

SOCIO-STRUCTURAL INNOVATIONS IN INDONESIA'S URBAN SUFISM

The Case Study of the *Majelis Dzikir* and *Shalawat* Nurul Mustafa

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Abstract: Sufi tradition has grown significantly in the modern Muslim world, including Indonesia. Currently, Sufism has been not only practiced by villagers, peasants, and non-educated people, but also practiced by urbanites, national elites, and educated people. Moreover, it has experienced significant innovation in terms of its practices and organization. This article takes an in-depth look at the innovation of Sufi tradition socially and structurally in Indonesia. It argues that *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* in Indonesia, like Nurul Mustafa, has represented a new Sufi group that arises out of *tarekat* group, a group that has been considered as 'official institution' in implementing Sufism. The Majelis Nurul Mustafa has strong basis in urban society, rises from urban *majelis taklim*, introduces Sufi teaching to its *jama'ah* that mostly urban teenagers and youths uses popular methods to attract the interest of those groups to attend its ritual as the complementary of its activity.

Keywords: Urban Sufism, *majelis dzikir*, *majelis shalawat*, *majelis taklim*.

Introduction

Social scientists and Islamists have predicted that the Sufi tradition as well as its proponents will diminish in the Muslim world following the development of Muslim society toward *shari'ah* oriented community.¹ Moreover, according to them, Sufi traditions will become

¹ Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 60, 3 (2001), pp.701-729.

the remnant of Muslim history when Muslim has adopted the values of modern society socially and economically and when modern reformation of Islamic society has taken place. In the course of the history of Sufism in Indonesian, Sufi traditions have also experienced marginalization among modernist Muslims for several decades². However, the prediction has proved to be flawed. Even though Sufi tradition has been strongly challenged by modernist Muslim in the last few decades, it has grown significantly in the Muslim world including Indonesia, the most populous Muslim majority country in the world. Sufism has been not only practiced by villagers, peasants, and uneducated people, but also has been practiced by urbanites, national elites, and educated people. Even, modernist Muslims, who once were strongly opposed to Sufi traditions due to its heretical elements, have practiced Sufism and joined *tarekat* group.

Moreover, during the last few decades Sufi tradition in both Indonesian urban and rural area has experienced significant innovation in terms of its practices and organization³. Previously, Sufism only can be practiced through numerous organized Sufi groups (*tarekat*), for now in order to practice Sufi ritual, Indonesian Muslims need not join a particular structured Sufi order (*tarekat*) formally with its complicated rules. People can practice *dzikir* ritual as widely practiced in the *tarekat* groups without necessarily being members of the *tarekat*. New *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat* have been emerging in urban and rural areas. Instead of *tarekat*, these new groups serve as an alternative venue for Muslims to improve their spiritual lives.

Majelis dzikir and *shalawat* have proliferated over the last few decades not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Without a doubt, the locus of the *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat* activities especially in the rural areas has been *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). *Pesantren* have played a pivotal role not just in Islamic education generally, but also in maintaining Sufi tradition in Indonesia. The *pesantren* through their leaders and alumni networks have been disseminating *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* throughout Indonesia. Recently

² Julia Day Howell, "Modernity and Islamic Spirituality in Indonesia's new Sufi Networks," in Martin Van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell, (eds). *Sufism and 'The Modern' in Islam* (New York and London: IB Tauris, 2007), p. 217.

³ Arif Zamhari, *Rituals of Islamic Spirituality: A Study of Majelis Dhikr Groups in East Java* (Canberra: ANU E-press, 2010).

they have spread to urban areas, which is the focus of our current research project.

In urban areas another institution has been important in facilitating the proliferation of *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* is the *majelis taklim*. The *majelis taklim* also grew out of the pesantren, but have sprung up independently both in rural and urban areas. They now play an important role in preaching and teaching Islam to urbanites. In the last ten years the *majelis taklim* in urban areas functioned not only as centres for lectures on Islam (*pengajian umum*) but also as centers for activities known as *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*, ritual practices commonly conducted by Sufi groups especially the *tarekat* or Sufi orders. This study examines the emergence of *majelis taklim* as a locus for *dzikir* and *shalawat* activities as well as a centre for Islamic preaching (*da'wah Islāmīyah*) among urbanites.

Despite the importance of *majelis taklim* in urban areas, there has been scant attention to the study of the contemporary practices of *dzikir* and *shalawat* conducted by *majelis taklim* in urban areas. Moreover, in the study of urban Sufism, little attention has been given to the proliferation of *dzikir* and *shalawat* practices among urbanites as part of the development of neo Sufi tradition in Indonesia. In addition, as widely held among Indonesian Muslims, the popular practices of *dzikir* and *shalawat* proliferated in the last few decades cannot be regarded as part of Sufi practices that has been practised by *tarekat* groups. I spent almost nine months among *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* groups in Jakarta, following from one of *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual to another ritual held by the group, recording its teachings and ceremonies, collecting its literature and interviewing the member of the *majelis* from the leader (*kyai* and *ḥabīb*), teachers (*al-asā'idh*) to the followers of the *majelis*.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the understanding of spiritual life of urbanites. In urban areas which have been known for their secular orientation, *majelis taklim* have provided space for people to deeply experience a new way of encountering in Sufi tradition. Documenting the recent growth of *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* in urban and rural areas will broaden our perspective on the innovation that has been made in the Sufi tradition in Indonesian Islam. In the following article, specially, we focus on ritual activity of best known urban *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* group, the Majelis Nurul Mustafa led by Ḥabīb Ḥasan bin Ja'far Assegaf in Jakarta. Both *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*

groups have exemplified structural and organizational innovation of Sufi tradition in Indonesia. The Majelis Nurul Mustafa was established by a *ḥabīb*, a title to name a descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad, Hasan bin Ja'far bin Assegaf (b. 1977). Among people of Jakarta, the *ḥabīb* has been widely known as a leader of the *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* group whose participants are mostly teenagers and youths. He is regarded as an Islamic preacher who has been responsible for introducing *dzikir* and reciting *shalawat* followed with musical instrument (*marawis*) among urbanites of Jakarta. His picture and the name of his *majelis* can be easily seen in big posters located along the street of the city before his group conducts *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual. The ritual of the *majelis* which is involved thousands of participants is usually conducted once a week (Saturday night).

