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The Leadership in the Tariqah Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya: Characteristics and Sustaining Doctrines

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji tentang kepemimpinan dalam Tariqah Qadiriyya dan Nadshbandiyya (TQN) yang secara khusus mengkaji perkembangannya di Mranggen, Jawa Tengah. Kajian ini menginvestigasi terkait karakteristik, pemimpin TQN dan doktrin yang mendukung kepemimpinan, dan kajian ini juga menjelaskan konsep kepemimpinan dalam tasawuf klasik secara umum. Di TQN, kami menjumpai beberapa ritual yang menopang kepemimpinan: *rabita* (terikat dengan guru) yang berfokus pada sang guru; ritual yang menjadi kewenangan guru sebagai inisiasi; gagasan yang menunjukkan otoritas guru sebagai *silsila*; sebuah gagasan yang melatarbelakangi (dan memicu) ketertarikan sang guru kepada orang-orang sebagai *baraka* (berkah); dan tradisi yang menunjukkan pemujaan terhadap guru sebagai *hawliyya* (peringatan kematian).

Katakunci: Baraka, kepemimpinan, otoritas, *rabitah*, *silsila*

Abstract

This paper was devoting to exploring the nature of leadership in the Tariqah Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya (TQN) by giving some particular attention to the develops of that Tariqah in Mranggen, Central Java. It will investigate the characteristics of the TQN leaders, the doctrines and traditions that sustaining this leadership. In order to develop the nature of leadership in the TQN, it also will be exploring the concept of leadership in Islamic mystical tradition as general. In the TQN, we come across several rituals which sustain the leadership: the *rabita* (bond with the master) which focuses on the master; a ritual that falls into the authority of the master as initiation; a notion which indicates the authority of the master as *silsila*; a notion which lies behind (and triggers) the attraction of the master to the people as *baraka* (blessing); and a tradition which indicates the veneration of the master as the *hawliyya* (death anniversary).

Keywords: Authority, baraka, leadership, *rabita*, *silsila*

Introduction

The Tariqah Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya (TQN) is a synthesis between the elements of the Qadiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya. This Sufi order is developed mainly by the Kalimantan scholar Ahmad Khatib ibn ‘Abd al-Ghaffar Sambas (1803-1875). Ahmad Khatib Sambas, who was regarded as the founder of the TQN, has been known as both *faqih* (expert in Islamic law) and Sufi (van Bruinessen, 1999). The TQN is regarded as the only orthodox Sufi order that was established by a scholar from the Indonesian Archipelago (van Bruinessen, 1999).

Many people from Southeast Asia were interested in becoming pupils of Ahmad Khatib Sambas in Mecca. Three of them were appointed his main *khalifas* (deputies), and these were outstanding personages in spreading the TQN in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. These were Abd al-Karim Banten (d. 1897), Ahmad Hasbullah ibn Muhammad Madura, and Ahmad Talhah Cirebon (van Bruinessen, 2000).

The TQN developed and spread throughout the Archipelago, and especially by 1970s. There were four important centres of the propagation of the TQN, namely the Pesantren Pagentongan, Futuhiyyah Mranggen, Suryalaya Tasikmalaya, and Darul Ulum Jombang (van Bruinessen, 1998). These four focal points were instrumental in expanding the networks, due to the charisma of their respective leaders.

Method

This paper is devoted to the exploration of the features of leadership of the TQN and their sustaining doctrines. To begin with, the paper will reveal an overview of leadership in Islamic mystical tradition. The next session of the paper is devoted to highlight the variety of leadership in the TQN. The last part of the paper deals with doctrines and traditions which sustain the leadership in the TQN.

The Notion of Leadership in Islamic Mystical Tradition: An Overview

The Sufi order normally includes a range of leaders (*murshid, shaykh, pir*) and disciples (*murid, akh, talib*). Some Sufis wrote to describe both natures. The work *Mudhakkirat al-murshidin wa al-mustarshidin* (‘Azā’im, 1974) is an instance of this sort of writing.

The position of master in Islamic mystical tradition in general, and in the Sufi brotherhood in particular, is central, as one is believed not to be able to traverse the mystical path in the correct manner without the assistance of a master. One Sufi author depicts Sufi masters as doctors of the soul, giving their disciples spiritual sustenance (Malamud, 1994).

