namely to maintain the valid or righteous past and to absorb or to transfer a more suitable innovations".<sup>6</sup>

There are a lot of primary sources and secondary ones scattered treating early Sunnism. It will be valuable if one endeavors to reconstruct a picture of early Sunni ideas based on the various sources. The modern scholars mentioned above, for instance, have given some well-defined features of pre-Sunnis which can be used as beneficial means for analytical investigation. However, it is only Ibn `Umar who was reported by Goldziher to be associated with early Sunnism. Further studies are ,therefore, absolutely needed.

Sunni or Ahlussuna Wa al- Jama'a can be defined as the majority of the Muslims who accept the authority of the Prophet Sunna and the authority of whole first generation of Muslims and the validity of the historical community. Sunnism in this case is characterized by tendency of people to use the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet as primary sources for solving any ideological debate and for guiding their way of life rather than using logic to win the authority of al-Ḥadīṣ such as the Mu'tazilis,<sup>7</sup> and by the tendency of people to use the power of majority, jama'a, or Ijma' to stay away from disintegration. In the last respect the Sunnis validate both the Umayyad and Abbasid leadership, without claiming their rulers as Sunni Muslims. This Jama'a is different from the Shi'is whose

leadership is primarily referred to Ali's progeny. The order of the first four Caliphs is then considered to be the order in its excellence.

The development of the Sunna is not confined to the Sunna of the Prophet, but it is stretching the Sunna of the Sahaba as indicated by the Hadis: "Those of you who survive me shall see great differences (among Muslims); so stick to my Sunna and that of the rightly-guided and divinely- led Caliphs (Rahman, 1965: 58).

According to al-Bajuri, an eighteen century Islamic jurist, the Sunna even has broader implications, namely: to come after the "sa-laf- al-šāliḥ": to go behind the Prophets, the Aṣḥāb, the tabi`in, the tabi'i al-tabi'īn specifically the four mazāhib founders. Sunna in this case is opposed to *bid'a* which is attributed to the Mu`tazili's disposition.

It should be understood here that the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet are complimentary. Historically at the end of the first century the principle was formed: al-Sunnah qāḍiya 'alā al-Qur`ān wa laysa al-Qur`ān biqāḍin 'alā al-Sunnah (The Sunna is the judge of the Qur'an and not vice versa).<sup>8</sup> Goldziher's research shows that the endeavor to raise the Sunna to position of equality with the sacred book in establishing the law comes more and more into evidence. (Goldziher, 1971:31).

Modern scholars such as Gibb defines the Sunna as "an actual living practice of the early Muslim while Ḥadīṣ is the vehicle of the Sunna, and the whole corpus of the Sunna recorded and transmitted in the form of Ḥadīṣ is itself generally called "the Ḥadīṣ". (Gibb, 74). The position of Sunna in this case is above the Ḥadīṣ, for the latter has levels from sahih to dha`if, while the Sunna is considered a continuous living tradition and a secure standard practice from the Prophet period onward. Those who opposed the Sunna were called ahl al-bid`a.

In Islamic law the Sunna is the second source after the Qur'an. This solid position is due to the Sunna's function as a tarjuman al-Qur'an and as an original practical guide to apply the Qur'an. It is noteworthy that they were never taken apart in Islamic history. From the very beginning, as the Ḥadīṣ above, the Prophet had reminded Muslims to stick to the Qur'an and Sunna, so that they will

never get astray.<sup>9</sup> Hasan al-Basri, who was also a thoughtful faqih, used both sources to argue against the Caliph `Abd al-Malik, (Schwarz, 1967: 15-31). The generation before him, especially among the *aṣḥāb*, must have more exceptionally employed them. The reason is as will be seen below that their closeness to the Prophet appeared more discernible. In other words, the *aṣḥāb* were the direct students of the Prophet. This does not mean that future Sunnis from `Umar bin `Abd al-`Aziz to the rest of four founders of *maẓāhib*, as shown below, were hesitant to employ them. Those founders, as a matter of fact, had resemblance in upholding them consistently as very basic sources of Islamic jurisprudence. In short, the development of Sunna as a legal and theological source suggests that the Sunnis comply not only with the Sunna of the Prophet but with the salaf as well, and this practice has been continuously increasing with the passage of time. Its continuity and change is a matter of how the Sunnis interpreted and applied the Sunna, without any intention to question its authority.

