

RESEARCH HANDBOOK ON  
**Islamic Law  
and Society**

Edited by  
**Nadirsyah Hosen**



# Islamic Law and Society

*'What is Islamic law and how does it work? This Research Handbook of 18 case studies drawn from across the contemporary Muslim world promises not only to help contextualise Sharia as a versatile rather than an unchanging framework of laws pertaining to the 7th century, but also importantly to demystify it.'*

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The *Research Handbook on Islamic Law and Society* provides an examination of the role of Islamic law as it applies in Muslim and non-Muslim societies through legislation, *fatwa*, court cases, sermons, media, or scholarly debate. It illuminates and analyses the intersection of social, political, economic and cultural contexts in which state actors have turned to Islamic law for legal solutions.

Taking a thematic approach, the *Research Handbook* assesses the application of Islamic law across six key areas: family law and courts; property and business; criminal law and justice; ethics, health and sciences; arts and education; and community and public spheres. Through examination of these themes in over 20 jurisdictions, the *Research Handbook* serves to demonstrate that Islamic law is adaptable depending on the values of Muslim societies across different times and places. In addition, the *Research Handbook* highlights how Islamic law has engaged with contemporary issues, looking beyond what is set out in the Qur'an and the Hadith, to examine how Islamic law is applied in societies today.

Researchers and scholars with an interest in Islamic law, or the relationship between law and society more generally will find this *Research Handbook* to be an engaging text. The in-depth analysis, spanning sectors and jurisdictions, will offer new insights and inspire future research.

**Nadirsyah Hosen** is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Monash University, Australia.

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## 18. *Khutbahs* and *fatwas* in colonial Indonesia and Malaya

Muhamad Ali

### I. INTRODUCTION

The present chapter will examine the sermon (*khutbahs*) and edict (*fatwas*), and the extent to which colonial contexts shaped their characteristics and development in colonial Indonesia, particularly South Sulawesi, and Malaya, particularly Kelantan. It will analyse how various *ulama* constructed sermons and edicts, what sources and languages they used, and what problems and issues they faced. In such an analysis, the flexibility of religious knowledge and the contending interpretations of the religious texts will reveal some of the tensions as well as the compromises that characterize the production of such knowledge. The sermons and the edicts are textual and contextual, persistent and changing according to the *ulama's* interpretation and socio-cultural and political circumstances.

As preachers, the *ulama* conceive of their sermons and edicts as religious spaces and symbols despite preaching about socio-political and other secular issues. Faith precedes knowledge, and so the preachers try to link the ever-changing local and global issues to the fixity of religious texts. The preachers would interpret social reality in light of the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition (Hadith) as their sacred and complete textual guidance. When this notion of 'returning to the Qur'an and the Hadith' is analysed more closely, however, one finds great variation among the groups. Most preachers are unaware of the importance in considering the context or the contingent elements that shape a belief and interpretation.

Sermons and edicts need to be situated within power/knowledge relations. For the religious establishment, the sermons and edicts function as an instrument of power for the strengthening of the Muslim collective identity, the preservation of religious authority, and the protection of Islamic knowledge from what they regard as heterodoxy and heresy. At the same time, the sermon in particular serves as a medium of resistance and contention. Because some of the colonial authorities were well aware of the importance of sermons and religious edicts, they rarely interfered

with them. Although the colonial regimes did not exercise direct control on the content of the sermon and edict, they created new circumstances which forced the preachers to adapt. An important consequence of this indirect colonial interference was that sermons and edicts became a site of power contestation among different groups.

### II. SERMONS, EDICTS AND THE RELIGIOUS SPACE

A sermon (*khutbah*) is a religious address delivered orally and directly to a specific audience, small or large, in the mosque and other religious spaces. A *fatwa* is an edict or a ruling on specific religious matters (*masail diniyyah*) that concern the community. From the early twentieth century the *fatwa* in British Malaya and the Netherlands Indies became institutionalized when Muslim communities facing with new problems in a colonial situation sought guidance from the *ulama* as the religious authority. While the *fatwa* tends to be issued in written form, it can also be delivered orally or made part of a sermon. The sermon is more popular than the edict because the former is delivered every Friday at a mosque, whereas the latter is only issued irregularly when required. But because of the infrequency of edict announcements, it is regarded as being more authoritative than a *khutbah*. In addition, the *fatwa* is issued by a *mufti* with certain qualifications such as a knowledge of the Qur'an, the Hadith, Arabic language, and the methodology of deriving rules from the sources (*istinbat al-hukm*), whereas a sermon can be delivered in theory by anyone who knows something about Islam, even if only a Qur'anic verse, and is able to convey it to others.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Arabic, *fatwa* means edict or ruling; *ifta* is the process of delivering a *fatwa*; *mufti* is the *fatwa*-giver; *istifta* is the act of asking a *fatwa*, and *mustafti* is the *fatwa*-asker. The *fatwa* became institutionalized following the institutionalization of the *ulama*, whose main task is to issue the *fatwa*. Originally, *fatwa* referred to any opinion coming from any individual. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said to his companion, 'You could ask your own heart in deciding what is right and wrong.' In Kelantan, the journal *Pengasah* had a section *sual jawab* (question and answer) but later called the section *fatwa*. The *khutbah* or more generally the *tabligh* (to convey) is the task of almost everyone capable and willing to spread Islam to the others, even if only one verse of the Qur'an. Although delivering a Friday *khutbah* requires certain qualifications, these are not as high as those for issuing the *fatwa*. Besides *fatwa* and *khutbah*, there are other forms of religious advice, which are commonly said to be less strict than the *fatwa*. These other forms include personal advice (*nasihah*, *taushiyah*), admonition (*tazkirah*), letters (*risalah*) and written articles



While the *khatib* or preacher who gives a sermon must seek to conform to the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an, how successful he/she is in this endeavour of course depends upon circumstances and each individual.<sup>2</sup> The preacher's education and experience shape his or her way of preaching. In Kelantan and in South Sulawesi, the *pondok* (traditional boarding school)-educated preacher has greater training on and hence understanding of traditional Islamic knowledge such as the Qur'an, the science of the Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*), the science of Hadith, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and Arabic, enabling him to be better versed than others in delivering sermons. In many of the *pondok*, how to deliver a sermon is regularly taught as it is also an act of communication and performance, not simply of possessing certain knowledge. Some preachers write down their topic and points beforehand, others rely on their memory and spontaneity, and still others use a combination of text and improvisation.<sup>3</sup>

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(*maqalah*), which might contain religious knowledge and a mission (*da'wa*). In post-colonial Indonesia, new but more secular forms of advice emerged, such as position statements (*pernyataan sikap*), appeals (*himbauan*), contributions to opinion (*sumbangan pemikiran*), and instruction (*amanat*). See Nico Kaptein, 'The Voice of the 'Ulama: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia', Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Working Papers, visiting research series, no.2, 2004; Aboebakar Atjeh, *Beberapa Tjataan Mengenai Da'wah Islam untuk Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam* (Semarang: CV Ramadhani 1971), pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Zakaria, *Fadhilah Tabligh*, 2nd ed. (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press 1982), pp. 1-33.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the preachers probably did not make an outline; but they did have some idea about their audience and the choice of a subject. They also needed to accumulate the material and to meditate on the subject chosen. They tried to choose a text or texts, to write the introduction, the content, and the conclusion. Perhaps some did make some review, elimination and rejection of some points. One of the sermon manuals, for instance, suggested that the preacher should be well prepared, should have a wide intellectual horizon, be brave and wise, polite, not arrogant, calm not in a hurry, normal, should know the level of thinking of the listener, should be a good example, and dress appropriately. The sermons should not be too long, should be in accordance with time and place, constructive, not insulting to people, make sense, and interesting. In Christian tradition, sermons were also equally and in some cases more elaborate in terms of its aims, methods and content. In many aspects, however, Christian sermons shared many characteristics with Islamic ones. Dja'far Amir, *Teknik Chutbah (Pedoman bagi Para Chotib)* (Solo: AB Siti Sjamsijah 1965); Paul B. Bull, *Preaching and Sermon Construction* (New York: Macmillan Company 1922); Charles Reynolds Brown, *The Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan Company 1922); Ray C. Petry, *Preaching in the Great Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1946).

