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**MOENAWAR CHALIL'S REFORMIST THOUGHT:  
A STUDY OF AN INDONESIAN RELIGIOUS SCHOLAR  
(1908-1961)**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty  
of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**by  
THOHA HAMIM  
(9000677)**

**The Institute of Islamic Studies  
McGill University, Montreal,  
February, 1996**



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## ABSTRACT

Author : Thoha Hamim

Title : Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar (1908-1961)

Department : The Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree : Doctor of Philosophy

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This thesis studies Moenawar Chalil's reformist thought, as it was patterned after that of earlier reformists. Issues which have been long formed the heritage of religious reform appear therein, ranging from a call to return to the original sources of Islam to condemnation of popular religious practices. In his approach to *Qur'ān*-interpretation, Chalil stripped the texts of legendary traits, rejected the principle of *naskh*, offered a particular approach to the interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* verses and emphasized the *i'jāz 'aqli*. His aim was to revitalize the *Qur'ān*'s function as a guide for modern life and to stress its compatibility with present modes of thought. Chalil's call for the emulation of the Prophet's *sunnah* was designed to reestablish the latter's direct link to rulings of a legal nature. He urged greater scrutiny of the authenticity of *hadīths* in order to restore the simplicity of faith and to halt inappropriate practices falsely attributed to the Prophet's example. This attitude was the logical outcome of his puritan stance, which was also manifested in the scope of his *ijtihād* which he restricted only to matters related to the purification of *'aqidah* and *'ibādah*. Similarly, Chalil's total rejection of the practice of *taqlid* shows his puritan agenda which went beyond even that of the early reformists. This extreme position, however, led him to misunderstand the true meaning of *taqlid* and its role both in the procedures of the judicial system and in shaping the faith of the *'awāmm*. Chalil's concept of *itbā'* did not assess the intellectual state of the *'awāmm*, whose inability to detect the reasons behind the proofs meant that they would inevitably have to



remain in a state of *taqlid*. Similarly, his call for the abandonment of the *madhhab* only helped to foster a new *taqlid* in response to this position. Also central to Chalil's reformist thought was his revision of the understanding of the basic tenets of Islam and his correction of the traditional celebration of religious occasions. This revision was pursued in order to promote the concept of the absolute divine unity of God as well as the purity of belief. While his attacks on popular religious celebration were basically aimed at rejecting the idea of the merit or demerit of time, which could, otherwise, lead to a reliance on powers other than God, his reconsideration of the concept of the basic belief of Islam attempted to address the distorted understanding of Islam and *Imān*.

## RÉSUMÉ

Auteur	: Thoha Hamim
Titre	: La pensée réformatrice de Moenawar Chalil: Une étude d'un érudit religieux indonésien (1908-1961)
Departement	: Institut des Etudes Islamiques, Université McGill
Diplome	: Doctorat ès Philosophie

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Cette thèse porte sur l'étude de la pensée réformatrice de Moenawar Chalil qui fut modelée d'après celle des réformateurs précédents. En cela, les questions qui ont formé l'héritage des réformes religieuses s'étendent depuis l'exhortation au retour aux sources originelles de l'Islam jusqu'aux traditions populaires de la religion. L'approche de Chalil de l'interprétation du *Qur'ān* est débattue afin de révéler la manière que l'auteur a éliminé des textes les traits légendaires, rejeté le principe du *naskh*, offert une approche particulière à l'interprétation des versets *mutastābihāt* et mis l'emphasis sur l'*i'jāz 'aqlī*. Son objectif fut de revitaliser la fonction du *Qur'ān* comme le guide de la vie moderne ainsi que d'insister sur sa compatibilité avec les courants de pensée actuels. L'appel de Chalil en faveur de l'émulation de la *sunnah* du Prophète fut désignée pour rétablir le lien de cette dernière avec les décisions d'ordre légal. Il plaida pour un examen plus rigoureux de l'authenticité des *ḥadīths* de façon à restaurer la simplicité de la foi et stopper les pratiques faussement attribuées à l'exemple du Prophète. Cette attitude fut l'aboutissement logique de la position puritaine de l'auteur, qui s'est aussi manifesté dans le champ d'action de son *ijtihād* qu'il limite uniquement aux questions reliées à la purification de l'*'aqidah* et de l'*'ibādah*. De façon similaire, le total rejet de Chalil montre son agenda puritaine qui excéda celui des réformateurs précédents. Ce position extrême, néanmoins, le mena à mal comprendre l'authentique sens du *taqlīd* et de son rôle à la fois au sein des procédures du système judiciaire et dans la formulation de la foi selon le *'awāmm*. Le concept de l'*ittibā'* de Chalil n'a pas évalué l'état intellectuel de l'*'awāmm*, dont l'incapacité à détecter les raisons

derrière les preuves ont signifié qu' ils devront inévitablement demeurer dans l' état du *taqlid*. Egalement, l' exhortation de l' auteur pour l' abandon du *madhhab* a uniquement encouragé un nouveau *taqlid* en réponse à cette position. De plus, l' élément central de la pensée reformiste de Chalil fut sa révision de la compréhension des principes de base de l' Islam ainsi que sa correction des célébrations traditionnelles des fêtes religieuses. Cette révision fut entreprise afin de promouvoir le concept de la divine unite absolue de Dieu de même que la pureté de la croyance. Alors que sa révision des fêtes religieuses traditionnelles était essentiellement orientée vers le rejet de l' idée du mérite ou du démerite du temps qui pourrait, autrement, mener à une confiance envers des pouvoirs autres que Dieu, sa reconsidération du concept de la croyance de base de l' Islam a tenté d' approcher la compréhension déformée de l' Islam et de l' *Imān*.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