A master is vital for a person on the Sufi path, since this path is depicted as strenuous and full of temptations (Netton, 2000). In line with this, the Naqshbandi author, Gümüşhaneli (Gümüşhaneli, 1870) also says that a traveller of the spiritual path must possess a corporeal guide (like a master) and an incorporeal guide (like divine inspiration, sound comprehension of the Koran, ḥadith, and the consensus of the religious scholars (*ijma'*)). This passage accentuates the importance of inner guidance and textual doctrines alongside the guidance of the sheikh.

There is a wide range of terms for the master of a Sufi brotherhood. The words *murshid* and particularly *pir* are customary in Iranian and Indian circles. In Egypt, the term sheikh is common, with the *ammuna* (our uncle) as a more frequently used expression (Trimingham, 1998). *Khalifas* or *muqaddams* (deputies) are assigned by the master to take charge of districts or town sections. There is a divergence in using a particular term (say *muqaddam*) within western and eastern Sufi brotherhoods. In eastern orders, the term *muqaddam* is an inferior agent, a few degrees below the *khalifa*, while in the Maghrib it's been employed to designate the deputy of the head of the order (Trimingham, 1998).

The leadership which is exercised by the sheikh of a Sufi brotherhood (*tariqa*) is based on religious authority (Attas, 1963). The shared commitment of the disciples is much more directed towards the master than to the principles or the ideals of the *silsila* (chain of spiritual authorities) (Islam, 2002).

The Variety of Leaders and their Respective Characteristics

According to some leaders of the TQN, they have only two types of leader; this includes the *murshid*, which, for them, are identical with *khalifa kabir* (senior deputy, or deputy with a greater authority) and *badal*, which, for them, are identical with *khalifa ṣaghir* (junior deputy, or deputy with a lesser authority).

Some other leaders are convinced that there are three types of leader, namely *murshid*, *khalifa kabir* and *khalifa ṣaghir*. For them, the term *murshid* signifies one who possesses an authority over *khalifa kabir* and *khalifa ṣaghir*. In this sense, we can see that the *khalifa kabir* and the *khalifa ṣaghir* are dependent on the *murshid*, or in other words, the *murshid* is independent of them. In terms of authority, both *murshid* and *khalifa kabir* share similar authorities and rights, namely the entitlement to appoint someone as a *khalifa kabir* or as a *khalifa ṣaghir* and the entitlement to initiate an aspirant. The difference mostly lies in their independence. The *khalifa kabir* normally strives to disseminate the teachings of the *murshid* rather than his own.

This is in line with what we encounter in the course of the history of the TQN. Aqib (Aqib, 1998) notes that all the *khalifas* of Aḥmad Khatib Sambas recognised the leadership of ‘Abd al-Karim Banten. After the death of ‘Abd al-Karim Banten, there was no leadership which united them. Each *khalifa* admitted being a self-determining *murshid*.

In the case of Mranggen, Muslih ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Maraqi (Maraqi, n.d.) was a *murshid* who possessed a number of *khalifas*, in particular throughout Central Java. After his death, several *khalifas* claimed to be independent *murshid*. Still others were of the opinion that the successors of Muslih were the members of his family, in particular his son M.S. Lutfi al-Hakim ibn Muslih (d. 2004).

The term *khalifa* itself in Islamic mystical tradition refers essentially and ultimately to its main function, namely *khalifat rasul Allah* (the deputy of the Prophet of God). According to tradition, the *murshid* can be addressed as *khalifa*. The opinion of some leaders of the TQN that there are only two kinds of leader who correct insofar as those two types of leader are what we can perceive distinctively, and which can be observed currently in some places.

The Characteristics of the Murshid

When we look at Islamic mystical tradition, we notice that at least there are two separate facets of the master, namely his role as a teacher (*shaykh al-ta‘lim*) and as a spiritual guide (*shaykh al-tarbiyya*) (Malamud, 1994). In the case of the TQN, the role of the master as a teacher can be observed for instance in the course of initiation and giving instruction on principles of Islamic law and Sufism in the gathering. Composed of individual supervision of certain disciples, for example the candidates of the *khalifas*, is the function of the

sheikh as a spiritual guide. The notion of sheikh as a spiritual mentor can be seen more specifically in the course of the *khalwa* (spiritual retreat), which is observed by some centres of the TQN.