## Some "Sunni" Figures with Their Typical Sunnism

### A. Among the *Aṣḥāb*:

#### 1. `Abd Allah ibn Mas`ud

Ibn Mas`ud who died in 32 AH /652 is reliable among the Kufan Muhaddiṣūn. To J. Schacht, Ibn Mas'ud is one of the favourite labels of the juridical school of Kufa. He is also one of the names to which the isnads of the *Ihya* of al-Ghazali tend to be attached. How Ibn Mas'ud advocated the Sunna can be seen from his saying: "Obey and do not make willful innovation (*wala tabtadi'u*) as you have your sufficiency in the Sunna". He was also accounted to be satisfied with his judgement about a particular case and expressed deep joy with it when the other *Aṣḥāb* testified that the Prophet made the same judgement. (Goldziher, 1979:139). Abdullah ibn Mas`ud was also teaching at Madain, settled at Kufa with 60 shaikhs who were his companions and followers, taught his own system of vocalizing the Qur'an, preserved even after `Uthman's standardization. (Morony, 1992). His faithfulness to the Qur'an and the Sunna reflects on his own words: "Indeed the most rightful Ḥadiṣ is the Qur'an, and the best tradition is the Prophet's Sunna". (Abu Nua'im, 1938:138). This sincere devotion was witnessed by

ʿAli as follows: "Ibn Masʿud is a gentleman who decorates himself by teaching the Qurʿan and the Sunna".(Abu Nuaim, 1938:129). Among the Sunnis ʿAbdullah bin Masʿud has been familiar with his idea of Jamaʿa, especially, when he transmitted a Hadīṣ of Jamaʿa as follows: "The Muslim who confesses *Lā ilāha illā Allāh wa innī Rasūl Allāh*, is protected, unless he commits three things: to kill, to conduct adultery, and to leave his community, *al-tarīkh li al-jamaʿa*.

As a *hāmil al-Qurʿān*, the one who knew the Qurʿan by heart, he suggested piety, a very religious norm which distinguishes him from the others. His recommendation is as follows: "It is essential for *hāmil al-Qurʿān* that he be aware of night when people sleep, of his day when they eat and drink, of his misery when they are in cheer, of his cry when they are in laugh, of his silence when they are in noise, of honesty when they are in falsehood".(Abu Nuaim, 1938:130).

## 2. ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿUmar

He was one of the most renowned personalities of the first generation of Muslims, and the authorities most frequently quoted for Hadīṣ. While his father, Umar bin Khattab, was familiar with his involvement in the controversial political arena, Ibn Umar was free from political issues. He derived his reputation from his high moral qualities which compelled the admiration of his contemporaries. At a time when the Muslims were being carried by their emotion into civil war, he was able to keep himself aloof from the conflicts. Even Ibn Umar advised his community that to pay homage to an unjust ruler is better than to revolt. This tenet is more noticeable when he was asked about praying together with the Kharijis, Ibn Zubair and the other Muslims who are in conflict. He shrewdly answered: "Whoever invites you to do prayer by summoning *ḥayya ʿalā al-ṣalāh*, *ḥayya ʿalā al-falāḥ* do fulfill him. And whoever invite you to kill his fellow Muslims and to usurp their wealth, do answer ʿNo!".(Abu Nuaim, 1938:309).

His idea about jamaʿa was clearly revealed during the first fitna. Since he did not involve in the friction, they were curious: "Why did not you go to the battle?". He answered, "Yes, I really did

when idols were at the corner and gate so that Allah vacated them from this Arabian peninsula. As a matter of fact, I hate killing people uttering *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. They fervently said: "By God, we understand who you are, you want the other Aṣḥāb slay one another, when they perish you will ask them to give their allegiance and declare yourself as Amir al-Mu'mininun!" He replied: "By God, I have no such ambition, if you ask me to pray together I will love it, but if want to isolate, I will not come along, if you are together, I will never seclude, *wa izā ijta'ma'tum lam ufārriqakum*." (Abu Nu'aim, 1938: 309).

Furthermore, he followed the precepts of Islam with such scrupulous obedience that he became a pattern for future generations, to such a degree that information was collected as to how he dressed, how he cut and dyed his beard. Campo, 2009:54). He totally followed the Sunna when he conducted the pilgrimage (hajj). His way of pilgrimage was reported to be different from that of the common *aṣḥāb*, but he successfully convinced them by referring to his record of Sunna. His humbleness is shown in the report that he never refused anyone who needed help, even a leper shared eating with him on one plate.