The Majelis Nurul Mustafa began its activity from small Islamic lecture circles (*ḥalaqah*) in the form of *majelis taklim* under the direction of Ḥabīb Hasan in Ciganjur, South Jakarta. After graduated from Pesantren Daruttauhid, Malang, East Java in 1996, he began his career as a wandering preacher in some regions in Jakarta. He held his *majelis dzikir* in several communities' houses as a venue of *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual attended by ten to twenty participants. In the *majelis*, he invited several youths from the vicinity of the venue to practice *dzikir* ritual by reciting *Rātīb al-`Aṭṭās*, *dzikir* litanies which has been widely popular among Ḥaḍramī family in Indonesia. As the number of *jamā`ah* was growing, he united several *majelis* at several houses to one *majelis* held on Saturday night. He then asked the respected 'ulamā , Ḥabīb Anis from Solo to give a name for his *majelis dzikir*. Ḥabīb Anis named Ḥabīb Hasan's *majelis* with Nurul Mustofa. Currently, Nurul Mustafa has developed as one of the biggest *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* groups in Jakarta attended by thousands participants in its weekly ritual on Saturday night⁴. Prior to the ritual, usually the *jamā`ah* are gathered by the coordinator of the *majelis* according to their regions. They meet in some meeting points and rally to the venue with motors, mini buses and rental cars handling the *majelis* flags and banner.

⁴ Anonymous. "Menebar Dakwah Dengan Mahabbah." *Majalah Kisah Islami Al-Kisah* (2011), p.51.

Understanding *Majelis Dzikir*, *Majelis Shalawat* and *Tarekat* Within Indonesian Islam

For the purpose of this study, it is important to explain particular terms such as *majelis shalawat*, *majelis dzikir*, and *tarekat* (Sufi groups) which have been widely used in the study of Indonesian Islamic spirituality for the last two decades. This explanation is necessary particularly to understand the phenomenon of the proliferation of various Islamic spiritual groups within the Indonesian urban Muslim society and the development of studies about Islamic spiritual groups and Sufi traditions in Indonesia.

In urban areas the term *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat* are sometimes used together to name a single type group (lit. *majelis*) that practices Islamic devotional acts to remember God (*dhikr Allāh*). These recitations include the repetition of the names of God (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) and phrases derived from Ḥadīth and Quranic verses of supplications but also the recitation of request for blessing for the Prophet. If the *majelis* categorizes itself as *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat*, it always practices the recitation of *shalawat* to remember and praise the Prophet Muḥammad.

Along with the recitation of *dzikir*, *shalawat* takes the form of the recitation of eulogy books of the Prophet such as *Barzanjī*,⁵ *Dibā'*,⁶ and *Simṭ al-Durar*⁷ which contain long phrases of blessings of the Prophet and the history of the Prophet. Indonesian Muslim usually called those books as *mawlid* texts. In the Islamic knowledge, these books can be categorised as Islamic literature works which are known in the classical Islamic nomenclature as *al-madā'ih al-nabawīyah* (eulogy of the prophet, *sastra pujian kepada Nabi Muhammad*). In Indonesia, these books are not only read by *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* but they are also widely popular among other Indonesian Muslims. These books are popularly recited by Indonesian Muslim particularly on the occasion of the

⁵ The author of *Barzanjī* is Syaikh Ja'far al-Barzanjy bin Husein bin Abdul Karim born in Madinah 1690-1766. The title of the book is '*Iqd al-Jawābir*' but among Indonesian Muslim it is popularly known as *Barzanjy* which is taken from his name.

⁶ The book is written by Al-Imam al-Hafidz al-Muhaddith Abdurrahman bin Ali bin Muhammad al-Syaibani al-Diba'i al-Yamani. The book is widely known among Indonesian Muslim as *Mawlid al-Dibā'*.

⁷ The book is written by Al-Imam Ali bin Muhammad bin Husayn al-Habshi. This book is widely popular among Indonesian Hadrami Muslim.

commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Mawlid al-Nabi*), *ḥawf*⁸ of the prominent *ḥabīb* or *kyai* of pesantren, and life-cycle celebrations such as the seventh month of pregnancy, the seventh day of the new born babies, circumcisions, and marriage. However, Indonesian urban Muslims cannot distinguish between the reciting of *shalawat* and the tradition of reciting *mada'ih*. As a result, all of these books are regarded by Indonesian urban Muslim as part of *shalawat*.

The *mada'ih* books are mostly written in Arabic in a very beautiful and delicate style. Part of the books is chanted in a group in melodious manner, often under the direction of a leader, with reading alternating between soloist and group. This chanting is accompanied by musical instruments consisted of membranophones such as tambourines and drums. In Jakarta and its vicinity, this instrument is called *marawis*, but in Central and East Java the instrument is called *badrah* and in West Javanese Muslims called *qasidaban*. The chanting of *mada'ih* usually occupies more than half of the ritual of the group. An example of this kind of *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat* is the Majelis Rasulullah led by Ḥabīb Munzir al-Musawwa in Jakarta and the Majelis Nurul Mustafa led by Ḥabīb Ḥasan bin Ja'far Assegaf in Jakarta, Majelis Ahbaburrasul in Solo led by Ḥabīb Syeich (Central Java). On the other hand, if the group calls itself as *majelis dzikir*, it only practices the reciting of *dzikir* formulas, the repetition of the Names of God (*al-'asma' al-ḥusnā*) and supplications taken from Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān as commonly practiced by *tarekat* in order to achieve spiritual perfection and closeness to God. However, these *majelis* have no structural connection to any *tarekat* (Sufi order). A well-known example of this kind of *majelis dzikir* is the Majelis Dzikir Al-Dzikira of Arifin Ilham in Jakarta. This *majelis dzikir* only focuses on reciting *dzikir* in unison led by the leader without reciting *al-mada'ih al-nabawiyah*.

The *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* in urban area are generally initiated by *majelis taklim*, a non-formal institution initially established as centers of Islamic learning for the community. For the last two decades, *majelis taklim* have been instrumental in the proliferation of *majelis shalawat* and *majelis dzikir* especially in urban area. Such *majelis taklim* functions are

⁸ *Ḥaul* literary mean circuit. This term is usually used to name the annual commemoration of the death of respected *'ulamā*, *kyai*, or *ḥabīb*.

not only as an Islamic learning institution but also as a centre of *majelis ṣalawat* and *majelis dzikir* practices. However, not all *majelis taklim* also provide *majelis ṣalawat* and *majelis dzikir* for their participants. There are some *majelis taklim* that focus only on Islamic learning activities for the community such as *Majelis Taklim Kwitang*, Jakarta established by Ḥabīb Ali bin Abdurrahman al Habsyi (1870-1968), a Hadrami descendent. Not only is The *Majelis Taklim Kwitang* regarded as the oldest *majelis taklim* in Jakarta but also it has been considered responsible for the emergence of *majelis taklim* tradition in Jakarta. Ḥabīb Ali's student Kyai Abdullah Syafii established the well-known *Majelis Taklim Assyafi'iyah* and Kyai Tohir Ramli established *Majelis Taklim Attahiriyah*. Many other *majelis taklim* in urban areas are established especially for female participants (*jamāah*) under the direction of *ustādzah* (female teacher). Some of these *majelis taklim* are regularly invited to fill an Islamic lecture program broadcasted live by private and public television stations.⁹