For Arabic names and Islamic terms, the writer follows the transliteration scheme for Arabic script employed by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. One exception from the scheme is that *tā' marbūṭah* is written "ah" rather than "a", i.g. *bid'ah* rather than *bid'a* or *'ibādah* rather than *'ibāda*. This is despite the fact that the *tā' marbūṭah* is written "at", when it functions as *idāfah*, such as *Umdat al-Ahkām* and *Nihāyat al-Sūl*. The Indonesian words and terms derived from Arabic are written in the Arabic form. For example: *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'* rather than *Nahdlatul Ulama* or *Majlis Tarjih* rather than *Majlis Tarjih*. This, however, does not apply to the names of person which are written in the form cited. For example, Moenawar Chalil rather than Munawwar Khalil or Isa Anshari rather than 'Īsā Anṣārī. Indonesian words and terms are written according to the new Indonesian spelling used since 1972. Names of books, journals and acronyms will appear as they are quoted, such as *Al-Boerhan*, *Pandji Masjarakat* and *Masjumi*. The following is a transliteration table of Arabic alphabet.

Arabic	English
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh

## Arabic

## English

ص  
ض  
ط  
ظ  
ع  
س  
ش  
ح  
ل  
م  
ن  
ه  
و  
ي  
آ

s

d

t

z

‘

gh

f

q

k

l

m

n

h

w

y

ah/at

To indicate long vowels of ( ؤ, ئ, آ ), these are typed by placing a macron above characters: ā, ī, ū.

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## INTRODUCTION: Background of the Inquiry

Attempts at reform in Islam have tended to be based on the firm belief that the problems facing Muslims are due to a misunderstanding of Islamic doctrine and society's refusal to conform to the true *Qur'ānic* principles and the Prophetic traditions. The call for a return to the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* is, therefore, paramount to the doctrine of reformists. They have always claimed the right to interpret the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* in the way that Muḥammad and the *ṣaḥāb* had done in order that they might free themselves from the authority of the jurists. They viewed the period of the Prophet and the *ṣaḥāb* as the Islamic era *par excellence* and held it up as the ideal pattern. Although modern reformism came into existence as a response to the challenge of increasing Western impact on the Islamic world, the way in which this reformism expressed itself was, to a large extent, conditioned by tradition. Issues that had been debated since classical times, from the role of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* to the status of *ijtihād*, *ittiḥād*, *bid'ah* and *taqlid*, were the focus of modern reformism, forming its heritage and providing the raw material for fierce debates.

The efforts of the reformists were certainly not coordinated, but they had a unity of inspiration and direction guided as they were by the common goal of returning Islam to its purity and combating heresies and accretions. This is not to deny that shifts constantly occurred throughout the history of reform in line with contemporary circumstances. Looking at reformism in 19th and early 20th centuries, for example, a change of emphasis is perceivable from the pan-Islamic political activism of al-Afghānī, through 'Abduh's liberal vision of social and educational reform to Riḍā's more exclusivist *Sunnism* and close study of scripture. Yet, their reformist thought never strayed far from classical concerns, which, indeed, marked the nature of their religious reform.

The duty of reforming Islam drew its inspiration from a *ḥadīth*, in which the Prophet is quoted as having said that "God will raise at the head of each century such

people for this *ummah*, as will revive (*yujaddidu*) its religion for it."<sup>1</sup> This was to suggest that no century of the Muslim era would remain devoid of one who would rise in the face of ignorance, endeavor to purge Islam of all impurities and restore the faith to its original form and spirit. In the *ḥadīth* mentioned above, the verb *yujaddidu* contains the concept of giving a new form of life to an old changeless substance, life which is embodied in the eternal message of the *Qur'ān* and in the practice of the Prophet and the *ṣalāḥ*. As such, the word *tajdīd* (the abstract noun of the verb *yujaddidu*), which has been adopted as one of the fundamental doctrines of Islamic reformism, conveys the concept of purification, since the essential mission of reform is to achieve a pure brand of Islam and to reformulate permanently valid and immutable dogma.