### 3. Ibn Abbas (Abdullah bin Abbas)

He was familiar with his capacity as *Tarjuman al-Qur'ān*, the translator of the Qur'an, as indicated by an Ḥadīṣ: "*Ni'ma tarjuman al-Qur'ān anta*". His being smart in religious sciences was a model for the other pious *aṣḥāb*. To him the Prophet prayed for his knowledge, and wisdom. Ibn Abbas even successfully promoted the idea of Jama'a by his saying: "If you hear from me a communication in the name of the Prophet and you find that it doesn't agree with the book of God or is not liked by people (*inda al-nās*), know that I have reported a lie about the Prophet" (Goldziher, 1971:33). In other words, what the umma considered to be true was really true. The general feeling of the community, *ijma'*, was then final.

His neutrality in political feud can be observed when Mu'awiyya asked him: "Are you 'Ali's follower", "No!" he answered, "the follower of 'Uṣman then?" asked further, he answered the same

thing, and explained: "I'm the follower of the Prophet". (Abu Nu'aim, 1938:329).

#### 4. Mu'ad bin Jabal

He was another expert in religious sciences. Probably because of him the Muslims followed the Prophet's Sunna to pray five times a day, for there is no explicit Ḥadīṣ for five time- prayer. Mu'ad reported that the prayers were referred to the Prophet's Sunna. If the Muslims leave the Sunna, they will get misguided, *lā ḍalaltum*.(Abu Nu'aim, 1938:235).It is he who popularized the standard of prayer time among Sunis. It should be noted that there are some other Muslims, not part of Sunnis, who conducted three time prayers a day. His reputation greatly enlarged among the Sunni Islamic jurists when he accounted the Ḥadīṣ about the approval of *ijtihād*, a systematic original thinking, as a source for Islamic jurisprudence. Promoted to be a governor for Yaman, Mu`ad was asked by the Prophet: "How you are going to judge if someone come to you with a case?". Mu`ad: "I'm judging with the Qur'an". The Prophet: "What if you don't find the case in it?". Mu`ad: "Will be with the Sunna". The Prophet: "If you don't find it there either?". Mu`ad: I'm going to conduct *ijtihād* without any doubt.<sup>10</sup> The Prophet, was reported, then, to be satisfied with the answer and to bless him. *Ijtiḥād* with its instrument of *qiyās* is another important source for Sunni Islamic law for later development and agreed by the four founders.

#### 5. Abu Huraira

Abu Huraira who died in about 58/678 was a distinguished transmitter of the Ḥadīṣ. As a narrator of the Ḥadīṣ, he kept more than 3500 Ḥadīṣ. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his Musnad contained of 213 pages of his Ḥadīṣ.

He was the most celebrated scholar among ahl al-Suffa consisting of seventy poor pious *aṣḥāb*.(Abu Nu'aim, 1938:377). He did not move out from Suffa till the Prophet died. Suffa was a regular residential school at Madina for writing and reading the Qur'an. Abu Hurairah had a reputation both for his piety and his fondness for jesting.

His neutrality in politics which may be viewed as a prototype for future Sunnism is notorious. He was asked by other *ashāb* whether he gave his allegiance to Ali or to Mu'awiyya. He answered: "It depends, in terms of (*hafla*) party, I'd rather come to Muawiya dinner, but in terms of prayer, I'd rather have congregational prayer (*al-ṣalāt al-Jama`a*) with Ali".<sup>11</sup>

### ***B. Umar bin `Abd al-`Aziz (an `Umayyad Khalif from 717-720)***

As mentioned above, he has been largely known among the Sunnis as an undeniable innovator of the first century Islam. This status is unique since he is the only *Khalif* who got such a scale, while the others were mostly not accessible to a ruler's authority and generally Muslim legist such as Syafi`i, sufis such as al-Ghazali, theologian such as al-Ash`ari, thinker such as Fakhruddin al-Razi, and so on. However, his being Sunnis which was proven by his consistency in hoding the Sunna and his petic inclination is incompatible and far from malaise. Among the `Umayyads, `Umar was then, reported, like a gentleman who lived in Pharoah's family. When he died Hasan al-Basri gave his deep sympathy by saying: "The finest man has gone back to Allah" (Al-Suyuti, 1988:390). He was the first Umayyad Caliph to take the application of the syari`a law seriously and systematically and tradition credits him with sending out emissaries to all the outlying provinces to teach people the syari`a law and to record traditions from the Prophet. The state in his period was thus to be the executive institution of Sunna which applied in different provinces the syari`a law as it had been formulated by local legal authorities.