The perfect guide (*murshid kamil*) signifies the person who masters both the *ṭariqa* (spiritual path) and *sharia* (God's given law). The number of people who reach this stage is limited. This sort of master deserves to be obeyed and highly venerated (Maraqi, 1994). The consummate master is believed to have been integrated into the tradition of the Prophet to such a point that the Prophet is made present and available for the people. The authority of the master is deemed to stem in part from his success in imitating the Prophet (Malamud, 1996).

A master carries a heavy responsibility, due to his position as the locus of *rabiṭa*. The spiritual advancement of a disciple is determined in some ways by his sheikh (in addition to his own efforts and above all God's grace). One leader of the TQN analogised the sheikh with a mirror. The clearer the mirror, the more transparent the receiving of those looking in the mirror; accordingly, the aspirant has the right to choose the proper master (interview with HM).

One instructor of the TQN once accompanied a group of people from Demak, Central Java, to see whom they believed to be a saint in East Java. This particular saint said that he was wondering why these people came to him and did not realise that there was also a saint in their own region. Some people were then aware that Muslih was the saint alluded to by the Eastern Javanese saint. Soon after that a belief in the sainthood of Muslih spread (interview with LL).

It was due to this conviction that a number of people desired to be inducted into the TQN. Some practitioners clearly stated that they were looking forward to the *baraka* of God which flowed through Muslih. For some adherents of the TQN, the personality of Muslih was much more attractive than the *ṭariqa* itself. Some practitioners explained that they joined the TQN due to their interest in the *baraka* of Muslih, which is believed to be transferred to his progeny.

The Khalifa: its Formal Requirements and its Mechanism of Selection

In the following paragraphs, we will see the competence and the formal requirements of a *khalifa* as well as the mechanism for selecting a *khalifa*. The case of succession in the TQN in Mranggen will be also highlighted.

It is stated that the candidate for *khalifa kabir* should have a sufficient congregation and that there are no other *khalifa kabirs* in the adjacent areas. The *khalifa kabir* is entitled to initiate disciples, a *khalifa ṣaghir* and a *khalifa kabir*. This includes the right to demote someone from the position of *khalifa*, if the person concerned violates the rules of Islam, for instance.

The *bay‘a* (oath of allegiance) and *ijaza* (authorisation) are beyond the authority of a *khalifa ṣaghir*. The *khalifa ṣaghir* is entitled to lead the communal *dhikr* when the master is absent. A *khalifa ṣaghir* is not named in the *silsila*. Therefore he does not enjoy the control of knowledge and authority. We may say that his function is simply to assist those listed in the *silsila*.

There are diverse attitudes among the sheikhs of the TQN. A number of sheikhs of the TQN prefer to keep the authority of initiation in their own hands, although several of them have witnessed a growing number of their disciples. Such a scheme is meant to provide the disciples with a shorter *silsila* (which is considered better). It also has disadvantages such as obstructing the propagation of the TQN. Some sheikhs prefer to pass the power of initiation to their *khalifas*, in order to speed up the propagation of the TQN.

The candidate is conferred with the *ijaza* (licence or authorisation) and appointed a *khalifa* by his master. The term *ijaza* has some meanings. The first refers to consent for an adept to practise on behalf of his master; the second designates approval for a candidate, authorising him to initiate people into the *ṭarīqa*; and the last simply acknowledges that the holder has undertaken a particular part of Sufi instruction (Trimingham, 1998).

During the inauguration process, the sheikh normally says to the candidate, “*albastuka khirqata al-faqiriyati wa-ajztuka ijazatan muṭlaqatan li-l-irshadi wa-l-ijazati wa-jaaltuka khalifa*” (I dress you in a cloak of poverty and I confer upon you an absolute licence of mentoring and authorisation, and I appoint you as a deputy). The candidate responds with the following phrase, “*qabiltu wa-raḍitu ala dhalik*” (I accept and I am contented with that) (Maraqi, n.d.).

The presence of witnesses or the statement from someone confirming the appointment as a *khalifa* is deemed to provide the *khalifa* with a more stable position. Muslih, for instance, stated that he witnessed someone becoming the *khalifa* of someone else (Maraqi, 1994) in order to acknowledge the position of this person as a *khalifa*.

The institution of leadership in the circle of *ṭariqa* is not necessarily hereditary, although in some cases hereditary succession is still prevalent. Each sheikh normally appoints a disciple, whom he considers (by “intuition”) the most suitable, to be his successor (Attas, 1963).

