

The Network of Hadith Studies in Indonesia in The 17th – 19th Century

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THE NETWORK OF HADITH STUDIES IN INDONESIA IN THE 17TH – 19TH CENTURY

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Abstract

This article aims to explain the network of Indonesian Muslim scholar (*ulama*) regarding the hadith dissemination. However, this research used a historical approach based on Azra who tells about the welfare of Islamic kingdoms in international trading. It has given the opportunity to the Muslim to make the intellectual trip in the Middle East. The *Haramayn* becomes the center of hadith since the beginning of the Islamic year. It implicated in the spread of hadith studies in Indonesia which first appeared in the 17th century. The symbol of this period is Nur Ad-Din ar-Ranieri and Abd ar-Rauf as-Sinkili. Sufism is more popular than hadith study. This condition continued into the 19th century. Some Indonesian *ulama* Muhammad ibn Umar an-Nawawi Banten and Muhammad Mahfuz Termas gave their contribution to hadith studies, through teaching the hadith in Indonesia and the Middle East. They also wrote the hadith books.

Keywords: The Network of Hadith, *Ulama*, Middle East, Trading, *Isnad*

Introduction: The Relationship between Indonesian and Middle East Muslims

Muslims in Indonesia have already had a good relationship with those from the Middle East since the early days of Islam. Muslim Merchant from Arab, Persia, and Indian invaded Indonesia not only for trading but also spread and introduce Islam to the resident (Pires, 1944, 182).

The welfare of Islamic Kingdoms in Indonesia as an international merchant gave the opportunity for Muslim society to make the intellectual trip into some Islamic countries in the Middle East. These regions became the center of religious study (Azra, 2005, xx). Historically the transition of Islamic studies in Indonesia has been built since a long time. The academic tradition for studying Islam in the Middle East became stronger in the post-colonialism. There were some Indonesian Muslims who performed the pilgrimage and learned the Islamic studies in the *Haramayn* (Mecca and Medina) at the time.

Islamic studies learning focusing on hadith emphasized the importance of *isnad* existence. It encouraged the Indonesian scholars in the 17th-19th century to build intellectual networking with their teachers in the Middle East. It cultivated the hadith studies and produced many works of hadith that are useful for the Indonesian Muslims daily life.

Methods

The study presented in this article based on the library research using the historical approach. It is intended to explain the historical data on the development of

hadith in Indonesia in the 17th-19th century and the intellectual networks built by the Indonesian and Middle Eastern scholars in the field of hadith. The steps taken in this research are understanding and interpreting the data relevant to the theme of this study intelligibly, supported by the authentic and reliable data (Kuntowijoyo, 2008, 10).

McCullagh (1984, 165-168) emphasized the importance of adhering to two rules to produce an objective understanding of the historical descriptions: (1) regularity and consistency in explaining causal relationships between events, and (2) conceptual generalizations derived from comparing its units.

The Hadith Network of Indonesian Muslim Scholar and Those of Middle East in the 17th -18th Century

Since the early year of Islam *Haramayn* became the center of hadith studies. The Prophet Saw -as the source of the hadith- taught the Islamic values on the *Haramayn*. Three out of the fourth religious sects (*al-Mazahib al-Arba'ah*) that is Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali are also known as hadith experts. They had developed and instilled their powerful influence in the Arabian Peninsula. Even though on its development Maliki *Mazhab* was first brought by Malik ibn Anas (d.179 H/798 M) to Medina, but later on, it became dominant in North and West Africa. So was Shafi'i who earned the title of "Sunnah Helper" (*Nasir as-Sunnah*), whose *Mazhab* he built became dominant in Asia. Similarly, it happened to Hanbali who looked superior to his *Mazhab* in Arabian Peninsula that were known as their belief in the Prophets' hadith.

Azra (2005, 123) says that the Egyptian *muhaddithin* had disseminated the most *isnad* in *Haramayn* scholar's network since the 15th and beginning of the 16th century. They are Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani, Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, and Zakaria al-Ansari. As a result of this development, since the end of the 16th century, the relationship among the scholars of *Haramayn* began because their hadith expertise was widespread. As a superior proprietor of *isnad*, the main *muhaddithin* of *Haramayn* was not the only connector among Middle Eastern scholars, but it also stimulated the rise of the trends of a new religion-cultural tendency within networks outside the Middle East.

The Middle Eastern of *ulama* network that went to Indonesia through the trading line making it be the struggle of Indonesian Muslim in teaching both of the Islamic source Qur'an and hadith (Milner, 1983; Azra, 2005, 53). The meaning of Qur'an as the reference source of Islam was revealed and interpreted, then being disseminated to the people. So the hadith has a significant function in understanding the Islamic teachings. Qur'an was unable to be learnt well without any knowledge and understanding about hadith. There are a lot of verses of Qur'an that have a general and global meaning, so that referring to the hadith is an inevitability (Azami, 1990, 3-4; as-Siba'i, 1992, 37-43).