For sources, a preacher would select one or several out of more than 6000 verses of the Qur'an and/or one of or several of the thousands of the Prophet's sayings and tradition (Hadith) of six major collections.<sup>4</sup> Since the structure of the Qur'an is neither systematic nor thematic, the selection of verses may come from a major Hadith collection or from selections incorporated in religious books. A sermon can be delivered 'deductively', meaning that a preacher would speak of a phenomenon and then examine it in accordance with his/her interpretation of the normative values derived from particular verses. An 'inductive' sermon, on the other hand, is one where the preacher quotes from the Qur'an and the Hadith to explain a particular issue.

Apart from the Qur'an and the Hadith, a preacher may pick ideas from books in Arabic, in translation, or in the vernacular. The preacher may be influenced by works such as those of al-Imam al-Ghazzali (d.1111), to mention just one example.<sup>5</sup> Other sources of sermons may come from material gathered from international and local journals. In Kelantan, reform-minded preachers (*kaum muda*) might consult the international publications of *al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* (the Strong Bind) and *al-Imam* (the Leader), as well as the local ones, such as *Pengasuh* (the Bearer) and *al-Hidayah* (the Guidance). In South Sulawesi preachers found inspiration in the stories or commentaries found in the local bulletins such as *Suara As'adiyah* (Voice of As'adiyah), magazines of the Muhammadiyah, and *al-Wafd* (the messenger). One sermon manual mentions a book of Qur'anic exegesis entitled *Tafsir al-Jamal* (The Beautiful Interpretation)

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<sup>4</sup> The Sunni six major Hadith collections are Shahih al-Bukhari (d. 870), Shahih Muslim (d. 875), Sunan al-Nasa'i (d. 915), Sunan Abi Daud (d. 888), Sunan al-Turmudzi (d. 892), Sunan Ibn Maja (d. 886) or Muwatta Imam Malik (d. 796). The first two were considered 'authentic' (that is why the two were often called '*shahih*'), and the other four were said to be simply 'Sunan', which contained the authentic, less authentic, and even the weak Hadith. Imam al-Bukhari and Ibnu Madjah were Persian, while Imam Muslim and al-Turmudzi were Arabs. The tradition of the science of Hadith (*Ulum al-Hadith*) discusses the history, validity and various dimensions of the Hadith. The Shiite Muslims rejected the claim of authenticity of these Sunni Hadith collections. The Shiite Muslims have their own Four Book collections, consisting of *Usul al-Kafi*, *Man La Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih* of Shaikh Shadud, *Tahzib al-Ahkam* and *Al-Istibsar* by Imam al-Tusi.

<sup>5</sup> The often-cited works by Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111) included *Bulugh al-Maram* (Reaching the Honor), *Riyadh al-Shalihin* (Garden of the Pious) and *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (Revitalization of the Religious Sciences). See Machfuzh Siddiq, *Pedoman Tabligh*, vol.1, 4th ed. (Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama 1955), first published in 1938.



and that of the legal philosophy of *fiqh* (entitled *Hikmat al-Tasyri' wa Falsafatuhu*, the Wisdom of Islamic Law and Its Philosophy).<sup>6</sup> During the colonial period, references from Western books in sermons were uncommon and mainly used to highlight shortcomings or emphasize favourable remarks on Islam, such as a statement by a Scottish scholar of Islam, H. A. R. Gibb (1895–1971), that Islam is both a faith and a civilization.<sup>7</sup> While sources consulted were wide-ranging, the materials selected were used solely for a religious aim.

In Kelantan during this time, the language of Friday sermons was predominantly local Malay (Kelantanese dialect) and usually written in *jawi*, a modified Arabic script used for the Malay language.<sup>8</sup> In South Sulawesi, sermons were delivered in the local vernacular language (Bugis, Makassarese, or Mandarese) and were sometimes written in the Arabic-script called *serang*, but more often in Latin script. The use of *serang* in South Sulawesi, however, was limited and not as popular as the use of *jawi* in Kelantan because Malayness and Arabic were intertwined. In South Sulawesi, while the majority preached in the vernacular, some gave Friday sermons in Arabic, as occurred in the mosque of As'adiyah in Wajo.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Siddiq, *Pedoman Tabligh*.

<sup>7</sup> Siddiq, *Pedoman Tabligh*.

<sup>8</sup> 'Jawi' means people of Java, which were 'Malays' because the Arabs considered all the people in the Malay archipelago as Javanese; therefore the Malay writing using Arabic characters was called tulisan Jawi (Jawi script), 'Kitab' which literarily meant simply 'book', became to mean 'religious book' in Malay and Indonesian usage. The book of *jawi* (*kitab jawi*) were used by the Malays as a major source of Islamic knowledge because most ordinary Malays did not understand Arabic. Abdullah Munshi observed that Arabic was used by the Malays only in worship and prayers. The *kitab jawi* were mostly written during the period from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. R. Roolvink, *Bahasa Jawi* (Leiden: Leiden University Press 1975), p. 2; Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Hikayat Abdullah*, trans. A. H. Hill (Kuala Lumpur: Singapore 1970), p. 56; Mohd. Nor Bin Ngah, *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*, research notes and discussion papers no.33, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1983, pp.vii–viii.

<sup>9</sup> The As'adiyah had its *Da'wa* Department, organizing the training of the preachers and the journal *Risalah As'adiyah* in the Bugis language. In later years, the As'adiyah also had its radio station broadcasting the teaching, sermons and other information for the people around Wajo. Abd. Aziz Al Bone, *Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Sulawesi Selatan (Studi Kasus di Perguruan As'adiyah Sengkang) Laporan Hasil Penelitian*, Departemen Agama RI, 1986, p. 16.

The Muhammadiyah in South Sulawesi urged their preachers to use the local languages or the national language of Indonesian.<sup>10</sup> But Arabic was used for the main part of the sermons, which included the recitation of the praise to Allah (*hamdalah*), the praise to the Prophets (*shalawat*), encouragement to do good (*wasiyyat taqwa*), the declaration of faith (*shahadat*), the quoted Qur'anic verses and Hadith, and the recitation of prayer (*do'a*).<sup>11</sup> Most of the ordinary people in Kelantan and South Sulawesi did not know Arabic, except in some pondok where Arabic was taught intensively and sermons were delivered in Arabic for educational purposes.

*Fatwa* is more formal than a *khutbah*. The *fatwa* uses different sources, including the Quran, the Hadith, and religious books regarded as 'acceptable' by the mufti. In Kelantan, during this period, *fatwa* were issued in the journal *Pengasuh*. The sources of the *fatwa* were various, but primarily Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah books of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari (873–975) in matters of belief, and books of Imam al-Shafi'i (767–820) for matters of ritual, legal and social matters.<sup>12</sup> South Sulawesi did not

<sup>10</sup> The Sixteenth National Congress of Moehammadijah issued a ruling that all sermons should be carried out in the vernacular (*bahasa Boemipoetera*). *Boeah Congres Moehammadijah XXIII* (Djogjakarta: Hoofdcomite Congres Moehammadijah 1938), p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> See Dja'far Amir, *Teknik Chutbah (Pedoman bagi Para Chotib)* (Solo: AB Siti Sjamsijah 1965), pp. 50–1; H. Muhamad Arsyad Sunusi, *Khutbah Jumat Lengkap Satu Tahun*, 6 vols (Makassar: Toko Buku Pesantren, n.d.); H. Muhammad Arsyad Sunusi, *Hotbah Jum'at Bahasa Makassar*, 2nd ed. (Makassar: Toko Buku Pesantren 2002); *Khutbah Jum'at Lengkap Satu Tahun Bahasa Bugis Tulisan Latin* (Makassar: Yayasan Pendidikan dan Penyiaran Islam 2002); Muhammad Jamil Hamid, *Mimbar al-Jumati Li 'Aamatil Muslimin* (Ujung Pandang: Toko Buku Pesantren 1968).

