

Haji and Lebai from the Perspective of Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir Al-Mandili Al-Indonesi (1910-1965)

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Abstract: The Malay society has come to idolize individuals who have performed the fifth pillar of Islam which is performing Haj. This act of worship is seen as the apex to the Islamic beliefs and principles and thus, it is seen as an epitome of respect so much so that as they return from Mecca, they will unofficially be called ‘Tuan Haji’, ‘Bang Haji’ and ‘Hajjah’ for the women. Some even use these terms officially in their identity cards. Individuals in the community will highly regard them and their opinions and views will often be consulted as ‘point of reference’ in societal activities. They function as the leaders of the solat, lead in tahlil ceremonies, feasts, new-born babies tahniks and so on. In short, the title ‘haji’ in the tradition of the Malay thinking is very much linked with the Islamic teaching that mirrors pious personality and who thinks of the Hereafter. In one of his writings, Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili titled his book as ‘Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai’ (The Weapons of the Hajis and Lebais). The content of this book is somewhat different from the title. It contains the prayers of solats, prayers after solat, prayers in feasts, the benefit of reading Yasin 41 times, talqin, the benefit of terawih and witir prayers, the Friday sermons, matrimonious sermons, 2nd Eid sermon also other recitals that have become commonplace in the society. This study seeks to analyse the views of Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili in relation to his writing entitled to ‘Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai’. What is the concept of ‘weapon’ implied by the Tuan Guru possessed by the Hajis and Lebais and how did the concept and the function work in the societal life at the time?

Key words: Malay society, Mecca, weapon, matrimonious sermons, haji

INTRODUCTION

Awang (2008) is one of the scholarly dignitaries who can be regarded as prolific in the Malay Archipelago. His presence among the front line of the Archipelago’s scholars in his era was very much felt especially around the years of the 50 and 60s. This was because, the winds of politics in Malaya had also blown his name as one of the key speakers in the field of debate between the asabiyyah, scholars with nationalist stream of thought and scholars who fought for Islamic movements. His books which contain political facts such as Islam Agama dan Kedaulatan and also Beberapa Mutiara Yang Bagus Lagi Indah were made illegal by the alliance government at the time. The ban established in the main stream at the time-Warta Negara had given great shares and free publicity in elevating his name in the front line of the scholars who were assertive in opposing the deviancy and political understanding on the notion of asabiyyah.

Other than well-known for his principles that defended the fikrah of the Islamic politics, al-Mandili also

wrote several works that touched on other aspects related to acts of worship. Among them is Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai (STHTL) (Mandili, 1949).

THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMING HAJ

In relation to the act of performing Haj, al-Mandili also wrote Pemberian yang Bagus Lagi Indah (Hukum Ihram dari Jeddah); Risalah Doa Tawaf Dan Sai Dan Doa Arafah Bergantung Makna. As is Bekal Orang Yang Menunaikan Haji (Mandili, 1963). Based on the title, it can be understood that the discussions on these books specifically touch on the discipline of performing hajj as the fifth pillar of Islam with focus on prayers and zikrs in some locations when performing haj. Meanwhile, in the book Beberapa Mutiara Yang Bagus Lagi Indah, al-Mandili did include questions and answers and the chapter of performing haj as two of the chapters in the writing, together with the issue of the obligations of doing zakat and fasting (Mandili, 1949). Among the questions posed (and answers) in relation to haj include:

- Bringing together commercial goods when performing haj
- Umrah in the months of Haj
- Come to Mecca to perform haj before syawal then he will work on Umrah
- What is the law of Haj performers from the Malay world to delay the wearing ihram until reaching Jeddah
- What is the law for women in menstruation that have yet to perform the obligatory tawaf?
- Will the haj be dropped if it is done using illegal money?

The book *Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai* does not talk about the issues concerning haj and this gives the picture of the existence of other intention from that of Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili in naming his book *Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai (STHTL)*.

THE IMAGES OF TOK HAJI AND TOK LEBAI

The image and appearance of someone called Tok Haji and Tok Lebai in the Malay community are very 'special'. These are the two factors that might want to be raised by oleh Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili in his writings. Their image and position have always been under the limelight in the Malay community. They are easy to recognize through their distinctive dressing pattern and image comprising of:

- The turban wrapped around the head with the kopiah that is often white in colour
- Wearing Malay suit with pelikat sarong

This type of dressing is synonymous with Tok Haji and Tok Lebai where the most 'basic' is the existent white kopiah or turban wraps around the head.