`Umar's consistency with Sunna is apparently seen on his promotion day as a khalif. He stood up before the people, praised God, glorified Him and said: "O people! there will be no revealed Book after the Qur'an and no Prophet after Muhammad, --now verily I am not one who decides but one who executes, nor one who invents "a heresy" (*mubtadi`*) but one who follows (*muttabi`*), and I am not better than anyone of you but I am more forbearing in meekness, and verily a man that fleets from tyrannous Imam, does not wrongfully-- surely there is no obidience due from the creature to what is sinful before the Creator."(Al-Suyuti, 1988: 390). In many



cases, he sharply dichotomized Sunna and Bid`a. In his *khutbah al-`id* he concluded that unless there was Sunna that he activated and Bid`a he assaulted, he would not be concerned about how to live in the world. His life would be no more than a *fuwaqa*, a death rattle.

Based on the available evidence, it is not of exeggeration then if `Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi mentioned in his *Uṣūl al-Dīn* `Umar's efficient refutation of the Qadariya, and calls him the first theologian of the Ahl-al- Sunna.

### ***C. The Founders of the Four Mazhabs***

*Mazhab* in Islamic jurisprudence plays such an essential part that it becomes another "religion" for its followers. After the *mazhab* founders died, conflicts among *mazhab* extremists became unavoidable and reached its zenit in the eleventh century of Baghdad and its vicinity. However, here is to suggest that there was a harmony among the founders themselves. As a matter of fact they even have an intellectual network. Scattered history indicates that Malik learns from Hanafi, the former teaches Syafi`i who himself as shown below is undoubtedly transferring his knowledge to Ibn Hanbal in Syafi`i's circle at Iraq. More visible is what evolves in Sunni's understanding that according to a tradition preserved by al-Tarmizi, Muhammad himself is said to have fortold the four founders (Campo, 1999: 263).

Their opinions on theological questions are more evident that they have similiar ideological basis. How they differentiate themselves from Kharijites, for example, can be seen on their parallel opinion on the *fāsiq*. While the Kahirijites regard the the *fāsiq* as to be so devoid of faith and in infidal that he deserves an execution, the majority of the *mazhab* founders view the *fāsiq* as being fault of behavior not of faith. Against the Shi`is who raise Ali to a rank above that of the other Companions and some of the Syi`is went further as to consider Abu Bakr Umar and Uthman as usurpers, the founders agree to deny none of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah. On the contrary they recognize them as the very important figures after the Prophet.

Abu Hanifa has been awarded with a title of al-Imām al-A`ẓam al-Afqā, Mālik with al-Imām al-Iḥtirām, al-Syafī`i with al-Imām al-Iḥtiyāṭ and Ibn Hanbal with al-Imām al-Aurā`. In addition, this four has been imagined as the embodiment of the four Caliphs; Malik is under influence of `Umar, Syafī`i under Abu Bakr, Ibn Hanbal under `Usmān, and Abu Hanifa under `Ali. This is what and how the Sunnis view their predecessors' history. Again to follow this frame work is important as long as the study is reliable and not considered as being apologetic.

### 1. Abu Hanifa (699-767)

Born in Kufa, he spent a lot of his life at the same place. living under two dynasties: the Umayyads and `Abbasids, he did not take part in any political activity. When Yazid Ibn Huraira, an Iraqi governor under the `Umayyad Marwan Ibn Muhammad, tried to promote him as a *qadī*, the former seriously rejected it which brought him to a torture. The same thing happened to him when he refused an Abbasid al-Mansur's offer to be a *qadī* in Baghdad.

Abu Hanifa devoted his life to study Islamic legal law in depth and to teach. His teaching activity was more intensive than that of his writing. Therefore, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar I*, which is commonly attributed to him appeared to be written by his pupils directly and genuinely quoting his ideas (Wensinck, 1932: 123). Among Islamic jurists, he was considered to have contributed a very significant element, since he was the first jurist to codify Islamic law by using *qiyās*, an analogy, as the source. Applying Islamic law, he used some principles: Qur'an, Sunna, the *aṣḥāb* opinions, *qiyās*, *istiḥsān*, and local tradition.

While Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was conventionally admitted as the founder of the term Ahl al-Sunna, as a matter of fact, before him Abu Hanifa used the same term, Ahl al-Sunna. This fact is commonly ignored. For example, in his letter to Usmān al-Batti, Abu Hanifa, while explaining his position toward evil Muslim against the Kharijite extremism, described his own view as that of *Ahl al-`Adl wa al-Sunna*, namely people of the mean and the middle path.<sup>12</sup>

An intensive study on the *Kitāb al-Akhbār* by Wensinck shows that Abu Hanifa, as one of Sunni *ʿulama*, addressed his issues to different groups of people including Kharijites, Syi`ites, Jahmites, and Qadarites. The last two was unquestionably the root of future Mu`tazilites. It is not an exaggeration then to suggest that Abu Hanifa promoted Sunnism by justifying his argument with Qur'an and Sunna.<sup>13</sup> It should be also understood in this framework that his "imaginary" student, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, would get a cruel treatment from the Mu`tazili ruler, due to his shared principle of Sunnism which basically was in common with that of his predecessor.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Malik bin Anas (713-789)

To him Madina was an important milieu during his life time. Here he gained and transferred religious knowledge so that he became a very prominent scholar at his his time. Ibn Sa`d (d. 845) places him in the sixth class of Madinan "sucessors". His superiority over his contemporary scholars is that he was an expert in the Ḥadīṣ collection as shown on his productive work *al-Muwatta* and he was a mufti. He gained a special status in teaching the Ḥadīṣ, and Islamic legal law. Syafi`i was one of his pupils.

As a *mufti* and a jurist, his environment, Madina being center of Sunna, affects the way he produced verdicts. Sunna was, therefore, the major source after the Qur'an to outline a law. However, *qiyās* was also used in somewhat small portion campared to that of Hanafī. It is interesting to note that there was a kind of common political understanding shared by him and his teacher, Abu Hanifa. Both stayed away from an established ruler without recommending their pupils to revolt. When Muhammad in 762 by a coup made himself master of Madina, Malik declared in a fatwa that the homage paid to al-Mansur was not binding because it was given under compulsion, however he took no active part in the rising but stayed at home. On the failure of the rebellion (763) he was punished by flogging by Ja`far bin Sulaiman, the governor of Madina. This consistent student seems to get continual bad treatment from the ruler, however, since he lived in the city of Sunna center,

Madina, his propagation of Sunnism was not bitterly suppressed as it did to his teacher.

### 3. Muhammad Ibn Idris al-Syafi'i (757-820)

Syafi'i was born fatherless in Gaza and died in Cairo. He had a familial lineage to the Prophet from Muttalib ibn `Abd al-Manaf. Mecca has been his influential location since he learned from child. He memorized not only the Quran, but *al-Muwatta* as well when he learned from Malik. During his learning time, he appeared to be a promising student who could grasp the Qur'anic and Ḥadīṣ sciences, the *aṣḥāb*'s sayings, history, different opinions of jurists, Arabic literature grammar and structure.

Syafi'i emerged in the period in which the codification of Islamic law had been orderly arranged in a good system. This enabled him beneficially to understand his predecessors' methods, principles. Because of his expertise and experience he could synthesize both Islamic legal thoughts of Hijaz and Iraq. This also brought him to a higher achievement in formulating a method of unifying the Qur'an, Sunna, *ijma`* and *qiyās*. Therefore, when he moved to Baghdad, his teachings were warmly welcomed. His experiences through field research probably can be seen from his two versions of legal products: *qaul qadīm* in Baghdad and *qaul jadīd* in Egypt. He wrote no less than 113 books including the most popular one, *Kitāb al-Umm*.

His influence as a Sunni legal theorist has been so far everywhere in the Islamic world, from Egypt to Indonesia. This influence cannot be separated from his genuine thoughts of Sunni legal theory flexibly applicable in the major Islamic countries.

### 4. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780-855)

He was not only popular in founding a legal madhab with his deepness in the *ilm al-Ḥadīṣ*, but he was prominent in Islamic theology as well. The latter was proven by the event of Mihna. Syafi'i testified: "In Baghdad I left none of my students better than Ahmad bin hanbal". Ibn Hanbal's reputation was more on his expertise in the Ḥadīṣ discipline with his *musnad al-Ḥadīṣ* consisting of 40.000 Ḥadīṣ. Therefore, it is not amazing if his future gene-

ration, al-Tabari (d. 923) considered him as *muhaddis* instead of *faqih*.