<sup>12</sup> It was little known that Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari was actually a Mu'tazalite follower until the age of forty and then turned against the Mu'tazalite theological thinking. Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari was then more known for his theological idea of 'compromise' between predestination of Jabariyya and free will of Mu'taziliyya. Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari wrote a number of theological books, including *Maqalat Islamiyyin*, *Kitab al-Luma* and *Al-Ibanah 'an Ushul al-Diyanah*. Imam al-Maturidi, another theologian of *Ahlu Sunnah*, had less impact in the Islamic world than Al-Ash'ari. Al-Ash'ari was a follower of Imam al-Shafi'i. Muhammad Idris al-Shafi'i stressed the four basic sources of Islam: the Qur'an, the Hadith, the *Ijma'* (scholarly consensus) and the *qiyas* (analogy). The Shafi'i *fiqh* has been prevalent in many parts of the Islamic world, such as Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Somalia Yemen, and Southeast Asia. See Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, *Al-Ibanah 'an Ushul al-Diyanah* (Lebanon: Dar al-Qutub al-Ilmiyya, n.d.); Muhammad Idris al-Shafi'i, *Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala*, trans. by



have a state-supported *fatwa* and office of *mufti* as in Kelantan,<sup>13</sup> but the Muhammadiyah and the *Nadhlatul Ulama* (NU) branches circulated their nation-wide collection of religious rulings in the form of religious decisions (*tarjih, keputusan*) considered as *fatwa*. The Indonesian Islam Labor Party (PSII) also had a Council of *Shari'ah* and *Ibadah*, which organized the preaching and writing on Islam, as well as the issuance of *fatwa*, for its members.<sup>14</sup>

The NU as an organization did not penetrate into South Sulawesi until early 1950, although the Ahlussunnah wal-Jama'ah theological and Shafi'i legal school of thought was represented by Islamic schools, such as *Madrasah al-Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Arabic School) and *Darul Da'wah wal-Irsyad* (House of Mission and Guidance) and some other *pesantrens* in the island of Salemo and other districts in South Sulawesi. During the first half of the twentieth century, South Sulawesi did not have a collection of *fatwa*, but they had individual religious edicts, such as those issued by K. H. As'ad. Comparatively speaking, in Java, the NU organizational *fatwa*, collected later on, used about 160 religious books (*kitab kuning*) as references to the *fatwa* issued between 1926 and 1994. The *fatwa* are in the vernacular with references in Arabic without Indonesian translation, whereas the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* provide Indonesian translation for the references as well. The Muhammadiyah *fatwa* use the Qur'an and the Hadith more but Arabic books less than the NU *fatwa* collections. In matters ambiguously explained in the Qur'an and the Hadith, the Muhammadiyah uses the legal methodology of *ijtihad* (reasoning) and *ittiba* (following but knowing the reasons),

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Majid Khadduri (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1961); Montgomery Watt, *Free-will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1948); Muhammad Mukhtar bin Atharid al-Jawi al-Batawi al-Buqari, *Ushuluddin I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Kota Bharu: Ahliyyah Sendirian Berhad 1978); Abdul Shukor Husin, *Ahli Sunah Waljamaah Pemahaman Semula* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia 2000); Michael E. Marmura, 'Ghazali and Ash'arism Revisited', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, vol.12 (2002), pp. 91-110.

<sup>13</sup> Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Kelantan, *Himpunan Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Negeri Kelantan*, vol.1, 3rd ed. (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam 1996).

<sup>14</sup> The organizational document was first written in 1933. 'Pasal 5: Madjlis Departemen Sjariat dan Ibadat', Putjuk Pimpinan PSII, *Anggaran Dasar Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia berikut Anggaran Rumah Tangga dan Peraturan Tata Tertib* (Jakarta: Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia 1952), pp. 33-4.

while the NU applies *taqlid* (following the established opinions of the *ulama* without necessarily knowing the reasons).<sup>15</sup>

With regard to sermons in South Sulawesi, local *ulama* individually and organizationally write down various aspects of their sermons in manuals or guidebooks for limited or wider circulation.<sup>16</sup> In Kelantan during the colonial period, the journal *Pengasuh* had a section devoted to religious rulings or edicts, but no section on sermons until the 1950s. Few books of sermons were written and published by individual preachers and/or the Council of Religion in Kota Bharu, and after independence published more manuals.<sup>17</sup> The khutbah, despite its simple form, is a complex practice. It constitutes drama and performance, involving various aspects of communication: language, dress, mimic, gesture and so

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<sup>15</sup> The Muhammadiyah and the *Nadhlatul Ulama* issued their own collections of *fatwa* on a wide-range of issues using different methodologies. K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri (ed.), *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Muktamar dan Munas Ulama Nadhlatul Ulama Kesatu-1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PT RMI and Dinamika Press 1997); Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Madjlis Tardjih Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: P.P. Muhammadiyah 1971).

<sup>16</sup> For example, *Risalah Djum'ah* by Ahmad Hassan (Bandung, 1931); *Ta'jidil Islami fi Chutabil Chas wal'Am* (Javanese; al-Chutabatul's Ashriyah by Muhammad Nur Idris (Indonesian language, Padang, 1931); *Kitab Da'wah Djum'at dan Da'wah Hari Raja* (Bandung, 1938); and *Pedoman Muballigh Islam* by Hamka (Medan, 1937). The Islamic organizations such as As'adiyah, the Muhammadiyah, the *Nadhlatul Ulama*, and *Persatuan Islam*, also published books on sermons. The As'adiyah had its own bulletin entitled 'Risalah As'adiyah' and the *Darul Da'wah wal-Irsyad* (D.D.I.) also had *Risalah Ad-Dariyah*, both of which contained religious knowledge and information, including sermon text samples for its students, teachers and the people. These sermon guidelines generally elaborated sermon requirements, ethics, preparation, suggested topics and models, for a period of one year. See Aboebakar Atjeh, *Beberapa Tjatan mengenai Da'wah Islam* (Semarang: Ramadhani 1971), p. 30; Muhammad Shawir Dahlan, *Pedoman Khutbah Jum'at Praktis* (Ujung Pandang: Yayasan Pendidikan Ilmu Al-Qur'an al-Muzahwirah Sulawesi Selatan 1992); S. J. Soetan Mangkoeto, *Pedoman Penjiaran Moehammadijah* (Padang Panjang: Drukkerij Islamijah F.D.K., 1936); *Laporan Penelitian Naskah Khotbah pada Pelita II Tahun 1974-79 di Daerah Sulawesi Selatan dan Sulawesi Tenggara*, Balai Penelitian Lektur Keagamaan Ujung Pandang, Departemen Agama RI, 1981-82.

<sup>17</sup> With the increase in publishing technology and in the numbers of preachers, more manuals were produced and circulated in the postcolonial period. For example, Arifin bin Awang, *Pemimpin Tabligh* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Dian 1959); Muhammad Zakaria, *Fadhilah Tabligh*, 2nd ed. (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press 1982); Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat, *Khutbah Jum'at*, 9 vols (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press n.d.).



forth. Unlike the edict, the sermon involves the use and manipulation of words, styles and sometimes illustrations and anecdotes.