The image is 'white' in the community and it is seen as very sensitive with the deviant aspects committed by one titled haji. Thus, haji is really a personality which represents good noble traits, piousness, concentrating on the Hereafter, monitoring the members of the society in adhering to the religious teaching, at the same time functioning as the referees, khatib, master of the matrimony and so on in the social rituals.

Mentioning Tok Haji and Tok Lebai in the Malay community back in the 40-60s directly relates with the mosques, surau, turbans, kopiahs, solat, prayers and others which focus on the adherence to religion and holding firmly on the religious principles.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WRITING AS THE WEAPONS OF TOK HAJI DAN LEBAI

Despite the terms Tok Haji and Tok Lebai, the writing of al-Mandili in relation to *Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai (STHTL)* does not elaborate on aspects concerning the act of Haj. When analysed comprehensively, accounting for factors like the era, the stream of thought of the community, the social status and the religious activities and the understanding at the time then this book is perceived to have its own philosophy and perspective for the author as compared to his other works.

In general, STHTL can be assumed to center the hopes and expected accomplishments that a Muslim with a title of Tok Haji and Tok Lebai to his name should possess. This can be reinforced with the existing term of 'weapon' included in the title. The adoption of the term 'weapon' in the title of this book does not refer to weaponry that is characterized as a 'physical thing' but it refers to the spiritual aspect that comes in the form of prayers that are directly addressed to Allah. In this regard, it is clear that the intention and hope of Tuan Guru Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili are greatly embedded in his noble heart that he wished to see that those called Tok Haji and Tok Lebai were equipped with this 'weapon' to lead and to guide the other Muslims to tawajjuh to Allah, taqarrub towards Him with prayers and acts of worship, hoping for Allah's blessings and inayah. The practice of praying indirectly becomes malicious to enemies (lusts and Devils) who always want human beings to distant themselves Allah. The importance of equipping oneself with prayers as the weapon, can be based on several aspects: Prayers as a weapon to mukmin. This is not strange to those who understand the hadith of the Prophet which is:

"Prayers is the weapon of Mukmin, the pillar of religion and the light of the sky and the earth." (Hakim, 1978; Qada, 1986)

Those who do not pray will be angered by Allah. Therefore, praying enables one to obtain the mercy of Allah and at the same time, getting closer to Him. It is decreed by Muhammad SAW:

"From Abu Hurairah RA he said: It was stated by Rasulullah SAW those who do not ask (pray) to Allah then Allah will be nothing but angry with him" (Tirmidhi, 1983)

Prayers always bring benefits. Prayers can also repel any unfortunate catastrophes or events from occurring. The Prophet, Muhammad stated this:

“Indeed, prayers will bring benefit towards what has been granted and what has yet to be granted. Thus, dear servants of Allah, you must pray with all your hearts.” (Tirmidhi, 1983)

In his other decree, The Prophet, Muhammad asserted:

“There is no use avoiding oneself from one’s own fate (qadar) and prayers give benefit to what is granted and what has yet to be granted. Meanwhile, the disaster that befalls, will clash into the prayers recited and both shall be at war with one another to the end of time.” (Hakim, 1978)

Whatever, weapon there is if it is in the hands of those who have no right to claim it will be subject to destruction and in turn if held by those who are pious then the weapon will do good. Thus, the ‘weapon’ as in the prayers according to Tuan Guru Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili shall be rightfully held by Tok Haji and Tok Lebai. Thus, STHTL can be characterized as a very important ‘book’ to be used by the hajis and lebais where it will become a source of reference to the general public. To obtain blessings on the prayers as stated, he also granted the prayers to those who happened to have his book. This is mentioned in STHTL (Mandili, 1949).

This also helps the understanding that the term ‘haji’ for Tuan Guru Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili should be laden with characteristics among the followers. Among them are Tok Haji and Tok Lebai who are deemed qualified to function as.

Ambassadors of the Holy land: Those with the title of ‘haji’ function as ‘ambassadors’ of the holy Land to the entire Muslims. In their thinking, a haji who has performed this deed experiences a lot of adversaries and necessitates a high level of sacrifice in terms of his spiritual and physical conditions. They would spend some time, a lot of money and energy to perform this act of worship. In the 40s right to the 60s, those wishing to perform haj had to travel by ship. The journey would last for three months and it was nothing but exhausting. The Kelang and Penang Ports were serving as the ports for the departure and arrival of the pilgrimage. The connection was troublesome with poorly developed and narrow roads; the economic aspect mostly depended on the agricultural sector and also to the close familial relationships among the community. Those wishing to perform this deed would normally be celebrated in feasts or at least among close families and kins.