Like other *maḏhab* founders, Ibn Hanbal had some students comprising large `ulama. He was familiar with his strong hold to the Sunna. This principle caused him to regard those who viewed al-Qur'an being created as *mubtadi`un* which endanger people's religiosity. To him the Qur'an is sacred, *kalām Allāh* which is eternal. His sturdiness in maintaining this creed made al-Ma'mun imprisons him. The future Sunnis considered al-Ma'mun's harsh treatment as being irony due to his adopting "rational" ideology (Mu`tazila) without putting up a fundamental disagreement. Theoretically rationality produces objectivity and mutual understanding of diverse opinion. Therefore, the critic was arguing why the rational ruler proved to be irrational in his decision making process.

The event of *Mihna* is usually seen as the milestone of early development of Sunnism. This is understandable due to Ibn Hanbal's risk of his life to defend and propagate his Sunni ideology. Besides, historical clues in the form of political and ideological dispute were clearly seen. However, it should be remembered that Ibn Hanbal was not alone. He was a product of his masters who were, as discussed above, the holders of Sunni ideas as well. The transmission of knowledge among them which characterizes their formative period was something else to consider. This transmission was highly influential, since the education was dominated by the existence of brilliant teachers instead of non-established educational institutions.

The above description shows the early development of Sunnism in Arabia, what about the early one in the archipelago? Here is to suggest that the origins of early Islam in Indonesian cannot be separated from sufi-sunni movement. Sufi movement was, in fact, almost identical with the Islamic world during a period of 500 years, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, so that it was hardly an exaggeration to speak of a Sufi period in Islamic history (Johns, 1961). During these years Sufi traditions exemplified true Sunni Islam. In the Islamic world there was a general trend that the Sufi Islam in the 13<sup>th</sup> century became the Sunni Islam. Logically Islam which was introduced to Indonesia was Sufi-Sunni Islam.

That merchants and Sufi agents came at the same time is sensible, but it is also reasonable that merchant and Sufi existed in one individual. That new comers from the Middle East were merchants is a fact, but some pious merchants who were not disturbed by their worldly trade and they used their wealth to be close to Allah is not hardly found. Anthony John (Australian National University) characterizes the Sufis as peripatetic preachers ranging over the whole known worlds voluntarily espousing poverty. They were frequently associated with craft and or trade guilds according to the order (thariqa) to which they belonged. They were also proficient in magic and possessed powers of healing (Johns, 1961: 10-23). This characterization is hardly imagined unless the Sufis were wealthy Muslims who employed their investment to support their Islamization efforts.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were nine Saints or "Wali Songo" in Java. These Walis are recognized as the most effective agents in Islamizing Java. They successfully propagated the religion without interfering with the local traditions. It is not amazing if some writers accused them as propagators or da'is with syncretic Islam. The writers made the Saints' heritage such as minarets, temples, as historical proof of peaceful combination between Hinduistic and Islamic elements. Some of the Saints' traditions such as not to slaughter beef among Kudus (Central Java) society, and to use "Wayang" or shadow, puppets to socialize Islamic values, are also viewed as related evidences.

## Conclusion

The founders of the *mazāhib* had resemblance in strengthening Islamic jurisprudence with the same sources of the Qur'an, Sunna, *ijma'*, and *qiyās*. The difference is only a matter of emphasis which was suitably applied according to their own preference and specific time. The way they made judgement was thus affected by their discipline of knowledge, the time and the place they lived. *Qaul al-qadīm*, and *qaul al-jadīd* attributed to the same person, al-Syafi'i, for example, proved to be different and diverse. However, their basic principles: the Qur'an, the Ḥadīṣ, *ijma'*, and *qiyās* should be viewed as a typically Sunni legal products. Otherwise the future

Sy'i scholars, such as Kadi Nu`man, would have never criticized them, especially against al-Syafi`i.

Abu Hanifa who called himself *Ahl `Adl wa al-Sunna* and Ibn Hanbal with self identity of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama`a* probably can be seen as the milestones of early development and continuation of Sunni legal society. The question of self identity or Sunni self awareness was, therefore, sufficiently coming to the surface since the very early time. It should be remembered that these founders had an intellectual net-work of transferring knowledge from the first generation, Abu Hanifa, to the latest, Ibn Hanbal. This transmission remained an essential tool of preventing and developing their teachings against non-Sunni enemies.