This performative aspect of sermon is situated within a 'religious field' between the preacher and the audience. The stories are usually about the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, his four successors (*caliphs*), other prophets, and other exemplary figures. What was important for the preachers and the audience was not the factuality of a story, but rather the moral meanings behind the stories, such as patience, courage, fairness, devotion and other qualities that the preacher intends to emphasize. A Bugis preacher KH Muhammad Abduh Pabbaja, for example, said that when he was a boy he used to listen to the stories of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali bin Abi Talib, Khalid bin al-Walid, and Hamzah, which gave him lessons on courage.<sup>18</sup> The *ulama* see the moral values that govern the daily behaviour of such figures not as 'secular' and 'contingent', but as 'religious' and 'constant'. The sermon acts as a link between the past, the present, and the future by providing an occasion for the preacher and the listener to share in a common religious space where exemplary figures – prophets, saints, scholars – become living and real.

The preacher maintains the 'religious' character of the sermon by interpreting particular issues through his/her understanding of Islamic doctrine and practice.<sup>19</sup> Thus, to believe and to preach are intertwined.<sup>20</sup> Even while adhering to the belief in the absoluteness and universality of knowledge (*wahyu*), the preacher nevertheless conveys it through his/her individual interpretation. In religious sermons, pure thinking and reasoning without reference to the sacred texts are rarely made and would make them less authoritative for the congregation. References to the Qur'an and the Hadith are a sign of authoritative sermons and usually precede purely personal opinions.

The regular and the most frequent sermon is Friday sermon. The Friday sermon functions as a practical religious guide, source of religious information, a religious response to any problem, and as encouragement

<sup>18</sup> Rosehan Anwar and M. Yusrie Abady, *Laporan Penelitian dan Penulisan Biografi K.H. Muhammad Abduh Pabbadja di Propinsi Sulawesi Selatan*, Proyek Penelitian Keagamaan Departemen Agama Bagian Proyek Penelitian dan Pengembangan Lektur Agama, 1986/1987, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> See *Laporan Penelitian Naskah Khotbah pada Pelita II Tahun 1974–79 di Daerah Sulawesi Selatan dan Sulawesi Tenggara*, Balai Penelitian Lektur Keagamaan Ujung Pandang, Departemen Agama RI, 1981–82, pp. 40–5.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching is Believing: The Sermon As Theological Reflection* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press 2002).

to strengthen faith and deepen religiosity.<sup>21</sup> Sermons are by nature repetitive (daily, weekly, or annually) and therefore contribute to a sense of continuity. The Friday sermon is in reality not a space for dialogue or debate; it is one-way communication. One sermon manual suggests that the Friday congregation should be a space for those who seek spiritual peace and for uniting the heart and the mind of the Muslim community. The sermon is not intended to create friction and disunity among the Muslim community by highlighting errors committed by the people or imposing the preacher's political ideology. Public sermons, particularly those delivered in a public space or the electronic media, tend to be more general in content to appeal to an audience that may include both non-Muslims as well as Muslims with varying theological and ritual orientations.<sup>22</sup> The main concern of sermons, however, continues to be the introduction, maintenance, and reinforcement of a sense of community among Muslims within a particular space – neighbourhood, village, city, country, etc.

Even though sermons and edicts are endowed with religious authority, they are not legally binding. In Kelantan in colonial times, sermons were often the business of the state and the Sultan through the Council of Religion. There were regulations that attempted to force attendance at Friday sermons, for instance. However, even though the Friday sermons were forcefully attended, the degree of reception by the audience during this time could not be exactly measured, as there was rarely direct feedback to a sermon by audience. The *ulama* hardly intended to measure the feedback from the audience they preached, neither did they examine if their *fatwa* were actually followed by the asker (*mustafti*), although there were sometimes letters from the audience sent to journals. For example, one reader of a *fatwa* sent his letter to the journal *Pengasuh*, expressing his agreement with the *fatwa* issued by the Council on the recitation of *basmalah* in the Surah of Fatihah of the Qur'an since it was according to the Shafi'i school of thought in the kitab *al-Um*.<sup>23</sup> In South Sulawesi, a local ruler in Bone discarded his membership of the Sufi

<sup>21</sup> For example, a preacher gives a guidance about how to do a formal prayer in right way, gives some information about the history of the Qur'an and its main teachings, a response to particular social issues, persuades the audience to improve knowledge, to pay the almsgiving, to go to the pilgrimage to Mecca when able, and so on. There could be any topics deemed important by the preacher.

<sup>22</sup> Dja'far Amir, *Teknik Chutbah (Pedoman bagi Para Chotib)* (Solo: AB Siti Sjamsijah 1965), pp. 42–5.

<sup>23</sup> 'Fatwa Majelis Uagama Islam Yang Tersiar' (1930) 292 *Pengasuh*.



Order Tariqah Khalwatiyya after he heard in a meeting KH As'ad *fatwa* on the falseness of the Sufi Order. KH As'ad's *fatwa* about ritualistic matters such as Friday sermons in Arabic was followed by the preachers in the mosque of Sengkang, Wajo. But the Muhammadiyah preachers also gained a following since the 1930s when the khutbah began to be preached in local languages.<sup>24</sup> There was, therefore, some leeway among Muslims to choose which religious opinions to follow.

A *khutbah* is not inherently political if this means practical politics. M. B. Hooker has argued that the mosque and the *khutbah* are 'socially and even politically identified and the *khutbah* is the public expression of a specific identity'.<sup>25</sup> This view is true to some extent and in some cases. As mentioned earlier and demonstrated below, the preacher sees his or her sermon as 'religious', even though the topic is categorized as 'political', 'social' and 'non-religious'. The issues are theological and ritualistic, but when political and social concerns are the focus of the sermon, the preacher delivers judgments based on his/her interpretation of the Qur'an, the Hadith, and other religious sources. In the sermon and the edict, the distinction between religious and the non-religious aspects of knowledge thus becomes blurred because the *khutbah* and the *fatwa* are viewed as being 'religious space'. This emphasis on the 'religious' character of the *khutbah* and *fatwa* and the constant return to the sacred texts explain why the secular, context-specific problems and issues tend to become 'de-secularized'.

### III. THE CONTEXTUAL DIMENSION

The characteristic of *khutbah* and *fatwa* as being 'religious' should not lead us to suggest that there is not contextual dimension. De-secularization of worldly issues requires contextualization. If textualization is a process that involves the use of the sacred texts (the Qur'an, Hadith, religious books), contextualization is a process of making references to such religious texts relevant and meaningful to particular groups within specific contexts. Some preachers are more contextual than others, and suggest that the ideal preacher should possess not only religious knowledge but also 'general knowledge', especially of social and current

issues of his or her time. As one preacher put it, 'human beings are the sons of their times.'<sup>26</sup> Thus they need to 'follow the times' (*mengikuti zaman*) by continuously reading current news and affairs through the available media such as the books, newspapers, magazines and other sources.<sup>27</sup>

One of the requirements of preachers is the ability to communicate by using appropriate speech and terminology because even the prophets were asked to 'speak to people according to their level of comprehension'.<sup>28</sup> As a result, preachers tend to adjust their language and ideas to the audience, whether it be courtiers, farmers, labourers, women or youth groups. In speaking to the Muhammadiyah Youth in Makassar, one local preacher chose as his subject the early life of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Another preacher sought a rapport with his young audience by urging them to be physically healthy, strongly motivated to obey God, and aware of the danger of the 'women problem' resulting from a free intercourse between the sexes.<sup>29</sup> Current problems and challenges, including the colonial and the local, informed the sermons, and the preachers sought to address them directly.