Another term which is important in the study of Sufi tradition in Indonesian Islam is *tarekat* (from the Arabic word *ṭarīqah*). *Tarekat* is considered the oldest Sufi organizations in Indonesian Islam. This term is widely used in Indonesian Islam to refer to the centres where people practice communal rituals under the guidance of *murshid* (teacher) In the pesantren tradition, *tarekat* can be divided into two categories: first, *tarekat 'ammah* (general way), that is, orders that encourage the continuous performance of pious acts with good intentions; and second, *tarekat khashshah* (specific way), that is orders that conduct certain ritual of *dzikir* under the guidance of *murshid* (the leader, spiritual teacher). The *murshid* must be linked through a spiritual genealogy to past *murshid* in a chain of authorization going back to the Prophet Muḥammad. This form of *tarekat* has some formal conditions: First, in order to become a member of particular *tarekat*, a disciple must vow of allegiance (*bay`ah*) to the master of *tarekat*¹⁰. The *bay`ah* is

⁹ Most of private TV stations in Indonesia provide a special program for Islamic lecture with different formats. Usually the program is held in the early morning starting from 5:00 am to 6:00 am. Some of these stations provide a particular space for female preachers with their female *jamāah*. Female preachers such as Ustadzah Dede Rosyidah Syarifuddin or well known as Mama Dede (Indosiar TV and ANTV), Ustadzah Umi Qurrotu A'yun (MNC TV), Ustadzah Tan Mei Hwa (JTV Surabaya and TV One) are current star among female Indonesian Muslim viewers.

¹⁰ Zamhari, *Rituals of Islamic Spirituality*.

an important requirement of *tarekat*, since it is considered to bestow the validity on the spiritual journey of the disciples. It is widely held in the *tarekat* world that following tasawuf path without the guidance of a murshid is like following the path under the guidance of Satan.

Furthermore, some *tarekat* associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization promote the concept of tarekat *mu'tabarab* (recognized and legitimate orders). This description applies especially to *tarekat* under the supervision of the NU. The meaning of this concept is that particular groups of *tarekat* can be considered as *mu'tabarab* as long as the teaching of the group must conform with the Islamic Law and the *wird* or *dżikír* practiced by the group must have a spiritual genealogy going back to the Prophet. As a result of this concept, any groups of *tarekat* that do not meet the requirements cannot be considered as *mu'tabarab* and should not be joined with NU organization. The reason to introduce this concept is not only to give strong legitimacy for the *tarekat* groups and to strengthen the member's faith in their rituals and teachings, but also to make a clear-cut distinction between their ritual and other group ritual that NU considers incompatible with Islamic law.

Even though *tarekat*, *majelis dżikír* and *şalawat* have a similar objective, which is to purify the self in order to approach God, they differ in some practices. For example, *majelis Dżikír* and *şalawat* do not require their followers to take an oath to the leader of these groups. In other words, people are able to join and practice their *şalawat* and *Dżikír* without taking committing themselves exclusively to the leaders. As a result, people can join one particular *majelis şalawat* and *Dżikír* group, while at the same time also become a member of another *majelis şalawat* and *Dżikír* group, something which is generally not possible for members of *tarekat* in Java.

Tarekat, *majelis Dżikír* and *shalawat* also differ in the *Dżikír* recited in the ritual. The *Dżikír* text recited in *majelis dżikír* and *şalawat* is generally created by their leader or taken from *dżikír* formula taught by the Prophet or widely used by prominent '*ulamā*'. In contrast, *dżikír* formula recited in the *tarekat* group are believed to have been transmitted from the teacher's teacher and so on through a series of unbroken links back to and the Prophet. The followers of *tarekat* are obliged to recite *dżikír* formula every day, usually after the five obligatory daily times prayer. Unlike *tarekat*, the members of *majelis şalawat* and *dżikír* are allowed to practice the group's *dżikír*

intermittently without any sanction, even though the leader of the groups recommended that their followers practice the chosen *dzikir* continually.

Distinguishing those terms clearly will give a clear sense of the variations in Islamic ritual groups that have developed within Indonesian Muslim society over the last few decades. In addition, distinctions will help people understand the innovations that have been made in the Sufi practices and organizations in Indonesia of late.

General Features of *Majelis Taklim*

Even though scholars have different view on the origin of pesantren in Indonesia, they have agreed that pesantren is the oldest system of Islamic learning and education in Indonesia. With the emergence of a modern Islamic education schools recently, pesantren has survived and maintained its tradition and at the same time it has accommodated some modern education system. In this regards, pesantren should compete with modern secular education institution. In Indonesia, we can find a various pesantren which generally function as a centre of learning Islam as well as a centre of Sufism and *majelis Dzikir*. Likewise, scholars cannot exactly know when *majelis taklim* term was initially introduced in Indonesian Muslim community. The *majelis taklim* is a term to denote an institution in which a group of Indonesian Muslim communities not only conduct learning of Islam and Islamic preaching activities but also conduct *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*. In the last ten years *majelis taklim* with its variety has proliferated particularly in urban area.

The basic elements of *majelis taklim* are the venue for activities (Arabic, *majelis*), the leader (can be a *kyai*, ustad, or *habib*), and the participants (*jama'ah*). *Majelis taklim* does not provide a dormitory for the participants (*jama'ah*) of the *majelis* because they only attend the program of *majelis taklim* and return to their home when the program concludes. However, a few *majelis taklim* such as the Majelis Rasulullah and the Majelis Nurul Mustafa located in Jakarta provide a simple house as a residence for their technical staffs and a *mushalla* (a small praying venue) which is used for praying, teaching activity and the ritual of *dzikir* and *shalawat*. In some cases senior staffs live in the house which also functions as the office of the *majelis*. One of the rooms in the house is usually provided for the leader which is used as his private room and office. Even though the leader of the *majelis* has a family private house, he usually lives in the house everyday together

with his staffs and only visits his family twice a month. The residence is usually owned by the leader or is rented by the leader for the center for the activities of the *majelis*.