Therefore, these people tend to be regarded as ambassadors in the house of Allah from the Holy Land and they were anticipated to offer explanation and elaboration to the Muslims followers on Islamic values and knowledge and the manner in which one is to get close to Allah as they return from Mecca having performed the fifth pillar of Islam. They were qualified enough to narrate the manner of the act of worship (Haj) done based on the experience that they had gone through. Other than giving motivations to others, automatically, it will act as the ‘deliverers of the course’ to those yet to perform it.

It is also hoped that they would be able to encourage to the Muslims who have yet to perform haj to visit Baitullah. In that era, the connection was limited. Any correspondence would take months to deliver. Thus, any information on the city of Mecca where Kaabah is located, had become the ‘primary’ source steadily followed by the people. It was through these Tok Hajis that they were able to keep abreast of the development and events that took place in the city of Mecca.

The hope was mounting for al-Mandili on one with haji attached to his name and this is translated into his writing in STHTL. This book is written solely to fulfill the requests of his respected friends where he wrote:

“Amma ba‘du, indeed I was asked by several brothers who have good thoughts to write for them prayers in solat and for feasts and Friday prayers, zikrullah and others. I could not refuse this, so I had to write and compile the prayers in a small leaflet altogether fulfilling their requests, although I am no expert and I name this leaflet (Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai)” (Mandili, 1949)

The content of this book is explained in brief on the cover, under the big title of Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai. The following statements grace the cover of the book and it can be regarded as the synopsis of the gist of the discussion:

“Which contains prayers of solat and prayers after solat and prayers in feasts and ceremonies, the manner of Yasin 41, its prayers and talwin for the deceased, kaifiyat (manner) for tarawih and witr, Friday sermons and sermons for matrimony and sermons during Eid and al-wird al-latif and more prayers, istighfar, selawat and others” (Mandili, 1949)

The Friday khatib: A Tok Haji is the beacon of hope for the society at the time. Muslims in Malaya back then were still lagging behind in academic endeavours. The illiteracy

rate was high although at the same time, they were Quran-literate. The hope for these people lay in indhar to the Muslims through the medium of the Friday sermons and they are normally the Tok Hajis. They were students or teachers of the huts who had performed Haj previously. It can be said that hundred percent of the teachers who led the hut education were those who had already performed Haj. Thus, STHTL provides guidance of the Friday sermons and sermons conducted on the 2nd Eid. No doubt, there were youth who were equally knowledgeable and skilled, yet those with the title Haji were given the priority in delivering the religious talks and sermons.

When talking about Friday sermons, Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili had put forth a sample of text that was very concise to be read. Although quite brief, the content of the text covers things such as:

- The urge for redemption
- To succumb to Allah for His blessings
- Not influenced by the impermanent world
- To have the knowledge before worshipping (the urge to gain knowledge)
- To worship with the knowledge learnt
- To preserve the solat five times a day
- The reminder to issue zakat
- The reminder to fast
- The reminder to perform haj
- The concept of mabrur haj
- Doing a lot of optional deeds (fasting, performing solat, charity, reading al-Quran and zikrullah)
- The reminder to avoid oneself from committing sins (seven sins-sab'ul mubiqat)
- Taking care of the organs (tongue, eyes and ears)
- Social and community aspects. (Mandili, 1949)

The leader of the community: One who is called Tok Haji will function as a leader in the community. Normally, the community will allow them to engage themselves in activities done in the villages. Their opinions will be consulted and their advice heard. These were the scenarios of the Malay society at the end of the 40s and the 60s which was during the era when the book was written. For filling and provide guidance to them in this respect Master Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili provide them with the following prayers:

Prayers during feasts: The organizations of feasts in the village communities are held in conjunction of certain events such as maulidur Rasul, marriage, blessings and so on. Those hoped to lead the feasts are Tok Hajis. The peak of these feasts is the reciting of prayers.

Nisfu Syaaban: The Malay community normally celebrates the advent of nisfu Syaaban in full gratitude and to mark the coming of Ramadan. They would gather in mosques and musolla. The activity during the night would begin after Maghrib starting with the reading of Yasin three times (the first is for longevity, the second is to ward off danger or bad events and the third time is to ask for wealth) followed by the prayer of nisfu Syaaban every time Yasin has been read.