In 1937 a local preacher named Hamka openly acknowledged that the contents of Friday sermons should be appropriate for this day and age and not for a society that lived hundreds of years ago. He observed that many preachers taught the disregard of the world (*dunia*) for the sake of the life after death (*akhirat*) and still used the Arabic language rather than the vernacular in the Friday sermons. As a result the audience became disinterested in the sermon and could not understand the message being

<sup>26</sup> In Arabic, it reads, *الإنسان أبناء الزمان al-insan abna'uz zaman*. See Djafar Amir, *Teknik Chutbah (Pedoman bagi Para Chotib)* (Solo: AB Sitti Sjamsijah 1965), pp. 23–4.

<sup>27</sup> Djafar Amir suggested that ideally, a preacher should prepare the material for sermon; he should be polite, not hurry, be apt and normal, aware of the level of the intellectuality of the audience, motivating, be a model, attractive, not insulting people, reasonable, knowledgeable of the people's aspiration, and keeping the public order. Djafar Amir, *Teknik Chutbah (Pedoman bagi Para Chotib)* (Solo: AB Sitti Sjamsijah, 1965, pp. 13–14, 24–44.

<sup>28</sup> A popular Prophet's saying is read: '*Umirma Ma'asyiral Anbiya an Nukallima al-Naasa bi qadri Uquulihim*'. See *Pedoman Chutbah* (Jakarta, Proyek Penerangan, Bimbingan dan Da'wah/Chutbah Agama Islam (Pusat), 1971), p. 45; KH Mustafa Zahari, in H. Muhammad Arsyad Sunusi, *Khutbah Jum'at Lengkap Satu Tahun*, 6 vols (Makassar: Toko Buku Pesantren, n.d.), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Pemberita Makassar*, no.2, 3 January 1940.

<sup>24</sup> KH Daud Ismail, *Riwayat Hidup Almarhum K.H.M. As'ad*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>25</sup> See M. B. Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatawa* (Honolulu: Allen & Unwin and University of Hawaii Press 2003), pp. 87, 104–5, 127–9; Muhamad Ali, 'Fatwa on Interfaith Marriage in Indonesia' (2002) 9 (3) *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*.



conveyed.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, he cited an example of a Bugis preacher named KH Abdullah who maintained the interest of his congregation by speaking his mind about the colonial situation.<sup>31</sup>

Signs of both continuity and change are evident in the ideas contained in sermons and edicts from colonial South Sulawesi and Kelantan.<sup>32</sup> In South Sulawesi, K. H. As'ad commented on religious matters such as the religious status of paying a fee for a religious teacher for a substitute of a Muslim not performing the daily prayer (*salat*) during his life time.<sup>33</sup> In Kelantan, by the 1987 instruction of Sultan Ismail Petra, the Council of Religion published a collection of the *fatwa* that had been issued by the Council since its establishment in 1915. The new collection in 1997 simply added more *fatwa*, but did not modify the previously issued *fatwa*. The book contains a wide variety of religious matters, including belief (*tauhid* and *aqidah*), physical and spiritual cleanness and dirt, prayer for the traveller, prayer clothing for women, reciting the daily prayer in the Malay language, marriage procedures, man-woman relationships, gifts, food and drink, buying and selling, debt, endowment, sacrificed animals, jewellery, clothing, the messiah and the Prophet 'Isa (Jesus Christ), and religious innovation and superstition (*bid'ah* and *khurafat*). Under the section 'belief', topics include the question of passive imitation (*taqlid*) of the recognized schools of thought, the right and deviant paths, whether the sinful believer and the good unbeliever go to heaven, and men

<sup>30</sup> Hamka, 'Pedoman Muballigh Islam' (Medan, 1937) in Aboebakar Atjeh, *Beberapa Tjataan*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Hamka, *Muhammadiyah Melaloei 3 Zaman*, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> For instance, in Java, the Ahlussunnah wal-Jama'ah Association, N.U., had its *fatwa* from 1926 to 1946. As we mentioned, NU did not come to South Sulawesi until the 1950; the NU *fatwa* contains a wide variety of social, cultural and political issues, such as drawing of animals, orchestra instruments for entertainment, playing chest, dances, firework, wearing Western tie, trousers, shoes and caps, using golden pen, cultivating a Muslim land to the *kafir* (interpreted as non-Muslim), offerings to the earth, the status of *tariqah*, and Friday prayer in prisons. The collection also deals with the issues of the studying the books authored by a *kafir*, the status of Muslim convert to Christianity until the death, the status of women as preachers, the name of Indonesia, depositing money in the bank, joining an Islamic organization, accusing the NU as *bid'ah* (religious innovation, heresy), life insurance and Muslims joining organization not based on Islam. K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri (ed.), *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Muktamar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu-1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PT RMI and Dinamika Press 1997); pp. 1-196.

<sup>33</sup> Daud Ismail, *Al-Ta'rif bi al-Alim al-Allamah al-Shaikh al-Hajj Muhammad As'ad al-Bugisi* (Sengkang: Yayasan As'adiyah 1989), pp. 16-17, 19.

reaching the moon.<sup>34</sup> These collections of edict indicate that different issues and contexts produced variant resolutions. In applying such textual and contextual methods, the *ulama* were able to do their duty in answering the 'religious' problems of the day.

The Muhammadiyah, even though they argued for the use of the vernacular, were stricter than the Ahlussunnah wal-Jamaah group in their attitude toward aspects of local culture which were regarded as being contrary or alien to Islam. In 1931, the Muhammadiyah Council of Scholars issued their ruling on the pillars of faith: belief in God, belief in angels, in holy books, in the messengers of God, in the hereafter and in the human fate. It concluded with a short explanation that such beliefs were of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, based on the Qur'an, the reliable Hadith, and the work by the early generations of Muslims (the *Salafi*).<sup>35</sup> For the Muhammadiyah, the emphasis on the Qur'anic fundamental beliefs is directly related to the strict attitude toward local tradition (*adat*) deemed harmful to the purity of the belief in one God. Correcting the false *adat* became an important part of their preaching.<sup>36</sup> The Muhammadiyah *ulama* emphasized the purification of the faith (*aqidah*) and rejection of religious innovation (*bid'ah*) and superstitions (*takhayyul*, *khurafat*), often connected to animism and polytheism (*shirk*).<sup>37</sup> For the Muhammadiyah preachers, there is less toleration for cultural accommodation in matters of fundamental religious ideas because they regard the Qur'an and the Hadith as the primary references for judging what are true and false beliefs.

The *ulama* do not always recognize changing dimensions of their sermons and opinions when they believe that the fundamentals of faith

<sup>34</sup> See Dato' Haji Ismail bin Yusuf, *Himpunan Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Negeri Kelantan* (Kota Bharu: Majelis Agama Islam dan Istiadat Negeri Kelantan 1986), pp. 2, 184-96.

<sup>35</sup> 'Aqaidoel-Iman: Poatoesan Madjilis Tardjih', *Almanak Moehammadiyah Tahoen Hidjrah 1351, Kitab Almanak ke-IX* (Djogjakarta: Taman Poestaka, 1931/32), pp. 124-33.

<sup>36</sup> The twenty-third congress made a statement that the Moehammadiyah heads and consuls throughout the East Indies should examine the regulations to be followed in relation to the relationship between the local tradition and Islamic norms, but the twenty-fourth congress amended this statement because without such statement the Muhammadiyah members should have understood this doctrine any way. *Boeah Congres Moehammadiyah XXIII*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Later on, however, the Muhammadiyah added a phrase, 'without overlooking the doctrine of tolerance in Islam'. It is a matter of importance to examine why and when the word 'tolerance' emerged in the Muhammadiyah formal statement. This needs further research.



(the essence of Islam) should not be compromised. It is not commonly realized that in reality there is room for contending interpretations, and that there is localization of even what is believed to be fundamentals of the faith, as will be demonstrated in the following.

#### IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD MUSLIM DIVERSITY AND LOCAL NORMS

The issue of tolerance toward religious difference was sometimes brought up by the *ulama* in Kelantan and South Sulawesi. Again, the issue was not simply textual, but also contextual. Some preachers argued for Muslim unity while recognizing diversity in non-fundamental matters. In Kelantan, Haji Nik Muhammad Adeeb (1918–64), who studied in Mecca and then in an American University in Egypt where he learnt general knowledge and English, was asked about diversity in Islam to which he replied: 'If they prayed there would be no difference.'<sup>38</sup> Tok Khurasan, the *ulama* graduate from Deoband, India, was reported to have been not very interested in the then current debate on the issues of talqin and talfiq (see above). Instead, he focused on his teaching of the hadith and the school of thought of Imam Hanafi, rather than Imam Shafi'i.<sup>39</sup> Nik Muhammad Adeeb and Tok Khurasan were among those who did not see the need to worsen the existing internal schism on the issues they regarded as non-fundamental. In other words, they wished to adopt a 'moderate position' between or remain outside the *kaum tua* and *kaum muda* debate of the time.

In South Sulawesi, some preachers paid some attention to the issue of tolerance. The Muhammadiyah preachers recognized the diversity of Muslim organizations in the Netherlands Indies as part of global and local reality as long as they shared the commitment to preach and teach Islam according to the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition. They interpreted the term *ummah* as not simply the Islamic community but also as Islamic organization, which meant that Islam could be preached by different organizations (*ummah*) in different local areas.<sup>40</sup> Here the

<sup>38</sup> Ismail Awang, 'Haji Nik Muhammad Adeeb (1918–64)', Ismail Che Daud (ed.), *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung Melayu*, vol.II (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan 1996), p. 84.

<sup>39</sup> Nik Abdul Aziz Hj. Nik Hassan, 'Tok Khurasan; Seorang Tokoh Ulama di Negeri Kelantan', *Malaysia in History*, vol.18, no.1, 1975, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> H. Hasjim, 'Choetbatoel Arsij', *Almanak Muhammadiyah 1351* (Djogjakarta: Taman Poestaka, 1932/3), pp. 1–16.

Muhammadiyah tolerated organizational plurality. The local organization, Bone Islamic Association (Perhimpunan Islam Bone, PIB) in established on 20 January 1940 in Watampone, also aimed to promote tolerance among Muslims particularly in Bone because of difficulties there. In their sermons, local Muslims were encouraged to counter backwardness, improve the economy, be more faithful to Islam and be tolerant toward different interpretations of Islam.<sup>41</sup> Here the P.I.B. promoted tolerance of more ritualistic orientations of Islam.

As for the local norms, many emphasized that Islam should coexist with these. For instance, in Bugis society, *siriq* is regarded as an important cultural belief. As I have discussed above, *siriq* is a fundamental concept which governs behaviour based on mutual respect.<sup>42</sup> Some preachers tried to explain the local norm of *siriq* in light of Islamic norms. Hamka, a Muhammadiyah preacher who preached and taught in South Sulawesi from late 1931 to 1934, realized the religious importance of *siriq* and the cultural importance of the religious norm of shame. In a public speech, Hamka suggested that *siriq* was actually in accordance with Islamic norms but should not be done in an excessive or exaggerated fashion. Dignity, he continued, should be based on true faith and moral moderation. Hamka then quoted Imam al-Ghazzali who said that 'the best dignity is one that is moderate'. What he meant by exaggeration was killing and violence that often resulted in the defence of *siriq*. In justifying his opinion, Hamka quoted an Arab poem translated as: 'If you

<sup>41</sup> The organization also aimed to introduce general knowledge (*ilmu-ilmu umum*) and Islamic knowledge (*pelajaran Islam*), to improve the economy by providing financial support to the members, to improve the peoples' health, and to disseminate Islam through public sermons. One of the speakers quoted a Qur'anic verse, 'God will not change the course of a group unless the group themselves are willing to change,' and explained it in the Bugis language. *Pemberita Makassar*, no.26, 31 January 1940.

<sup>42</sup> It is believed that violation of the norm will bring calamity to the region, such as drought, severe economic conditions, etc. Run-away couple, which was without familial consent, is an example of *siriq* that should be paid off. The family that had been brought shame become *tomasiriq* [meaning those who become *siriq*]. To remove this shame, the *tomasiriq* are thus obligated to remove the shame by killing the one who is responsible for causing *siriq*. The Makassarese have a saying: '*Ikambe Bugisi Mangkasara, nialle toddopuli, sipassiriqkia siagang sipaccea*' (We Bugis and Makassarese, We declare our oath, to respect each other, to show our solidarity). See Musda Mulia, *Ketaqwaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Sistem Sosial Budaya Makassar di Kelurahan Mangasa Kecamatan Tamalate – Ujung Pandang* (Ujung Pandang: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama, Proyek Penelitian Agama, 1988/89), p. 11.



do not defend your dignity then you undermine it, and others will undermine it even more; therefore respect yourself and if a place is narrow for it, then move to another place where respect is possible.' Hamka explained *siriq* by the Islamic terms *maru'ah* (self-dignity), *shaja'ah* (bravery) and *haya* (shame). An Islamic *siriq*, according to Hamka, is a reflection of individual liberty, national freedom, no fear but of God, no place with greatest protection but in God. *Siriq* could also mean respect for women and the dignity of religion. Hamka then quoted a Hadith saying: 'Whoever is killed in defense of his property dies a martyr (*shahid*); whoever is killed defending his life dies a martyr; whoever dies because he defends his religion dies a martyr; whoever dies in defending his family dies a martyr.' He then supported this with a hadith, 'shame is part of faith'.<sup>43</sup>

Hamka noted that a Bugis preacher, Haji Abdullah, preached at the Congress of the Muhammadiyah in 1932 at Makassar, emphasizing that 'to die in the defense of the religion of Allah is to die in the most honorable way and to idealize the implementation of Islam in the country is to live meaningfully'. Hamka then concluded his speech by saying, 'I am amazed by the bravery of the Bugis and Makassarese people in facing death over only small things, but I would encourage you to apply the *siriq* in reaching higher goals, such as the dignity of your country, your nation, and your religion, so your death will be worth it.'<sup>44</sup> Bugis scholars, such as Abu Hamid, later argued that *siriq* is equivalent to Islamic motivation (*niat*) because *siriq* serves as a motivating factor in social action.<sup>45</sup> Here Hamka and Abu Hamid tried to Islamize the traditional doctrine of *siriq* and to localize the Islamic norm of respect and dignity. Thus, in South Sulawesi, there was an attempt to synthesize and reconcile the local norms of *siriq* and the Islamic norms of shame, dignity and respect to form a single religio-cultural concept.

<sup>43</sup> Hamka, 'Pandangan Islam terhadap Siriq', in Andi Moen Mg., *Menggali Nilai-nilai Budaya Bugis-Makassar dan Siriq Na Pacce* (Ujung Pandang: Yayasan Mapress 1988), pp. 66–74.

<sup>44</sup> Hamka, 'Pandangan Islam terhadap Siriq', pp. 75–8.

<sup>45</sup> Abu Hamid even speculates that the term *siriq* is derived from the Arabic *sirri*, meaning secret (*rahasia*), in the Arabic saying 'Allahu sirriy wa ana sirruhu' (God is a secret and I am His secrecy). Yet Abu Hamid further contends that *siriq* belongs to shame culture, rather than guilt culture. Abu Hamid, 'Sistem Nilai Islam Dalam Budaya Bugis-Makassar', Aswab Mahasin et al. (eds), *Ruh Islam dalam Budaya Bangsa: Aneka Budaya Nusantara* (Jakarta: Yayasan Festival Istiqlal and Bina Rena Pariwisata 1996), pp. 173–5.