Similar to *pesantren*, a mosque is the centre of Islamic rituals and activities for *majelis taklim*. However, unlike *pesantren*, *majelis taklim* do not establish their own mosque as the centre of their activities. The *majelis taklim* often make use of a community's mosque as the venue of their regular activities. Even, similar to *pesantren*, some big *majelis taklim* in Jakarta originate from those mosques. The reason of using a community's mosque as the venue of *majelis taklim* activities is that it is difficult to find big venues in urban area that can contain thousands of *jamaah* (participants).¹¹ Such large *majelis taklim* occasionally make use of a city park or football stadium as a venue of big event which involves participants from many regions. However, to make use of a football stadium and city park, the *majelis taklim* has to pay a rental fee to the city administration, while to make use of mosques, the *majelis taklim* do not have to pay a rental fee. Therefore, every *majelis taklim* makes use of particular mosque in urban area as important venue for its regular activities. Each *majelis taklim* in urban area, for instance, usually makes use of four or five mosques and conducts its ritual in those mosques weekly. However, some *majelis taklim* in Jakarta establish their own building as the venue of the *majelis'* activity such as a big hall which is usually located close to the residence of the leader.

In terms of learning process, *majelis taklim* conduct Islamic learning for community by referring to classical Islamic books (*kitab kuning*). *Majelis taklim* do not use any specific Islamic books or books categorized as *mu'tabarab*. *Majelis taklim* use any Islamic books, either classical ones or modern ones, as long as they are relevant to the objective of the *majelis* and the interest of the leader of *majelis*. For instance, in the formative period of *Majelis Dzikir and şalawat Majelis Rasullullah* in Jakarta, the leader of this *majelis* taught Islamic Jurisprudence (*fikih*) to his participants. When the leader thought that the participants were not enthusiastic and no longer needed Islamic Jurisprudence subjects, he then changed the subject to the ethics of the prophet taken from prominent *Ḥadīth* books such as Bukhari Muslim.¹² On the other hand, the leader of *Majelis Nurul Mustofa*

¹¹ Interview with the deputy of leader of *Majelis Rasululllah*, Habib Ahmad on June, 2011

¹² Interview with the Deputy of *Majelis* on June 2011

prefers to teach the story of Muslim saints of Hadramaut (hagiography books), Yemen, and the book on *Khaṣā'is Ummat Rasūl Allāh* (The Distinctiveness of the Followers of the Prophet), to his followers. The reason of the leader teaches the story of Muslim saints is to introduce his *jamā'ah* to those saints of God who have been able to obtain a highest spiritual stage in their life. In addition, it is expected that those saints of God (*awliya' Allāh*) who are the descendants of the prophet can be used as a means for the *jamā'ah* (followers) to know the Prophet, whose example is the most important guidance to correct conduct and the achievement of states of grace.¹³

The participants of the *majelis taklim* are called *jamā'ah* (followers). In order to be a follower or participants of *majelis taklim*, one does not need to register formally and pay membership fee. There is no membership in a *majelis taklim*. People can be regarded as the followers of *majelis taklim* as long as they attend *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual of *majelis taklim* and participate in the activity of the *majelis* regularly. Moreover, people can voluntary join one *majelis taklim* while also joining another *majelis taklim*. People from different age are able to join the group regardless of their gender. However, recently some *majelis taklim* have been established especially for female participants, while other *majelis taklim* still include both female and male participants.

In term of schedule, *majelis taklim* conduct its activities in the flexible time. *Majelis taklim* conduct its activity any time according to the consent of the followers and the availability of the leaders. Sometimes, the activity of *dzikir* and *shalawat* is held in the morning and evening. However, most of *majelis taklim* in urban areas conduct its *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual in the evening after *'ishā'* prayer until midnight.

The leader is important element both in pesantren and *majelis taklim*. The leader of *majelis taklim* can be an independent *kyai*, or *habīb*. In the past, the title of *kyai* was commonly inherited, especially *kyai* who runs pesantren. However, currently the concept of *kyai* in Java has changed. The title of *kyai* is no longer inherited genealogically. One can be a *kyai* as long as the member of society recognize him as a *kyai* by virtue of his mastering higher Islamic knowledge and his influential role in Islamic preaching among community. Therefore, it is not

¹³ Interview with Ustad Riziq, a preacher of the Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa on September 2011

unusual that some prominent *kyai* in Java do not come from a *kyai* family and they do not run a pesantren. An example of this *kyai* is the late *Kyai Zainuddin MZ*, a famous Indonesian preacher well known as *Dai Sejuta Ummat* (preacher of millions people). The title of *kyai* is not similar to that of priest, monk and cleric as in Christian or in Buddhist tradition. There is no a particular Muslim institution in Indonesia that approves and authorize *kyai*. Similarly, there is no Muslim organization that can remove *kyai* from his position. Currently, it is not unusual for big pesantren to have more than one *kyai*.

In contrast to the term *kyai*, *ḥabīb* is a title given only to Hadrami people who are considered to be a descendant of the Prophet. In fact, the term *ḥabīb* is a name of social stratum to denote the social stratification system in Hadramawt society in Yemen. The *saada* or *ḥabīb*¹⁴ (pl. *ḥabā'ib*), *sayyid*¹⁵ or *syed* are the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad and the top social strata among Hadramawt society. Although they lack of military power, the *sādah* are highly respected as arbitrators in tribal conflict and in charge of religious education. The *sādah* is followed by *masyāyikh*, descendants of respected religious scholars and it is followed by *qabail* which is lower than *masyāyikh* but still to be viewed as part of the second strata because most of them have common descent with the *masyāyikh*. The lowest in the Hadramawt society is *masākīn*, consisting of different group of artisans, servants and peasants. At the bottom of social rank is the *'abd*, the slaves.¹⁶ Despite complicated strata among Hadrami, Indonesian Muslim usually call *ḥabīb* to any Indonesian Hadrami descendents regardless of their social strata as long as they are equipped with higher Islamic knowledge and also are active in the preaching of Islam among community.

The Majelis Dzikir and Ṣalawat Nurul Mustafa

In addition to pesantren, another institution which can also be considered as another venue that can maintain Islamic tradition among urbanites has been *majelis taklim*. A part from tarekat, pesantren also

¹⁴ *Ḥabīb* means 'beloved' in Arabic.

¹⁵ *Sayyid* means 'lord' in Arabic.

¹⁶ Frode F. Jacobsen, *Hadrami Arabs in Present-day Indonesia: An Indonesia-oriented group with an Arab signature* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), p.8.

becomes the home for *majelis dzikir* and *majelis shalawat*. Likewise, *majelis taklim* in urban area has provided a venue to conduct *majelis shalawat* and *majelis dzikir*. The following paragraphs will describe the comparison between the Majelis Shalawat Wahidiyah which is initiated by Pesantren Kedunglo, Kediri and the Majelis Nurul Mustafa which arises from *majelis taklim* located in Jakarta.