The Indonesian *ulama* were obsessed with learning hadith and obtaining superior *isnad* from the *Haramayn* scholars. They traveled following the pilgrim route to *Haramayn* while studying Islamic studies there. Then, they develop the Islamic knowledge including hadith studies after they came back from the Middle East, there are even Indonesian scholars who have the opportunity to teach in *Haramayn*.

Azra (1999, 148-149) and Fathurahman (2012, 56-66) revealed that the study of hadith in Indonesia risen at the 17th century signed with Nur ad-Din ar-Ranieri's book (d. 1658 AD.), namely *Hidayat al-Habib fi at-Tarhib wa at-Tarhib*, and Abd ar-Rauf as-Sinkili (1615-1693 AD.) who wrote two books about hadith. They are *al-Mawa'iz al-Badi'ah* and the explanation of *al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyah* (Damanhuri, 2010, 432). The books written by these two scholars are more directed to the guidance of religious practice, especially Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and ethics than to research the authenticity of the hadith values used. It indicates that at that time, the study of hadith had

not received serious attention from Indonesian scholars, because the discussion of hadith during the Dutch colonial period was still as part of learning *fiqh*, had not become an independent field of study.

The popularity of the hadith study in the 17th century was also not balanced with the study of Sufism that had been widespread in Indonesia at the time. This unpopularity was due to the tendency of people who prefer *fiqh* and Sufism studies rather than hadith studies to practice it in their daily life.

Azra (2005, 225-226) quoted a statement from ar-Ranieri which simultaneously shows ar-Ranieri's concern for the hadith, that the applying of the *Shari'a* is not perfect without the knowledge of the hadith of the Prophet. Ar-Ranieri's view of the hadith then encouraged him to collect some traditions which he translated from Arabic to Indonesian-Malay, which meant that the Muslim population was able to understand their Prophet's guidance correctly. In *Hidayat al-Habib*, ar-Ranieri also links the hadiths he describes with the verses of the Qur'an to strengthen his arguments and explanations. Ar-Ranieri's book is considered to be the first pilot project in the field of hadith in Indonesia.

The choice of as-Sinkili to devote attention to explain 40 hadiths from the book *al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyah* shows their sincerity and concern for the laity so that they can study and understand some hadiths that are useful for daily life. *Al-Mawa'iz al-Badi'ah* which contains a valuable advice derived from hadith *Nabawi* and hadith *Qudsi* teaching about the existence of God, and His relationship with creation, heaven and hell, and the steps that can be taken by Muslims to gain the pleasure of God. In fact, through these as-Sinkili's books are considered to have set an example for the later Indonesian *ulama* to write the hadith books, and to ground the hadith as one of the sources of Islamic law in Indonesia. Previously, Sufism and mysticism covered the Islamic teaching in Indonesia.

It is interesting to note that both Indonesian scholars, ar-Ranieri and as-Sinkili, spent a long time studying in the Middle East, such as Hadramaut, Mecca, and Medina. Among ar-Ranieri's teachers was Sayyid Abu Hafis Umar ibn Abdullah Ba Shaiban, while as-Sinkili's teachers included Shaykh al-Qushashi (1583-1661) and Ibrahim al-Kurani. As-Sinkili's teacher in the study of hadith is Ali al-Basir al-Maliki al-Madani (d. 1160/1694).

The Development of Hadith Studies in Indonesia in the 19th Century

The hadith studies development in the 19th century in Indonesia is same with the previous one. Van Den Berg as cited on Martin Van Bruinessen reveals that in the 19th century and before, the Qur'an interpretation (*tafsir*) and *fiqh* were the main subjects study in the Indonesian *Madrasa* and *Pesantren*. The famous book of the Qur'an interpretation studies was *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* by Imam Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti and Imam Jalal ad-Din al-Mahalli. The most studied *fiqh* book in the 19th century was *Minhaj al-Talibin* by Muhy ad-Din Yahya ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi (Bruinessen, 1999, 28-29).

Karel A. Steenbrink (1984, 155-157) state that almost all of the *Pesantren* not made any hadith or *Mustalah al-Hadith* as one of the subject in *Pesantren*. However, in the 19th century, Muslim scholars referred to the famous hadith books *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

In the 19th century, the hadith learning material and its books had not been studied in several Islamic educational institutions and *Pesantren*. Hadith got little concern in the field of its studies. *Pesantren* only focuses on their students as experts and qualified in interpreting of Qur'an, *fiqh* and Sufism. Whereas, hadith also significant to be studied because it is the second source of law of Islam besides the Qur'an. The Islamic teaching will not be perfect without the referring to Qur'an and hadith.

Although hadith is not a major study in the educational institution, there are Indonesian scholars (*ulama*) who promoted their scholarships (hadith studies) in the

Middle East. They are ¹ Muhammad ibn Umar an-Nawawi Banten and Muhammad Mahfuz Termas.

Muhammad ibn Umar an-Nawawi Banten (1815-1879 AD) was an Indonesian scholar who produced many works and got the opportunity to teach the hadiths in the Middle East. His book entitled *Tanqih al-Qaul al-Hathith fi Sharh Lubab al-Hadith* is an explanation of the book of *Lubab al-Hadith* by Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti. An-Nawawi describes the names of narrators of hadith and explains the status of hadith that contained in the book.