The generation before them represented by `Umar Ibn `Abd al-`Aziz and some *aṣḥāb* should be viewed in the same context. They proved to be the models, *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, for future Sunnis. As models, the former did not only become sources of legal theory but continue through centuries to be "imaginary inspiring masters" as well. Ibn Taimiyya, for example, was die hard Hanbalis who had never seen his professor. The issue of why some Sunnis identified the four founders with the four *Khulafa'urrāsyidīn* is a matter of tracing historical origins. To understand the continuation of the ideas means to place the Sunni historical context in a broader spectrum. This attempt will help understand how the Sunni ideas unmonolithically and uninstitutionalizedly grew and developed. Sunnism in this case entailed a very large and diverse groups. It is too simplistic to conclude that they were a unity in diversity. Perhaps it will be more appropriate to remark that Sunnism was characterized by an apparent clue that its holders have been identified with "Sunni oriented society": people who referred and glorified the Sunna of the Prophet against any group who questioned the absolute authority of the Qur'an and the Ḥadīṣ.

Identical to the development of Sunnism is a never ending process which has been persuasively undertaken by Javanese Sufis which was an apparent example of "cultural" Islam. The Islamization of Java thus required an exceptionally long time; a gradual process, and resulted in "peaceful coexistence." The latter was one of the striking features of Javanese philosophy which underscores

unity, stability, safety and harmony. Referring to these features will enable one to understand somewhat easily why Islam came to Java quiescently, so slowly but surely.

The *da`wah Islamiyyah*, Islamic transmission, conducted by the *Walis* was an excellent and complicated venture but it was implemented through a simple avenue, the way which does not interfere with local traditions and habits, namely the *da`wah* which was uncomplicatedly attained and put into daily life by the *`awam*. These efforts probably can be translated in a "modern term" as a model of "development from within." This pattern has fascinatingly shown the brilliance of Javanese Sufism to flexibly absorb local and foreign elements but still to uniquely stand on Islamic principles. The *Walisongo*, the actors of the *da`wah*, were typically mediators of people and rulers, and of kings and God. They were undoubtedly models for the mystical dimension of early Javanese *santri*.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ibn Taimiyya, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Part II, p. 482. Although he lived in a period beyond this discussion, after the 11th century, he still had a close connection with the Hanbalis. One can say that his statement is a kind of apologetic thing, however, it is largely understood that he was undoubtedly a real upholder of the authority of the Sunna. If his objectivity is suspected, the one who was opposed to him should be equally treated. Therefore, it is not a defect to reconsider what he had claimed.
- <sup>2</sup> This Hadīṣ is narrated by Abu Daud, Hakim, and others. The Sunnis unquestionably believed in that Hadīṣ and made their own criterion to decide innovators of the centuries. Al-Ghazali, for example, is regarded as the fifth undisputed and ideal innovator. See (Sya'rani Ahmadi, 1401H: 39).
- <sup>3</sup> About the *mazāhib*, it is largely known that there were more than four. This study will only deal with the four since they have been the most popular figures among the later Sunnis.
- <sup>4</sup> The complete Hadīṣ is "My community will be divided into seventy-three sects but only one of these will be saved, the others will perish. "When asked which was the one that would attain salvation he replied, "Those who follow the Sunna and the congregation". He was further asked, "What is the Sunna and the congregation?" He replied, "That which I and my companions practice." The Prophet is also reported to have said, "In my community there will always be some who till the day of judgement will possess the truth ." Again, he said, "My community will never agree on an error." (Shahrastani, 1975: 5).
- <sup>5</sup> Among the Sufis and tariqa followers, the Prophet has been considered as the real and first master.