The Organization

Gilsenan, in his classical work on Saints and Sufi in Modern Egypt, used term organization and association to describe the structure of Sufi orders (tarekat). An organization emphasizes 'a high degree of stratification on the basis of differential expertise and/or efficiency.' An organization is also characterized by 'greater structural recognition of functional inequality and formal control based on hierarchy of authority statuses. In contrast, an association is characterized by 'looseness of structure with minimal development of a status hierarchy. Individual commitment in an association is also voluntary and egalitarian. Moreover, the appointment of officials is based on administrative convenience. He concluded that the majority of Sufi orders in Egypt could be placed on a continuum between organization and association.¹⁷

However, Gilsenan's typology cannot be easily applied to describe the structure of *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* in Indonesia. Unlike Sufi orders in Indonesia which have hierarchical positions such as master (*murshid*), vice master (*khalifah*), and disciples (*murid*), in *majelis dzikir* both in *pesantren* and *majelis taklim*, these positions are not recognized. Both groups only recognize a single position of leader who is regarded as a central figure in both *majelis*. The figure of *kyai* and *habib* is instrumental in the organization's structure of the *majelis*.

Unlike other Sufi groups in Indonesia, the Majelis Nurul Mustafa does not have local branches. In order to run its activities, the *majelis* does not establish hierarchical organization from the higher level of organization of the capital city to the lower level of organization in villages. Instead, the leader of *majelis* simply chooses several staffs and technical assistants responsible for particular tasks in the central office of the *majelis*. The selection of staff and technical assistants is believed to be based on spiritual vision of the leader. The leader is believed to

¹⁷ Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 65-66.

have a spiritual power to choose who the right person to be his staff is. These elected assistants and officials are instrumental in preparing activities of the *majelis* under the instruction of the leader of the *majelis*. They are monthly paid by the *majelis* taken from treasury of the *majelis*. A residence is provided by the leader for particular staffs and technical assistants. This residence functioned not only as a central headquarter of the *majelis* but also as a venue for the ritual and learning of Islam for small number of the followers. Instead of living with his family, the leader of the *majelis* mostly lives in the residence together with his staffs and teachers. To organize a big ritual event in the city, the staffs are helped with coordinators (*kordinator lapangan*) located in every region of the city. The number of coordinators is more than hundreds in all regions of Jakarta. These coordinators voluntarily help the *majelis* to organize followers of the *majelis* in their areas to attend and prepare any major events held by the *majelis* in the city. In order to hold a ritual event outside Jakarta, local committee will be responsible for the preparation of the event with supervision of the *majelis*.

Nurul Mustafa is established in the form of *yayasan* (foundation) and it is registered in the Ministry of Law of the Republic of Indonesia. With this format, Nurul Mustafa must abide by the law of foundation stipulated by Indonesian government. As a *yayasan*, Nurul Mustafa has bureaucratic structure such as the head of *yayasan*, the deputy of *yayasan*, and treasurer. However, the *majelis* does not have departments or divisions which are responsible to implement organizational tasks. It seems that this foundation can be categorized as a family foundation, because most of the boards members of the foundation are the relatives of the leader of the *majelis*. Like in the leadership of *tarekat*, the concept of *wakīl*, *nā'ib* (deputy) is also known in the Majelis Nurul Mustafa. The *wakil* of leader is needed in the *majelis* particularly when the leader cannot lead *dżikīr* service for particular reason. Usually, Ḥabīb Ḥasan, the leader of the *majelis*, asks his brother to replace himself if he is absent on the *dżikīr* and *shalawat* ritual.

The Rituals

Majelis Dżikīr and *shalawat* of *majelis taklim* focus on reciting ritual of particular *dżikīr* and *shalawat*. The Majelis Shalawat and Dzikir Nurul Mustafa focuses their activity on reciting *shalawat* and *dżikīr* ritual. However, the *shalawat* which is taken from books categorized as *al-madā'ib al-nabawīyah* or 'mawliđ' book is recited in the form of musical style accompanied by traditional music called *marawis*. This group

recites one of *al-madā'ib al-nabawīyah* books called *Simṭ al-Durar*. The recitation of these books occupies the whole ritual of this group. Even though there is no particular courtesy during the ritual, one of teachers of this group stresses the importance of good intention and comprehension of every single text of the book so that people are able to achieve blessing (*barakah*). After setting good intention, then people should recite the opening chapter of the Qur'ān (al-Fātiḥah) conveyed to the author of the book and our parents so that we can feel the blessing of reciting the book. The group prefers to use *Simṭ al-Durar* as part of the ritual due to the fact that the author of this book is one of the descendants of the Prophet, while many other books are written by non- descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the group also recites *dzikīr* formula of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* written by the famous Muslim scholars from Hadramaut, al-Ḥabīb `Abdullah bin `Alawi al-Haddad (1044-1132 H)¹⁸ as well as *Rātīb al-'Aṭṭās*. The leader of the *majelis* does not recommend his followers to follow particular courtesy prior to the ritual of reciting *shalawat*. However, during the recitation of the *salawa*, the Prophet is believed to be present in the ritual. As a result, the followers of the *majelis* are strongly urged to stand up to respect the Prophet. As happened in most *mamlid* ritual in the Hadrami family in Indonesia, the ritual of reciting *dzikīr* and *shalawat* in the *majelis* is accompanied with burning aromatic incense which release fragrant smoke. The incense burning place is put in front of the *majelis* close to the leader of the ritual. The aroma of incense as believed by one of teachers of the *majelis* will be the witness for those who practice in the *shalawat* and *dzikīr* ritual in the hereafter.

The ritual of Nurul Mustafa is conducted on the basis of a set of weekly schedule. The ritual of this *majelis* conducted in different places in Jakarta is led directly by the leader of this group, Ḥabīb Ḥasan bin Ja'far Assegaf and his three other brothers, Ḥabīb Abdullah bin Ja'far Assegaf, Ḥabīb Mustafa bin Ja'far Assegaf, Ḥabīb Qasim Sami bin Ja'far Assegaf. Ḥabīb Hasan bin Ja'far Assegaf, the leader of the *majelis*, usually leads the a big ritual of this *majelis* conducted on Saturday night in different places in Jakarta as well as a ritual held in the central office of the *majelis*,¹⁹ while other rituals held in other days are respectively

¹⁸ Yunus Ali Al-Muhdhor, *Mengenal Lebih Dekat al-Habib Abdullah bin Alawi al-Haddad: Kisab Hidup, Tutur Katanya dan Tarekatnya* (Surabaya: Cahaya Ilmu Publisher, 2010), p.2.