The *waṣiyya* (testament) is a means of authorising someone as a successor. The notion of *waṣiyya* in this context resembles that of *waṣiyya* in the tradition of ḥadīth. The *waṣiyya* is seen as a mode of conveying ḥadīth, in particular after the period of codification, in which the master leaves a message to a particular person to convey his ḥadīth after his death (‘Itr, 1979). There has been a dispute on the legitimacy of *waṣiyya* as a mode of authorisation in the circles of *ṭariqas* in Indonesia. Some believed that the *waṣiyya* was not a legitimate form of authorisation, since the master did not reveal the authorisation directly to the recipient. Others were convinced that the *waṣiyya* implied permission, which was the core of *ijaza*, although the master did not reveal it directly to the recipient.

In the circle of the TQN, the observance of the *muraqaba* (contemplative vigilance, contemplative watchfulness) is one condition of the *khalifa*. Muslih contended that the first three *muraqabas* (*muraqabat al-aḥadiyya* (meditation on the oneness of God), *muraqabat al-maiyya* (meditation of concomitance), and *muraqabat al-aqrabiyya* (meditation on proximity)) are to be observed by a disciple before he may be appointed a *khalifa ṣaghir* (a deputy with limited authority) (Maraqi, n.d.).

Muraqaba possesses two dimensions: man keeps watching over himself for his own good, but also feels the presence of God. In a broader sense, *muraqaba* signifies mutual “watch-keeping” between creator and practitioner (Netton, 2000). The Sufis believe that the active participation of God corresponds to the participation of the practitioner.

The *ijaza*, which is conferred on a candidate who has concluded the first three *muraqabas*, is called *wilayah shughra* (literally: small and limited authority), by means of which the candidate becomes a *khalifa ṣaghir*. All twenty *muraqabas* should be observed if someone aspires to the position of *khalifa kabir* (Maraqi, n.d.), who is entitled to a greater authority.

Although Muslih himself made the observance of three *muraqabas* the requirement for *khalifa ṣaghir*, he also appointed someone who had not observed a single *muraqaba*. The appointment of a *khalifa* lies solely in the hands of the master: or, in other words, it is one of his prerogatives. The master

is believed to know, through intuition, whom the position of *khalifa* suits, by assessing in particular the spiritual readiness of the candidate in question.

Doctrines and Traditions Related to Leadership

In this section, I would like to discuss some doctrines and traditions which support the idea and the nature of leadership in the *ṭarīqa* in general and in the TQN in particular. Netton (Netton, 2000) states that “Sufi rituals and practices, for those who undertake them, are signs and signals of the sacred. And each ritual or practice, whether it be the public *sama’* or the private *muraqaba*, creates a sacred space”. The notion of the sacred is likewise apparent in a leader. A leader, who is considered to be imbued with the sacred, has the potential to create a sacred space. Accordingly, the tomb of a leader and other special paths he took are considered sacred and worthy of visiting.

Initiation and the Role of Leader

Bay’a (convenance of Allegiance) or *akhdh al-ahd* (takes the compact) is connected to other expressions such as *ahd al-yad* (clapping hands as an indication of Allegiance and obedience to the Sheikh) and *akhd al-yad wa al-iqtida* (taking the Sheikh as a model). The term *bay’a* (vow of allegiance) suggests the position of the sheikh as a leader who wields a certain authority over the disciples. Although the *bay’a* itself is essentially believed to be an oath of allegiance to God, it still involves the sheikh as the transmitter of this pledge (Trimingham, 1998). This resembles another expression, that “surrender must be inward and outward, like a dry leaf in the wind” (Netton, 2000). The word *talqīn* (literally: instruction) signifies the position of the sheikh as a teacher who ingrains in his disciples a certain mode of recitation. The sheikh of the *ṭarīqa* can be considered as both a leader and a teacher.

Some leaders of the TQN have likewise noticed that majority of the people are attracted to join the TQN due to their longing for *baraka*. They constitute non-specialist members of the order. Only small number of them intend to be genuine disciples or “pilgrims” on the spritual path (*sālik*). The position of sheikh, in particular for the former group, is, as expressed by a sheikh, “like taking care of the falling leaves”. This parable is employed by the sheikh due to his thinking that the majority of the adherents of the *ṭarīqa* are old people, and hence their main desire is the *baraka*. This sort of expression, in its deepest sense, is likewise employed to depict the duty of the Sufi master;

that is, to take care of disciples who have striven to surrender themselves, like (quoting Netton's (Netton, 2000) phrase) "dry lea[ves] in the wind".