The reading of Talqin: It is common for people who live in the village that when in the event of one's passing, talqin will be read to the deceased. The ones who recite the prayers will be Tok Haji. Tuan Guru Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili is the writer of this guide of talqin.

Various prayers: There are many prayers given in STHTL such as waking up from sleep, going into and out of the toilet, taking ablution, wearing new clothes, going into and out of the house into and out of the mosque when hearing the azan in times of need when surprised in sadness, visiting patients going to funeral when looking at the enemy when life is hard when it is hard to find a job when in debt, listening to the thunder, in rainy days when in anger, zikrullah when the plants bear fruits, on the night of the wedding day, finishing the Quran and other prayers. Normally, when the prayers involve a group then Tok Haji and Tok Lebai would be the selected persons to lead the ceremonies. For those not really having the skills in reciting the prayers, Tok Haji and Tok Lebai will act as the unofficial 'tutors' and they will usually be guided without any charges and the time is between Maghrib and Isya' and located either in the mosque or musolla.

Yasin 41 times: It is common in the Malay tradition to be confident with the blessings and the importance of Yasin. When they face a big and difficult problem to solve, they will cooperate and together they will read Yasin 41 times. This kaifiyat of Yasin 41 is very much well known in the society at the time. As it is seen as important, then Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili also provided the manner of reading this Yasin 41. He wrote, (this is the manner of reading Yasin 41 times):

“There must be ablution, then to read Fatihah once and selawat 11 times, then to read the verse of al-Kursi once, then to read Yasin 41 times per person or in jamaah, then Alam

Nashrah thrice, Alam Tara Kaifa once, then Li ilafi Quraisy once, then Qul Ya Ayyuhal Kafirun once, then Qul Huwallahu Ahad 3 times, then Qul A'udhu bi Rabbil Falaq once and Qul A'udhu bi Rabbi Nas once, then Subhana Rabbika Rabbil 'Izzati 'amma Yasifun wa Salamun 'alal mursalin wal hamdulillahi rabbil 'alamin, then you read this prayer which is”

PRAYER-RECITING MANNERS

Prayers are simply flawed when the reciters do not maintain the manners of the praying. It is in this awareness that Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili established some manners of prayer-reciting in SHTTL, so that, it will spread to the people who recite prayers. He wrote (his text is translated in a simple translation): (This is the manner of reciting prayers).

“There are ten things to remember in the manner of praying (First of all) looking into times considered best to pray, such as the Arafah Day and Ramadhan and Friday or one third of the night and the dawn and between bang and qamat (Secondly) that you choose a noble behaviour as in when you are in prostration and when the rain falls and when you perform solat and then, when your heart is good or when you meet Muslim soldiers and deviant ones (Third) facing the Kiblat and raising both hands and using both to wipe the face in the end (Fourth) lowering the voice between very low and very loud (Fifth) it will not weigh seriously the saja' (Keenam) the heart is present and in fear and hope and is engrossed and offending oneself towards Allah taala (Seven) deciding that it will demand, meaning that it cannot be uttered with something in resemblance (in syi'ta) meaning that if You so want it and believe that it will be granted and allow that hopes are on Him (Eight) that he really works hard praying and asking and repeating it as much as three times and do not consider that the prayers are delayed to be granted (Nine) that he begins by praising Allah taala and reciting prayers for Rasulullah SAW and he ends with these two (Tenth) asking for redemption from all sins and succumbing to Allah and returning the properties of the people whom he imposes acts of cruelty and leaving foods that are haram”.

The ten items of guidance for praying mannerism above are not strange to those who learn the hadiths of The Prophet Muhammad SAW. The mannerisms can be found in the books of hadiths of Kutub Sittah and the well-established Sunans in the sect of Ahli Sunnah Waljamaah.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, a book entitled *Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai* produced in 1949 successfully appealed to the Muslims at the time. This book can be regarded as an important 'vein' to the society's praying rituals back then. This is because the book contains almost all important prayers that is very much needed in the lives of the Muslims. A survey was done by the author in study huts in Kelantan, Patani and Kedah and this book is still very much available for students' reference. This demonstrates the responses given by the society on this book up until today. Even the copy that the author has, illustrates that it is the eighth copy. This shows that the years of the 1940s have become witness to the fact that this book still receives welcoming responses from the society.

We pray that Allah gives His blessings on Master Syeikh Abdul Qadir, a man who had contributed his fountain of knowledge and some ma'thur prayers and recitals to be applied in their lives.

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