¹⁹ Usually the followers and staffs of the *majelis* called their office as *istana* (the palace).

under the direction of his three brothers. Ḥabīb Ḥasan, the leader, divides location of the *majelis* ritual in Jakarta into three areas: West Jakarta is led by Ḥabīb Mustafah bin Ja'far, East Jakarta is under the direction of Ḥabīb Qasim Sami, and South Jakarta led by Ḥabīb Abdullah bin Ja'far. These three areas will gather collectively in the *majelis* ritual on Saturday night.

The leader of the groups usually delivers Islamic lecture on particular themes during the ritual held by the *majelis*. The topic of the Islamic lecture is chosen by the leader. The theme of the lecture in the Nurul Mustafa includes the stories of Muslim saints (*awliyā'*), the story about the life of the Prophet, the importance of loving the Prophet and his family and the character of the Prophet. In the ritual held every Saturday night, the leader of Majelis Nurul Mustofa invites several Muslim scholars (*'ulamā'*) to deliver a small speech after reciting *dzikir* and *shalawat*.

The relationship between the leader of Nurul Mustafa and the followers either during the ritual or outside the ritual is of important aspect of those groups. The relationship is not like the strong master-disciple (*murshid-murīd*) relationship in many Sufi orders. The relationship is based on common relations practiced in teacher-student relations in the Islamic learning tradition, while the relationship between *murīd* and *murshid* in Sufi orders is strongly based on a complex set of *adab* (comportment) as well as sanctions. The late Kyai Usman Ishaqi, the *murshid* of *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah* order from Surabaya, mentioned the *adab* by which the *murīd* should completely respect their *murshid*. He puts it this way:

You should respect your syaikh and believe outwardly (*ẓāhir*) and inwardly (*bā'in*), without the help of the syaikh, your objective will never be obtained. You should not complain about what the shaykh has done, even though the shaykh may have done something which is unlawful in appearance. Instead, avoiding negative prejudice against the shaykh, people should be convinced that what the shaykh done is clearly based on God's orders. If you still do not understand this, you should think that this is because of your lack of your knowledge in understanding the essence of the matter...In all your life matters either in their totality or in their details, in devotional aspect or cultural aspects, you should abandon your own choice because your shaykh has chosen for you...You should not talk in front of your

shaykh. When he asks you, instead of answering too long, you must answer the question precisely. This partly because speaking too much in front of the shaykh will eliminate his veneration. Therefore, the excellent *adab* of a *murīd* toward his shaykh is that you should be silent, quiet, and pay attention to what the shaykh says and do that which contribute to welfare.²⁰

This *adab* (comportment) is relevant to the famous expression in the Sufi tradition, Be with your shaykh like the corpse in the hands of the washer; he turns it over as he wishes and it is obedient.²¹ This long *adab* is extremely stressed in a Sufi tradition, either by *murshid* or his *khalīfah*, especially on the occasion of initiation. In contrast, even though the *jama`ah* of the *majelis* do not follow such as *adab*, they still pay respect to their leader and consider their leader as the person who is able to guide them spiritually.

Financial Support

In order to run and support activities of the *majelis*, Nurul Mustafa seeks and draws funding resources such as cooperatives, shops, financial government assistance as well as financial assistance from followers. The Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa draws funding from the followers through conventional mechanism. For instance, the *majelis* collect funds from the *jama`ah* during the ritual by providing collection boxes. These boxes are distributed with the crews of the *majelis* among followers who attend the ritual. They are strongly recommended to give some money for the *jama`ah*. Furthermore, the *majelis* also seeks funds resources from selling merchandise of the *majelis* such as the picture of the *habīb*, the *majelis*' jacket uniform and DVD's on the ritual of the *majelis*, charging parking fees, and charging electricity fees for street traders during the ritual, renting sound system, lights, and a stage. Sometimes the Majelis Nurul Mustafa is invited by the *jama`ah* to conduct *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual in their region. If this is the case, the *jama`ah* must cover all expenses of the ritual including sound system rental, lights, and a stage catered by the *majelis*'

²⁰ Muhammad Usman Al-Ishaqi, *Al-Khulasah al-Wafiyah Fi al-Adab wa Kayfiyat al-Dhikr 'Inda al-Sadat al-Qadiriyyah wa al-Naqshabandiyah* (Surabaya: Al-Fitrah, n.d), pp. 5-6.

²¹ J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 187.

appliances. Moreover, the *majelis* also conducts annual program of visiting the sacred tombs of *awliya'* throughout Jawa led by the leader of the *majelis*. In order to join this program, the *jama'ah* should pay particular amount of money for a bus ticket rented by the *majelis*. All of these funds are being channeled for the activity of the *majelis*.

Memberships

As happened in many other Sufi groups, the exact number of members (*jama'ah*) and their social background are not easy to establish because the Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa keeps no official records and the recruitment of new followers is not officially recorded. The member of these groups includes not only elderly men and women but also younger people and children. However, the number of teenager exceeds the number of other group of age.

To become participants of those *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* groups, people do not need to take an oath or initiation (*bay'ah*) to the leader or his representative as in the case of member of *tarekat*. In other words, the mode of entry is voluntary, so people can practice the ritual and recite the *dzikir* and *shalawat* without asking direct permission to the leader. Moreover, those groups do not ask an exclusive commitment on the part of their members. Therefore, people can voluntarily take part in the activities of those groups while also being participants in other groups. As argued by Abdurrahman, coordinator of the Majelis Nurul Mustafa, the *jama'ah* of the *majelis* are allowed to participate with other *majelis* to fulfill the obedience of seeking knowledge as Muslims. Seeking Islamic religious knowledge for him can be obtained from different sources and different *majelis* as long as they are relevant to the teaching of Islam. However, Abdurrahman, the coordinator of the Majelis, pointed out that people must find a single spiritual teacher who is able to guide them in this world and in the hereafter. In other words, the *jama'ah* of the Majelis Nurul Mustafa are not allowed to choose more than one spiritual teacher for their spiritual life. In this sense, if they have decided to choose the *habib* of Nurul Mustafa as their spiritual teacher, they are not permitted to follow other *habib* as their spiritual teacher. He says as follows:

‘People can join the Majelis Nurul Mustafa and practice the ritual of other *majelis*. They have a freedom to join other *majelis* as part of their obedience to seek Islamic knowledge

from any various resources. However if they seek a spiritual master for themselves they have to choose only one particular spiritual master.²²

It is interesting to note here that the Majelis Nurul Mustafa allows non-Muslim to participate in the ritual without requiring them to convert to Islam. In contrast to *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*, the Sufi orders (*tarekat*) ask their member to take avow of allegiance to their shaykh or *murshid*, before they can recite a special *dzikir* and more *ahzab*, a special *wird* created by Sufi or Muslim scholars.²³ Even, Sufi groups such as Hamidiyah Shadiliya²⁴ and Tijaniyah Sufi groups have demanded an exclusive commitment from their member. For instance, people who join Tijaniyah are expected to abandon their commitment to other Sufi groups.

The Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa also does not require a particular mode of recruitment. People can be regarded as part of *jama'ah* of the *majelis*, if they would attend and participate in the ritual of the *majelis* regularly. In this respect, the continuity (*istiqaamah*) of attending and participating is extremely stressed in the *majelis*. For instance, in every *dzikir* ritual held by the *jama'ah*, the leader of the group continuously stresses the importance of attending and practicing the *dzikir* and *shalawat* ritual for his *jama'ah*. For the leader of Nurul Mustafa, continuity is extremely important because it will generate a lot of blessings of God for the improvement of peoples' spiritual life. Quoting a popular proverb in Sufi tradition, he pointed out that continuity is much better than a thousand of miracles (*karamah*).

In order to keep the *jama'ah* involve on the practice of *dzikir* and *shalawat* held by the *majelis* on regular basis, the leader of this group tries to find particular ways to increase their interest of attending the *majelis* ritual. One of the ways is by introducing and creating new melodies in the reciting of *shalawat* accompanied by entertainingly musical instruments as well as creating new songs for the ritual. According to Ustadz Jamal, who is a vocalist of the *majelis*, songs which he usually sings during the ritual are written by the leader of the *majelis*. He and the leader of the *majelis* regularly discuss the text of the

²² Interview with Abdurrahman, the coordinator of the ritual, November 2011.

²³ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders*, p. 187.

²⁴ Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, p. 94.

song and make its melody. The *shalawat* song is effective to attract the interest of the *jama'ah* which is mostly dominated by teenagers and youngster to attend the ritual. In addition, in order to attract the *jama'ah* to attend the *majelis*, the *majelis* also invites celebrities, TV stars, and public figures to attend the ritual and give them the opportunity to make a short talk before the ritual of *dzikir* and *shalawat* begin. Internet and SMS from mobile phone are another important means to keep the *jama'ah* informed and involved in the activity of the *majelis*. The *majelis* sets up a website of the *majelis* (<http://nurulmusthofa.org>) and facebook which mainly contain the activity of the *majelis*, a weekly schedule of the ritual, stream video live taken from the weekly ritual, pictures of the *habib* and the transcript of the leader's speech in the ritual of the *majelis*.

Moreover, to attract the *jama'ah* attending to the *majelis*, after *Dzikir* ritual held by the group in headquarter of the *majelis*, the *habib* also provides simple dinner. The *majelis* distributes a big plate with full of rice and meat accompanied by a cup of mineral water. One big plate is usually provided for three or four *jama'ah*. Another salient strategy of this *majelis* to attract new participants is by introducing the leader of this *jama'ah* as the descendent of the Prophet. This strategy is proven to be effective to improve the authority of the *majelis* among other *majelis* and the interest of *jama'ah* to join the *majelis*. As a result, they become interested in keeping involved in the *jama'ah* on regular basis because of the figure of the *habib*. One of the *jama'ah* explained why he is interested in joining the group:

'I joined and practice the ritual of *dzikir* and *shalawat* of Nurul Mustafa because of the figure of the *majelis*' leader. He is a *habib*, the great grandson of the Prophet. Even though I have never met directly to the Prophet, of course I am not able to meet the Prophet by myself, at least I can meet His great grandson (*cucu*). For me, this is the same. I am not able to love the Prophet, but I am able to love the *habib*. I hope the way I love the *habib*, the Prophet's grandson, is similar to the way the *habib* loves his grandfather.'²⁵

²⁵ Interview with Faiz, the follower of the *majelis* on July 2011.

The Authority of the Leader

The head of the group is important in the Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa. The head of the group has important role not only in developing the *majelis* but also in attracting the followers of the *majelis*. In this respect, authority of the leader is significant in the establishment of the *majelis dzikir* or *shalawat*. Most of *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* are established on the basis of charisma of the leader. The authority of the head of the Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat of Nurul Mustafa is built on the basis of the leadership of *ḥabīb* figure. *Ḥabīb* is a title given to those who are considered as male descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad, while *sharīfah* is a title given to female descendents of the Prophet. The concept of the *ḥabīb* and *sharīfah* has been well preserved particularly in the Indonesian Hadrami families. The Hadrami family categorized as *sayyid* usually has the line of family tree (*silsilah*) which is traced back to the Prophet. In order to preserve the purity of their Arab family, they only get married with those from Arab family.

Like many other Hadrami families in Indonesia, the leader of the Majelis Nurul Mustafa put his genealogical family tree in his *mushalla* (a small venue for praying) so that the *jama'ah* can clearly read and see his descendant up to the Prophet. Currently, among Indonesian Muslims, the title of *ḥabīb* is given only to those Indonesian Arab families who are not only the descendent of the Prophet but also those who are equipped with the higher Islamic knowledge and the highest station of Sufi practices. The *ḥabīb* believes that as *ḥabā'ib* are the descendents of the Prophet, they have a potential of spiritual power (*basbīrah*) derived from their grandfather (*jadd*)²⁶ (the Prophet Muḥammad), which is easily used to improve their consciousness to God.²⁷

Therefore, with his privilege, as the leader of *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*, he regard himself responsible to introduce Muslim to the Prophet, as he is part of the family of the Prophet who has genealogical connection with those who have previously achieved the highest station of Sufi practices. In this regard, *tawassul* (seeking a means) through these renowned *ḥabā'ib* (sing. *ḥabīb*) and *anliyā'* (the saints of God) is extremely stressed in the *majelis*. Ḥabīb Ḥasan

²⁶ *Jid'* meaning grandfather, is an Arabic work which is usually used by Indonesian *babaib* to call the Prophet Muhammad as their grandfather.