A number of people seek out initiation from a master simply for the sake of the blessing (*li al-tabarruk*), to set up a relationship with a source of power and authority; the case is similar with pilgrimage to a shrine (Trimingham, 1998) or participation in the *ḥawliyya*. The *baraka* of the leader is a central point of the attraction.

The stress in most of the orders is the sheikh, and their rituals emphasise the position of the sheikh together with his teaching and ritual functions. Nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that Sufism typically regards the sheikh as a channel, not a *telos* (ultimate object or aim). According to this paradigm, the focus of spiritual activity is God (Netton, 2000).

The Sufis ascribe the institution of the *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) or *talqin* (instillation of the *dhikr*) to the Prophet. It is widely held in Sufi circles that Abu Bakr was inculcated with the *dhikr ism al-dhat* from the Prophet, while 'Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (ca. 600–661) was instilled with the *dhikr al-nafy wa al-ithbat*. The Prophet himself was initiated by the angel *Jibril*, and the angel by God (Maraqi, 1994).

It is only the *khalīfa kabīr* or the *murshid* who is authorised to initiate someone into the *ṭariqa*. Muslih, citing another author, explained that those who do not obtain the licence of teaching and initiation but have attempted to initiate applicants into the *ṭariqa* are comparable to a robber and will bring negative effects to the people (Maraqi, 1994).

In line with this, Muslih explained that practising the *dhikr* with the consent of the sheikh would lead the practitioner to reach the goal faster. This practitioner has the chance to be a saint, which is different from those observing the *dhikr* without authorisation from the sheikh (Maraqi, 1994). As we can see in the history of Islamic mysticism, a saint does not suddenly appear from nowhere. He will possess a master who links him to the Prophet, and who teaches him the spiritual realities. Although he may obtain direct knowledge from God, the basis of his spiritual knowledge is to be channelled via a valid chain of spiritual authorities.

The Chain of Spiritual Authorities (Silsila)

In the circle of the *ṭariqa*, the *silsila* is of particular importance. It is argued that one whose chain of transmission has been broken does not end with the Prophet, cannot convey the *baraka*, and is not entitled to be an heir to the Prophet. Such a person is therefore not entitled to bestow licence and initiation on others. Sheikhs who possess an “unbroken” chain of spiritual authorities (*silsila muṭṭaṣila*) are deemed the real inheritors of the Prophet ; accordingly, they are entitled to pass on some of their authority to others.

The notion of the “unbroken“ chain of spiritual authorities (*silsila muṭṭaṣila*) in the circle of *ṭariqa* is comparable to the notion of *ḥadīth muttaṣil* (*ḥadīth* with an “unbroken” chain of transmission) in the tradition of *ḥadīth* sciences. As some scholars have pointed out, the notion of *silsila* in Islamic mystical tradition is influenced to a large extent by the tradition of *ḥadīth* sciences.

A practitioner of *ṭariqa* who does not have any knowledge of the people of the *silsila* (let alone have memorised them) is not able to obtain the flow of God’s grace. This leader quoted ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad al-Sha‘rani, who stated that a disciple who does not possess an authoritative *silsila* is like a person finding something in the street (Salihi, n.d. : 3). Due to the importance of the *silsila*, the leaders of the TQN normally provide a copy of the *silsila* for the adherents.

The *silsila* has become a sensitive issue in the circle of the *ṭariqa*. In the history of the TQN, we come across a case in which the authority of a leader has been doubted and problematised. One leader of the TQN was accused of hiding one name in his *silsila*, in order to be considered *silsila ‘aliya* (the short chain of spiritual authorities).

This is comparable to the so-called *tadlis* in the *ḥadīth* sciences. *Tadlis* means situations in which a transmitter dissembles another transmitter in the chain of transmission, usually to claim that his chain of transmission is in order. The concealed transmitter is normally one whose moral credibility and accuracy in reporting are dubious. The *ḥadīth* which is conveyed by means of this sort of chain falls into the category of *ḥadīth da‘if* (unsound or weak *ḥadīth*). One may think that concealing the name of the transmitter, although this hidden transmitter is morally credible and accurate in reporting, is an indication of dishonesty.