An-Nawawi's proficient in the field of hadith was obvious in this work through its emphasis on the urgency of the *isnad* which is the important theory in determining the authenticity of a hadith. So, he described the *isnad* of each hadith before giving his explanation.

An-Nawawi also mentioned a little explanation about the *da'if* hadith which some scholars do not regard as an argument (*Hujjah*). According to him, to accommodate and awaken the Islamic soul the *da'if* hadith should not be underestimated. Because the hadith is useful for a grip, especially for the main deeds (*Fada'il al-A'mal*) (an-Nawawi, 2001, 1 & 3).

Mahfuz's famous book, *Manhaj Zawi an-Nazar* is the book that describes as-Suyuti's book entitled *Nazam Alfiyah* which focuses on hadith studies. As-Suyuti's book is presented in the form of Arabic poem (*Nazam*) containing explanations of the rules of *Mustalah al-Hadith*, so that not all peoples can understand its meaning easily. Therefore, Mahfuz initiated to explain *Nazam Alfiyah* written by as-Suyuti. According to as-Suyuti, the poem he made was in a thousand stanzas. However, according to Mahfuz, it was still less 20 stanzas. Perhaps the mention of "a thousand stanzas" by as-Suyuti was only rounding, or there was a missing stanza when recorded by the recorders after as-Suyuthi was gone (Mahfuz, 1990, 302). Mahfuz's explanation in his monumental book, *Manhaj Zawi an-Nazar*, is considered to be on demand by many as the best work in understanding as-Suyuti's thoughts.

The book, *Manhaj Zawi an-Nazar*, began to be arranged in Mecca at the beginning of *Zul Hijjah* in 1328 H. It was completed on Friday the 14th of *Rabiul Akhir* in 1329 H. Thus, At-Tirmasi wrote it in just four months and 14 days. Although there were also a small parts written in Mina and Arafah (Mahfuz, 1990, 301).

The least time required in explaining the book of *Nazam Alfiyah* by as-Suyuti also shows the extraordinary of Mahfuz's ability, the depth of his knowledge, his intellectual superiority, and his intelligence. Therefore, it is not an excessive when Yasin Al-Fadani (1917-1990) calls him *al-'Allamah al-Muhaddith*. This title is a name for a scholar who attained the highest level of expertise in the hadith studies.

Two other books by Mahfuz, *Al-Minhah al-Khairiyah fi Arba'ina Hadithan min Ahadith Khayr al-Bariyah* which contains 40 hadiths, taken from the first and last hadiths of the eight books (*Sahih al-Bukhari, Thulathiyat al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan at-Tirmizi, Sunan an-Nasa'i, Sunan Ibn Majah, and Muwatta Malik*) (Mahfuz, 2009, 2). The other one, entitled *al-Khil'ah al-Fikriyah Sharh al-Minhah al-Khairiyah*, pours the *isnad* and *matan* explanations from 40 hadiths of *al-Minhah*, and explains another *isnad* path belongs Mahfuz himself that he got from his teachers. It also shows his own *isnad* network in studying the hadith of the Prophet.

An-Nawawi and Mahfuz have the intellectual networks to Mecca and Medina. They studied to the *Haramayn* scholars, even those living there as well. Among the same teachers namely Sayyid Ahmad Zaini Dahlan and Shaykh Uthman ibn Hasan ad-Dimyati. In fact, an-Nawawi and Mahfuz himself also have the relationship as a teacher and student.

Conclusions

Hadith are the source for Islamic teaching after the Qur'an. *Haramayn* as the main center of hadith attracts Indonesian Muslim to learn about hadith in the Middle East. The Indonesian *ulama* built intellectual networks with the *Haramayn* because the *Haramayn* have a superior *isnad* to the Prophet. Some of the Indonesian *ulama* who built it are Nur ad-Din ar-Ranieri, Abd ar-Rauf as-Sinkili, Muhammad ibn Umar an-Nawawi Banten, and Muhammad Mahfuz Termas. The Indonesian *ulama* do not need a long time to build it with the *Haramayn*. Ar-Ranieri who had a scholarly link to Sayyid Ba Shaiban, while as-Sinkili had many academic network routes that lead to *Haramayn* scholars such as Shaykh al-Qushashi and Ali al-Basir al-Maliki al-Madani. An-Nawawi and Mahfuz also have the connection with the *Haramayn* scholars, such as Sayyid Ahmad Zaini Dahlan and Shaykh Uthman ibn Hasan ad-Dimyati. Mahfuz described his own *isnad* path detailly in his book, *al-Khil'ah al-Fikriyah Sharh al-Minhah al-Khairiyah*.

In the 17th century, Indonesian *ulama* networking stimulated the dissemination of hadith studies in Indonesia. The existence of hadith as the explanation of the Qur'an becomes the rapid development of hadith studies in some Indonesia's *Madrassa* and *Pesantren*.

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