In Kelantan, a similar melding of cultural and religious ideas was complicated because there was no consensus on what aspects of Malay culture were actually Islamic. However, the connection between Malayness and Islam was often emphasized in the sermons. If Malays were poor, Islam played a role; and if they were developed, Islam also played its role. In Kota Bharu, Friday sermons emphasized the close connection between the Islamic faith and the Malay community. Even while recalling the glories of the Melaka Sultanate, preachers were aware that the Malays remained poor and backward in comparison with other nations, especially the Chinese and the English. Haji Abdullah Nuh (1905–47) travelled through Kelantan to raise awareness among ordinary Malays of the continuing relevance of Islam.<sup>46</sup> For him, Malayness and Islam were an interlinked identity that could prove productive by emphasizing that Islam promotes progress, and therefore the Malay people as true Muslims must become modern.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the effort by preachers to reconcile Islam with local culture, another of their concerns was to determine how they should interpret what the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition said regarding the proper Islamic attitudes toward other religious communities. Both Kelantan and South Sulawesi had large religious minorities, and therefore this was an important problem facing the preachers. While some focused on religious books for a resolution of the question, others formed their interpretations by going directly to the Qur'an. In shaping preachers' views of other religions, elements of text and context, as well as exegesis and history, had a major role.

## V. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER RELIGIONS

One common feature among Islamic preachers was the belief in the truth of Islam. Most, if not all were 'theologically exclusive', to use a contemporary term. They tended to see Islam as the only true religion without allowing some possibility about the truth in other religions.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ismail Awang, 'Maulana Abdullah Nuh (1905–47)', in Ismail Che Daud (ed.), *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung Melayu*, vol.1, (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan 1992), p. 399.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Professor of religious studies in America, Diana L. Eck, for instance, offers her definition of exclusivism, a definition I follow here. An exclusive theology is when one believes that 'our own community, our tradition, our understanding of reality, our encounter with God, is the one and only truth,



However, preachers in South Sulawesi and Kelantan expressed their exclusivity differently. In 1928, the conference of the Nahdlatul Ulama issued their edicts in response to various questions concerning other religions and the practices deemed as foreign influences. One of the questions was: 'What is the opinion of the NU regarding wearing trousers, ties, shoes, and hats?' The NU general conference replied in the following manner, which then became its *fatwa*: 'If one wears these with the intention to imitate and to follow the path of the unbelievers (*kafir*) and to promote their unbelief, then the person becomes *kafir*. If he or she does not have an intention at all to imitate the *kafir* (simply wearing this or that) and to follow their path, then the act is not forbidden. Nevertheless, it is undesirable (*makruh*).'<sup>49</sup> In response to another question on the different kinds of *kafir*, the answer was: First, the one who does not believe in God (called *kafir inkar*); second, the one who believes in God in his heart, but does not proclaim this verbally, such as Satan and the Jews (called *kafir juhud*); third, the one who says he believes in God

excluding all others'. This exclusivism is in opposition to inclusivism which signifies the acceptance of multiple communities, traditions and truths, although one's own truth is superior to the others. The third position is the pluralist who believes that there are truths equally present in all religions. Diana L. Eck, 'Is Our God Listening? Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism', Roger Boase (ed.), *Islam and Global Dialogue: Religious Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace* (Burlington: Ashgate 2005), p. 23; Muhamad Ali, *Teologi Pluralis-Multikultural: Menghargai Kemajemukan, Menjalani Kebersamaan* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas 2003), pp.viii–xix.

<sup>49</sup> This *fatwa* is written in Indonesian language, then with Arabic text. It is based on the *fiqh* books '*al-Fatawa al-Kubra*' by Ibn Taimiyyah (1263–1328) and 'Bughyatul Mustarsyidin' by Abdurrahman bin Muhammad bin Husain bin Umar al-'Alawi, a *mufti* at Hadramaut. Ibn Taimiyyah is the follower of Imam Hanbali rather than of Imam al-Shafi'i. This indicates some flexibility regarding the sources of *fiqh* in the *fatwa* of the NU. Yet in this matter of belief, the *fatwa* remains fixed. After this *fatwa* in 1927, there emerged a similar question in 1939, and the answer remained the same, with some additional explanation. To resemble (*menyerupai, tashabbuh*) a *kafir* that is forbidden is wearing anything that is specific to that particular religion such as the cross (*salib*) or for instance closing shop on Sundays following the Christians. 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-2', Surabaya, 12 Rabiul Awwal 1346 H, 9 October 1927, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 25; 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-14', Magelang, 14 Jumadil Ula 1351 H/1 July 1939, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 171.

verbally, but does not believe it in his heart (*kafir nifaq*); and lastly, the one who knows God in his heart, and says it verbally, but does not obey Him in practice, such as Abu Thalib (called *kafir 'inad*).<sup>50</sup> When asked if it is allowed to read the books authored by non-Muslims, such as an Arabic dictionary *al-Munjid* by Louis Maloef, the NU *fatwa* states: 'It is not allowed to read works by non-Muslims except for a Muslim who has adequate knowledge and can distinguish the truth from the untruth.'<sup>51</sup> Another *fatwa* proclaimed that 'a Muslim who converts to Christianity and does not return to Islam before death is not allowed to be buried in the Islamic way and in a Muslim cemetery'.<sup>52</sup> In another judgment, the NU decided that when a non-Muslim (*kafir*) says 'there is no god but Allah' right before death, but does not say that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, then he/she remains a non-Muslim.<sup>53</sup> Also, there is a *fatwa* which states that a Muslim parent should not agree to allowing his/her child to become non-Muslim. Instead, a Muslim parent should try

<sup>50</sup> This is based on a book called *Syarah Safinah al-Najah* by al-Imam al-Nawawi al-Banteni. 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-5, Pekalongan, 13 Rabiul Tsani 1349 H/7 September 1930, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), pp. 61–2.

<sup>51</sup> This *fatwa* is based on a book called *Fawa'id al-Makkiyah*, which referred to another kitab *al-Fatawa al-Haditsiyyah*. In the latter, it is stated that it is not allowed to read books such as *Nuzhah al-Majalis* because it contains the truth (*haq*) and the false (*batil*). This shows how the NU *fatwa* follows the other *fatwa* on similar matters, but interprets it for local questions and circumstances. 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-9', Banyuwangi, 8 Muharram 1353, 23 April 1934, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 110.

<sup>52</sup> This *fatwa* is based on two books, *Sullam al-Taufiq* and *Tarsyikh al-Mustafidin*. 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-9', Banyuwangi, 8 Muharram 1353, 23 April 1934, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> This is based on the religious book *Fath al-Muin* by Zainuddin al-Malabary. 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-12', Malang, 12 Rabiul Tsani 1356 H/25 March 1937. In K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu – 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), pp. 145–6.



to educate his/her children according to Islam.<sup>54</sup> In making all of these judgments, the NU sought justification in their interpretations of the previous religious books. In other words, there was no direct consultation nor a comprehensive reference to the Qur'an which shows various attitudes toward other religious communities.<sup>55</sup>

To the question whether Indonesia remained an Islamic country, the NU issued its *fatwa* in 1935, stating that 'Indonesia remains an Islamic country (*negeri Islam*) because it was governed by Muslim rulers although it has now been taken over by the infidel (*kafir*) colonizer; Indonesia remains an Islamic state and it will be so forever'.<sup>56</sup> One year after the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945, there was a question whether to fight against the colonizer was an obligation for every Muslim or only for some of them. The NU *fatwa* in 1946 stated that to fight against the colonizers and their collaborators is an obligation for everyone, male and female, old and young, within an area of 58 miles (94 km), and becomes an obligation beyond the area in order to assist those unable to undertake the fight alone.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-13', Menen Banten, 13 Rabiul Tsani 1357 H/12 July 1938, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu - 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 163.