## The Early Development...

- <sup>6</sup> Victor Makkari in his "Ibn Taymiyya's Ethics", published in 1983, in order to be faithful to Ibn taymiyya's own principle, he suggests that the Qur'an should not be translated, the verses he quoted, then, appear in Arabic. This approach is 'interesting' considering Makkari's position as a church activist. His preferred method, to some people, may be regarded weird, however, it has inspired the writer to undertake the same method.
- <sup>7</sup> The Mu`tazilis usually conduct reasoning by leaving some Hadīṣ which are considered irrelevant and weak, *ḍa`if*. In some cases, such as the issue of anthropomorphism, they leave some Hadith opposing their doctrine, though they are not the weak ones.
- <sup>8</sup> The saying is ascribed to Yahya b. Abi Kathir (d. 120) in al-Khatib al-Bagh-dadi, Vol. 6a.
- <sup>9</sup> The Hadīṣ is also narrated by Hakim from Abu Huraira and proved to be a very popular among the Sunnis.
- <sup>10</sup> Narrated by Tirmizi and Abu Daud.
- <sup>11</sup> Quoted from personal notes.
- <sup>12</sup> The two terms should not be confused despite the fact they are little differently manifested. They are basically the same. The attributed word (*muḍaf ilaihi*) is both ahl al- Sunna.
- <sup>13</sup> Sunnism in this case should be understood as a method which was used by Sunni people to solve any religious question by going back to the Qur'an and Sunna. The latter is also characterized by the understanding of how the earlier Muslims understand the Sunna, a unique perception which it develops Sunna's meaning into *al-Sunnah al-Salaf*. For instance, when the Kharijites propose sura iv. 95: "Whoever shall kill a believer of set purpose, his recompense is Hell; for ever shall he abide in it" to justify their teaching about grave sinner, Sunnis, represented by Abu Hanifa's teaching in *Fiqh Akbar*, interprets the word "for ever" as "for long time". This interpretation is referred to the authority of Ibn `Abbas. Therefore, the Kharijites understood the verse by their own daring judgment, while the Sunnis were helped by classical heritage to resolve the problem.
- <sup>14</sup> The political situation in the two periods was, of course, different. But their resistance against the rivals which were considered as being away from Sunnism by these two scholars was basically the same.

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<gopher://dewey.lib.ncsu.edu:70/7waissrc%3A/.wais/Internet-user-glossary> [Accessed 15 Apr 1996].

### **2. Reference to E-Journals**

Author. (Year). Title. *Journal Title* [online], volume (issue), location within host. Available from : URL [Accessed Date].

e.g. Korb, K.B. (1995). Persons and things: book review of Bringsjord on Robot-Consciousness. *Psychology* [online], 6 (15). Available from: <gopher://wachau.ai.univie.ac.at:70/00/-archives/psychology/95.V6/0162> [Accessed 17 Jun 1996].

### **3. Reference to mailbase/listserv e-mail lists**

Author. (Day Month Year). Subject of message. *Discussion List* [online] Available from: list e-mail address [Accessed Date].

e.g. Brack, E.V. (2 May 1995). Re: Computing short courses. *Lis-link* [online]. Available from: [mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk) [Accessed 17 Apr 1996].

Jensen, L.R. (12 Dec 1995). Recommendation of student radio/tv in English. *LASTAR* [online]. Available from: Listserv@ftp.nrg.dtu.dk [Accessed 29 Apr 1996].

It should be noted that items may only be kept on discussion group servers for a short time and hence may not be suitable for referencing. A local copy could be kept by the author who is giving the citation, with a note to this effect.

#### 4. Reference to personal electronic communications (E-mail)

Sender (Sender's E-mail address). (Day Month Year). *Subject of Message*. E-mail to Recipient (Recipient's E-mail address).  
Lowman, D. (deborah-lowman@pbsinc.com). (4 Apr 1996). RE>>ProCite and Internet Refere. E-mail to P. Cross (pcross@bournemouth.ac.uk)

#### 5. Reference to CD-ROMs

**This section refers to CD-ROMS which are works in their own right and non bibliographic databases.**

Author/editor. (Year). *Title* [type of medium CD-ROM]. (Edition). Place of publication, publisher (if ascertainable). Available from: Supplier/Database identifier or number (optional) [Accessed Date] (optional).

e.g. Hawking, S.W. (1994). *A Brief history of time: an interactive adventure* [CD-ROM]. Crunch Media (See Harvard Referencing style)

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4. The name of the author should be written in Capital and bold with 10 times New Roman
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  - e. Discussion (including the analysis from the author on the problem)
  - f. Conclusion
  - g. Acknowledgement if any
  - h. List of References

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عارف شيرا ملسي

الصورة (The Terengganu Inscription) في الغلاف الأمامي مأخوذة من الصورة في المقالة *Dialectic Between Islamic Law and Adat Law in the Nusantara: A Reinterpretation of the Terengganu Inscription in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*

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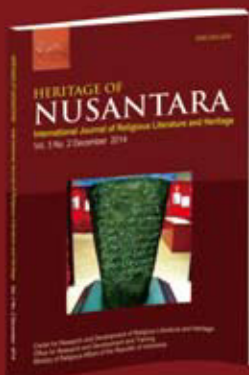
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# نوسانتارا

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