²⁷ Interview with Ḥabīb Ḥasan bin Jakfar Assegaf, November 2011.

explains the importance of *tawassul* as follows, 'Love of *awliya'* cannot only help us in the hereafter but also lead to love the Prophet and God.' On the weekly ritual, he also says, 'We must give respect to the family of the Prophet Muḥammad (*dburrīyat al-rasūl*) and the Saints of God. Our heart must not forget the Prophet. Respect His grandsons, in order to make them happy.' The special status of the *abl al-bayt* is found in two verses in the Qur'ān. The first verse is 33:33: 'God only wishes to remove all filth from you, people of the house (*abl al-bayt*), and to purify you completely.' Another verse commanding Muslim to respect love the Prophet's family (*abl al-bayt*) is 42:23: 'I do not ask you for reward (for delivering the revelation), except the love of those who are near of kin.' There are numerous Ḥadīth (Prophet tradition) which extol the status of *abl al-bayt* and command Muslims to love them. The example of the Ḥadīth is 'whoever prays a prayer in which he does not bless me and my family, it will not be accepted.' Another Ḥadīth is 'the people of my house are like the Ark of Noah, whoever rides is saved, and whoever stays behind is shaken by hellfire.' Even though there are several verses and Ḥadīth commanding to love *abl al-bayt*, the *ḥabīb* never cited during his speech. He just stressed the importance of respect the Prophet's families and extol the status of them.

Moreover, the authority of the leader of the *majelis* is also based on the connection of the *ḥabīb* with that of *ḥabā'ib* or 'ulamā in Hadramawt, especially in the region of Tarim. Historically, Hadramawt has been considered as one of the origin of Islam in Malay-Indonesian Archipelago.²⁸ The role of the Hadrami in the process of Islamization in the region has probably been substantial. With this historical position it is no doubt that Hadrami has been important among Indonesian Muslims religiously. Even, it is widely held among Indonesian *ḥabā'ib* that most of the Nine Saints (Wali Songo), the preachers of Islam, in the history of Islamization in the archipelago are Hadrami or have Hadrami descendants.

Among *ḥabā'ib* in Indonesia in particular and Indonesian Muslims in general the region of Tarim has been well known as a place where most of renowned *ḥabā'ib* and the saints of God live and a lot of shrines of *awliya'* become the object visitation of Muslims from

²⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan 'Ulamā Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p.28.

different places in the world. In addition to Haramain, Hadramawt is another destination for Indonesian Muslims who seek Islamic knowledge, visit the sacred sites and the centre for Sufi heritage. Therefore, with this important position of Hadramawt religiously, the *ḥabā'ib* of Indonesia try to link their connection with the *ḥabā'ib* and the sacred places in Hadramawt. For instance, the leader of the *majelis* makes regular visit to Tarim and meet its *ḥabā'ib* and 'ulamā' which are believed to be the saints of God. In addition, the *majelis* also invites the 'ulamā' and *ḥabā'ib* from Hadramawt (Tarim) to attend and lead the annual ritual of the *majelis*. Inviting the *ḥabā'ib* and 'ulamā' of Tarim without doubt can increase not only the authority of the *majelis* but also the leader of the *majelis*. The presence of the 'ulamā' from Tarim also makes the *jamā'ah* believe that the ritual they practice is closely connected to the similar tradition widely held by 'ulamā' in Tarim to whom their leader has continuously told the story about their life, virtues and their Sufi practices. The importance of Tarim for this *majelis* has been told by one of the teachers of the *majelis* as is follows:

'Without Tarim, Indonesia may be still in the age of dark. Tarim is a place where most saints of God grow. All the Nine Saints are from the descendent of Prophet of Tarim...Tarim can be described as the centre of electricity which illuminates to different places of the world. I have studied at Tarim for four and half years because of the *ḥabīb* asked me to study there. When I studied there I felt that the *ḥabīb* was presence. For me, although the *ḥabīb* never studied in Hadramawt, he has obtained the secret of Hadramawt's 'ulamā'. I have met many respected 'ulamā and studied Islamic knowledge from them. I have tested Tarim's salt. All of them have the same virtues as the Ḥabīb Ḥasan. One day I felt very sad, because a lot of problems that I faced such as the delay of pocket money from my parent and homesick. One day I visited one of 'ulamā' of Tarim and he just rubbed my head and prayed for me then suddenly I felt happy.²⁹

Conclusion

Sufi tradition in Indonesia has been experiencing innovations socially and structurally since the last two decades. These innovations

²⁹ Interview with Ustad Rizq, January 2012.

are well exemplified by some *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat* groups in Indonesia, like Nurul Mustafa. This group has represented a new Sufi group that arises out of tarekat group, a group that has been considered as ‘official institution’ in implementing Sufism. As I argued elsewhere, even though the group cannot be categorized as tarekat, it strongly emphasizes the *dzikir* and *shalawat* rituals and the teaching of Sufism which are also stressed in the *tarekat* traditions in Indonesia.

As a *majelis dzikir* and *shalawat*, the group has introduced Sufi teachings in their rituals. However, unlike a tarekat group, the Majelis Nurul Mustafa differs on their emphasizing on Sufism. The Majelis Nurul Mustafa which has its strong basis in urban society and arises from urban *majelis taklim* introduces Sufi teaching to its *jama`ah* as the complementary of its activity. For instance, Sufi themes are given by this *majelis* as part of other themes including ethics (*akhlāq*), Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the hagiography of saints of God, the story of the prophet (*al-sīrah al-nabawīyah*), and the virtues of *ḥabā'ib*. In addition, the Majelis Nurul Mustafa selectively uses Sufi teachings and texts of *dzikir* and *shalawat* only from sources which are mostly taken from the tradition of Sufism practiced by Ḥaḍramī ‘ulamā’ or *ḥabā'ib*.

The Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa whose *jama`ah* are mostly urban teenagers and youths uses popular methods to attract the interest of those groups to attend its ritual. The example of this popular method is by introducing membranophones or *rebana* music following the reciting of *shalawat*. New melodies which are familiar to the ear of teenagers are also introduced in the recitation of *shalawat*. The method is proven to be effective to attract the interest of youth and teenagers attending the majelis.

The Majelis Dzikir and Shalawat Nurul Mustafa has contributed to the development of pluralism idea among Indonesian Muslim. This can be seen from the fact that the *majelis* allows non-Muslims to practice and join the ritual without asking them to convert to Islam. It is undoubted that not all Muslims agree with this idea. furthermore, several Muslim groups considered pluralism as a non-Islamic teaching that can be categorized *bid'ah*. In fact, the ideas of pluralism are necessarily needed for improving a peaceful life in Indonesia with its pluralistic culture and religions. Introducing the teaching of pluralism in the religious ritual will help to create a civilized society. In addition, this group also play important role in denounce the idea of radicalism which have proliferated in urban area after the reformation era. Sufism

with its tolerant and ethics introduced by these groups is able to counter the radical teachings promoted by the so called radical Islam groups. []

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