<sup>55</sup> For example, the NU *fatwa* does not say anything about some Qur'anic passages that say plurality of ways among humankind as God's will. 'If God had willed, He would have made you one nation.' (Q.S. 5:48). There was no mention of a Qur'anic verse saying, 'Verily, those who have attained to faith as well as those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Christians, and the Sabians - all who believe in God and the Last Day, and do righteous deeds - shall have their reward with their God, the Sustainer; and no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.' (Q.S. 2:62; 5:69). On this theological issue, see for example, Nurcholish Madjid, 'Interpreting the Qur'anic Principle of Religious Pluralism', Abdullah Saeed, *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Oxford University Press and the Institute of Ismaili Studies 2005), pp. 209-22.

<sup>56</sup> The book contains the term *dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) translated in the NU *fatwa* as '*negeri Islam*' (Islamic state). It also mentions the country of Batavia and Java as *dar al-Islam*, not as *dar al-harb* (Abode of War). 'Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-11', Banjarmasin, 19 Rabiul Awwal 1355 H/9 June 1935, in K. H. A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu - 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), p. 138.

<sup>57</sup> The *fatwa* is based on several books *Bajuremi Fathil Wahhab*, *Asna al-Mathalib Syarah Raudh al-Thalibin*, and *Fathul Qarib*. Masail Diniyah Keputusan Mukhtar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-16', Purwokerto, 1946, in K. H. A.

The Muhammadiyah did not issue *fatwa* specifically regarding the attitude toward other religions. However, they had speeches and decisions in the conferences related to the issue. According to one speaker, the Muhammadiyah asked the Dutch colonial government to assure the security, peace and freedom to Muslim preaching and educational activities. The Muhammadiyah invited non-Muslim communities to return to the basic doctrine of belief in one God (*tauhid*) and to respect all prophets, and to help the Muhammadiyah to undertake these tasks since they were intended for all religions.<sup>58</sup> In Netherlands Indies, they interpreted the concept of *kafir* by associating it with the Dutch colonial power.<sup>59</sup> A Bugis Muhammadiyah preacher named Haji Abdullah expressed his hatred openly against the Dutch government and called them *kafir*: 'Think, my friends, Islam will not develop (in this country) if the Dutch *kafir* remains in control.'<sup>60</sup> For some preachers in South Sulawesi, the Dutch were regarded as *kafir harby* (infidels warring against Muslims), unlike the Japanese rules who were also *kafir*, but not engaged in a war against Muslims.<sup>61</sup> This is not the only attitude toward the Dutch among Muslims however.

In Kelantan, there was little attention paid in the sermons and edicts to Buddhism, let alone Christianity. The *fatwas* and sermons in the colonial era contained nothing on other religions. The possible reasons are that in Kelantan, the Malay Muslims were a large majority and did not see the Siamese or the Chinese as threats. Buddhist temples (*wat*) were erected without objection from the surrounding Malay community. The Buddhist monks had great freedom to preach in their temples and performed their

Aziz Masyhuri, *Masalah Keagamaan Hasil Mukhtar dan Munas Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama Kesatu - 1926 s/d kedua puluh sembilan 1994* (Surabaya: PP RMI and Dinamika Press 1997), pp. 197-201.

<sup>58</sup> M. H. Mansoer, 'Choetbatoel-'Arsj', *Boeah Congres Moehammadijah Seperempat Abad* (Djogjakarta; Hoofdbestuur Moehammadijah, n.d.), pp. 9-10.

<sup>59</sup> The idea of Christians as the People of the Book (*Ahl al-kitab*) had not become popular in South Sulawesi and Kelantan during this time, despite the existence of such Quranic interpretation of the Christians, Jews and Muslims as being the Peoples of the Book with shared Father, Abraham. For most of the preachers, the term *kafir* had carried the notion of communal identity rather than quality of disobey and unthankful-ness which could actually apply to the Muslims too. They asserted the idea that all non-Muslims were inherently *kafir*, whereas all Muslims were never *kafir*.

<sup>60</sup> See Hamka, *Moehammadijah melaloei 3 (tiga) Zaman* (Padang Pandjang: Markaz Idarah Moehammadijah 1946), p. 36.

<sup>61</sup> See H. Ismuha, '*Ulama Aceh dalam Perspektif Sejarah*', Taufik Abdullah (ed.), *Agama dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: CV. Rajawali 1983), p. 11.



rituals without opposition. Despite the assertion of ethnic and religious difference, there were no reports of open conflicts in Kelantan between Buddhists and Muslims during the colonial period.<sup>62</sup> As for Christianity, the Kelantanese *ulama* hardly discussed it during this time, except when it related to the British. Although the preachers must have had strong views about Christianity as *kafir*, they did not express this view in their sermons and edicts, at least insofar as our sources allow us to infer. One possible explanation is that when an ethnic and religious group became an overwhelming majority, divisions arise within the majority group, rather than between a majority and a relatively insignificant minority. These decisions whether to engage certain issues in sermons and edicts were significant since these vehicles for transmission of Islamic knowledge were contested sites of power. To determine what the attitudes were toward other religions, therefore, required an examination of both texts and contexts. In short, Muslims in Kelantan and South Sulawesi had some shared but more different concerns.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Sermons and edicts are different but complementary genres in the transmission of Islamic knowledge. Through these genres, the complexity and diversity of what is considered 'Islamic knowledge' have been revealed. The religious knowledge contained in the sermons and edicts in South Sulawesi and Kelantan in the European and Japanese colonial periods may be classified into the fundamentals of belief, rituals and social relationship. In assessing these categories of knowledge in terms of persistence and change, the more fundamental a particular knowledge is perceived, the less resistance it is to change. For example, the concept of one God has been relatively persistent across time and place, although the interpretation of the concept varies from one group to another group. The category in the middle is the one related to ritual. Muslims have shared forms of rituals based on the Prophet Muhammad's example, yet they disagree on certain ritual practices based on traditions, especially regarding divinity, spirits and healing.

<sup>62</sup> See Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, *Buddhism and Ethnicity: Social Organization in A Buddhist Temple in Kelantan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 1–5; Louis Golomb, *Brokers of Morality: Thai Ethnic Adaptation in A Rural Malaysian Setting* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa 1978), pp. 1–8.

The most contingent category of religious knowledge is the one related to social and political issues, which mostly appear in public speeches rather than in the mosques and collections of edicts. The social issues are those such as progress, science and the status of women. The political issues of the time are colonialism and nationalism. South Sulawesi provides more data on views on Dutch policies than does Kelantan on the British Adviser. The term '*kafir*' has become more salient in South Sulawesi than in Kelantan because of their different kinds of relationship. The Japanese occupation shaped Muslim discourse regarding Islamic unity, the new age, and the worldly matter. In general, however, what issues are discussed and to what extent depends very much on how the preachers linked the text with the context.

Despite the different degree of persistence and change in the different categories of religious knowledge, it is undeniable that text and context are crucial. Muslims pay attention to the way the text is treated, translated, interpreted, and applied in local contexts. Contextualization is the process of making the text relevant to particular time and space by different agents, not only the so-called reformist, but also the conservative (*Islam kolot*). I agree with Abdulkader Tayob, who has studied sermons in South Africa. He argued that sermons must be studied in relation to the historical context and the discursive tradition employed, and go beyond the written word and the speech and the gestures of the preachers and the teachers.<sup>63</sup> However, such a historical study of Islamic discourse needs to delineate the dynamics of what is textual and what is contextual, and what is persistent and what is changing. This chapter is an attempt to posit sermons and edicts within the binary dimensions of text and context, and persistence and change.

<sup>63</sup> Ashraf Dockrat, book review essay, Abdulkader Tayob, 'Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons' (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 1999) (2004) 36 *International Journal for Middle East Studies* pp. 519–21.



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