One leader of the TQN calls the *silsila* of the TQN *silsila dhahabiyya* (literally: golden chain of transmission), since a person obtains teachings from his master directly, during his lifetime. This sort of *silsila* differs from *silsila uwaysiyya* (the chain of spiritual authorities which sticks to the pattern of Uways al-Qarani). In this latter kind of *silsila*, a person receives teaching from the spirit of his master (Salihi, n.d.), by way of spiritual communication.

The *silsila* can also be a means of social mobilisation to the level of religious scholar (*kyai*). This can be seen from socio-religious conditions in Java, in which those mastering religious knowledge (for instance, completing their religious education at Al-Azhar University, Cairo) do not necessarily aspire to the position of religious scholar (*kyai*). The recognition of society for the figure of *kyai* is mostly based on heredity. Accordingly some who studied in the Mecca also strove to collect a licence from a respected *ṭariqa* master, by which they could be considered to be equal to the descendants of the *kyai* (van Bruinessen, 1998).

The Bond with the Master (Rabita)

During the *dhikr*, the master forms a link with his novice in order to assist him in his path to God. The novice must be constantly aware that the master is watching over him. He has to possess the conviction that the purpose is, in essence, God, with the sheikh serving as a medium. Accordingly, the practitioners usually utter the phrase “*Ilahi anta maqṣudi wa-riḍaka maṭlubi*” (My God, you are my purpose and your favour is what I am longing for) as an affirmation of this purpose and belief (Maraqi, n.d.).

One Sufi saw the *rābiṭa* simply as binding one’s heart to the master’s (Meier, 1994). *Rābiṭa* epitomises the idea of a rapport between the disciple and the master the essence of which is one of spirituality as well as corporeal presence (Netton, 2000). Persistence in the fraternity, facing one’s heart to God, and serving the sheikh and *rabiṭa* with the sheikh are considered the major steps on the path leading to God (Maraqi, n.d.).

Ahmad Khatib Sambas described the *rabiṭa* as visualising the image of the sheikh when he is far away and waiting for the flow of his blessing when he is nearby (Sambas, 1928). To Muslih, *rabiṭa* is an expression of keeping the image of the sheikh in one’s mind or heart or visualising the image of the sheikh. The *rabiṭa* helps the practitioner purge himself of heedlessness and

satanic whisperings from his heart and leads him to the state of *muraqaba* (contemplative vigilance) (Maraqi, n.d.).

One leader of the TQN explained that the *rabiʿa* includes imagining the image of the sheikh when he absents and waiting for the flow of his blessing when he is around. Nonetheless it does not necessarily mean that the disciple has to take the picture of his master with him when he observes the *dhikr*, prayer or other devotional activities.

One leader of the TQN contended that *rabiʿa* is a sort of *tawaṣṣul* (making a person or a thing a means to draw near to God). The idea behind the *rabiʿa* is seeking assistance from the master) (Meier, 1994) in the course of the disciple's efforts when following the spiritual path.

The notion of *rabiʿa* is in some ways connected with the notion of sheikh as the direction of and orientation for practitioners' spiritual activities (*qibla*) (Meier, 1994). Normally the disciple makes *rabiʿa* to the sheikh who initiated him into the order, not the other sheikhs in the *silsila*. Nevertheless, some sheikhs demand that their own disciples, the disciples of his *khalifas* and the disciples from his spiritual line make *rabiʿa* only with these sheikhs. This has contributed to the cohesion of the order which is drawn from these masters (van Bruinessen, 1998). This is a clear message that the *rabiʿa* can be "exploited" to create cohesiveness of the order.

Muslih recommended that the adherents of the TQN should learn the *silsila* by heart. He created poetry in order to facilitate them in doing so. Memorising the *silsila* will eventually help them implant the *silsila* in their hearts, and this is a part of *rabiʿa*. He went on to stress that memorising the *silsila* would lessen the practitioner's sins, citing the ḥadith, "remembering the prophets is a part of devotion and remembering the pious may lessen ones sin" (Maraqi, 1994).

Blessing (Baraka)

Some leaders of the TQN are often regarded as saints. They are believed to be the workers of miracles and the possessors of sound spiritual insight. These supposed qualities of the saints attract people and draw them to be loyal and obedient. In other words, these qualities potentially increase the charisma of those possessing them. As the persons are considered close to God, the saints are believed to be channels for the flow of *baraka* from God. An obvious message is that the charisma of a leader does not come out of the blue, without reference

to (or being grounded on) any specific context. The leaders' charisma in the TQN is intertwined with the existing rituals and doctrines.

Von Denffer (Von Denffer, 1976) points out that "the concept of *baraka* is not just limited to popular belief but has its place in Islam proper". This can be observed for instance in Al-Qur'an 41: 10. Von Denffer conceives *baraka* as "nearness that allows prosperity". This sort of definition pays attention both to "the actual state or cause" (namely nearness) and "its effects" (namely allowing prosperity).

One practitioner in Mranggen, Central Java, asserted that it did not make any difference who leads the communal *dhikr*, since the *baraka* of Muslih, a foremost leader of the TQN, is the most important thing for him. He argued that those who lead the communal *dhikr* have drawn their teachings from Muslih: in other words, they derived from a common source of authority. Some practitioners believe that the *baraka* of Muslih was transferred in some way to his *khalifas*. Accordingly, they likewise pay reverence to these *khalifas*, most notably those from his line of descent.

The consent of the sheikh is deemed to trigger the flow of his *baraka*. This can be perceived from the statement of one leader of the TQN that a certain leader received *baraka* from Muslih, and this enabled him to establish a *pesantren*.

The *baraka* of the sheikh maintains the spread of a certain *ṭariqa*, as long as it does not fade away. The *baraka* of the sheikh, Trimingham (Trimingham, 1998) asserts, can be utilised by his descendants. Such an occasion as *ḥawliyya* can be considered as an instance of "exploitation" of the *baraka* of the sheikh.

Anniversaries of the Leaders' Deaths

The festival commemorating the death of a leader is called *ḥawliyya*. Most Indonesian Muslims, however, call such an event a *haul* (Indonesian spelling of the Arabic *ḥawl*). There is also an anniversary of a leader's birth (*mawlid*) (Trimingham, 1998). In the circle of *ṭariqa*, the birth anniversary is, however, less common than the one for death. In general, Muslims prefer to celebrate the birth of the Prophet. This is also due to the emphasis on thinking about death which is prevalent in the circle of the *ṭariqa*. Entering on the spiritual path is often described as the death of the lower passions.

In Mranggen, Central Java, and the surrounding area we encounter at least three prominent occasions for *ḥawliyya*. These are the *ḥawliyya* of Ibrahim Yahya in the Pesantren Ibrahimiyah Brumbung, of ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Qasid al-Haqq al-Maraqi in the Pesantren Futuhiyyah Mranggen and of ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mannuri in the Pesantren Rahmaniyyah Menur. The *ḥawliyya* of each of these figures includes a cluster of *ḥawliyya*, under which the supplication addressed to their respective families is subsumed.

During the *ḥawliyya* of Ibrahim Yahya, his hagiography is normally retold orally. Muslih was at times requested to tell this story. One figure at the Pesantren Ibrahimiyah attempted to compose the hagiography of this particular master in writing. Some passages of this written hagiography originate from Muslih. The *ḥawliyya* of ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mannuri normally consists of the following items: recitation of the Koran and Islamic teachings, visiting the tomb, and the recitation of the *manaqib* of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.

Conclusion

We may say that obedience to a leader or a respected figure is ubiquitous, and present in nearly every aspect of life. Nonetheless the intensity, form and the supporting doctrines may vary from one institution to another. In Islamic mystical tradition, the need for a master is inevitable as one is believed not to be able to traverse the mystical path (which is depicted as being strenuous and full of temptations) in the correct manner without the assistance of a master. The charisma of a leader does not appear suddenly or unexpectedly. The leader’s charisma in the the *ṭariqa* in general and in the TQN in particular is intertwined with its existing rituals and doctrines.

Silsila is a chain of spiritual authorities, or in other words it is a chain of transmission which is a mark of authority over spiritual knowledge for those who possess it. We may infer that the *rabiṭa*, *ijaza*, *bay‘a* and *silsila* represent the same notion and serve the same purpose. All of them are identified and linked to the master as the source of authority.

The *baraka* of the master plays a role in attracting people into the *ṭariqa*, and in some ways moulds the mode of relationship between devotee and the teacher (which is clearly defined in a set of code of conduct. The reverence of the people towards the master manifests itself in the *ḥawliyya*, which can be regarded as an indication of the attraction felt by the people for the *baraka* of the master.

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