The concept of reform in contemporary Islam is closely connected with the idea of modernism, since one of the messages that reformists advanced was the repudiation of authorities which could not stand the test of reason. Reformists regarded a particular ruling of the *Sharī'ah* as being valid for the time in which it was formulated. It was due to historical, social and political conditions that particular rulings of the *Sharī'ah* had been introduced. For the reformists, these rulings would be subject to rational inquiry, which had become an integral element in the system of modern thinking. Thus, a reformist was at the same time a modernist, since he viewed Islam as being entirely compatible with modern rational inquiry and, what is more, the embodiment of modern ideas and values in their highest form. Moreover, the reformist was simultaneously a puritan, as has been previously explained, since within his precept there lay the doctrine of purging Islam of extraneous elements added over time. It is in the context of this meaning of reform, which combines a call for purification with an insistence on Islam's compatibility with new realities, that Moenawar Chalil's reformist thought is discussed in this thesis. On the basis of the foregoing definitions, the terms reformist, modernist and puritan will be employed

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<sup>1</sup>Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Jinān li-al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1988), 512.

interchangeably to characterize Chalil's thought. This is despite the fact that one term might be used more extensively than the others, depending on the emphasis given to individual subjects.

In reviewing the careers of Indonesian reformists who advocated the idea of a return to an unspoiled Islam, the name of Moenawar Chalil readily comes to mind. Chalil seems to have been among the first to write on the topic of a return to the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* as attested by the title of a book that he wrote in 1956.<sup>2</sup> As a reformist, the general pattern of his thought was the encouragement of religious purification, which was geared towards the rebuilding of a good and moral society. He saw the relaxation of religious observances and divergence from orthodoxy as grave threats to Muslim society and believed that the remedying of these ills was not possible unless a deeper reform of religious life was undertaken. His approach was similar to that of other reformists, viz. appealing to the supreme authority of the *Qur'ān*, to the example of Muḥammad and to the way the Islamic community was organized in his time. By taking early Islamic history as his pattern of reform, Chalil found inspiration in the Prophet's *jihād*, which implied active effort to reestablish the purity of religious teachings.

In line with this way of thinking, Chalil saw it as his duty to attack the religious practices of those whom both he and his reformist counterparts called the traditionalists, whom he identified as those who did not share his understanding of the teachings of Islam. By definition, these traditionalists were the followers of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'* and the *Persatuan Turbiyah Islāmīyah*, better known as the *Pertu*. Thus, he was inspired to criticize their practice of *taqlid*, their adherence to the *madhhab*, the "inauthenticity" of their *fiqh*-texts and their observance of popular religious celebrations. Similarly, he demanded the freedom of *ijtihād* and the implementation of *ittibā'* in order to maintain legal

<sup>2</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956); for the comment of Dawam Rahardjo on this issue, see in M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Melihat ke Belakang Merancang Masa Depan: Pengantar," in *Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan* (ed.) M. Dawam Rahardjo (Jakarta: P3M, 1989), 1-2.

independence from the authority of others. He held that Islam could only be a religion for all people at all times, if a creative interpretation of its primary sources, the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*, was conducted by means of *ijtihād*.

Considering that his preaching was a call for religious reform, Chalil's reformist thought will be studied from a doctrinal point of view. The term doctrine either refers to the principles as stipulated in the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* or to the long-established legal opinions of the early scholars, some of whom were reformists themselves. By so doing, his reform will be revealed in its historical context and be treated as part of a general trend towards religious reform that rested on a single doctrinal basis. Consideration of Chalil's dependence on early reformist thought will, thus, be an object of investigation, in that it will reveal the pattern of the reformist doctrine that guided him in his "re-statement of Islamic teachings". The intellectual dialogue between Chalil and the traditionalists, which was a feature of every stage of his career, will be studied in terms of the arguments that each side put forward. Such an examination is not intended to decide which of the two parties won the contest, but rather to bring out the doctrinal issues raised in the dialogue.

Chalil's reformist thought deserves scholarly investigation. Such an inquiry is indispensable, since the reform movements in Indonesia, as indeed in other places, received their religious inspiration from their leading thinkers. Studying his thought is even more important, since his dual position as the head of the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* (Council of the *'Ulamā'*) of the *Persatuan Islam*, better known as the *Persis*, and as a member of the *Majlis Tarjih Pusat* (the Central Board of *Fatwā*) of the *Muhammadiyah* will offer a broader insight into the interpretations of reformist doctrines in Indonesia. To date, no scholarly attention has been paid to the doctrinal aspects of reform as defined above. Rather, the study of the reform movement in Indonesia has tended to analyze it in light of its socio-historical framework, while ignoring the doctrinal dimension. As a result, scholars have neglected a central element of reform, i.e. its firm grounding in religious doctrine, thus

any effort to place it in a socio-historical framework while disregarding the doctrinal dimension is misleading. This can be seen in the fact that they have usually raised the issue of reform in the course of discussing the history of political or social organizations, such as the *Muhammadiyah*, the *Persis* and the *al-Irshād*.

## II. Moenawar Chalil and Scholarly Study of Islamic Reform in Indonesia

No serious study of Moenawar Chalil has been attempted so far, despite the fact that his works seem very promising for an inquiry into Indonesian Islam from the perspective of reformist thought. An undergraduate thesis was written by Mohamad Syafi'i on Chalil's theological views for the *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, the *IAIN* (the State Institute of Islamic Studies), Walisongo, Semarang, in 1989. The contribution of the thesis was to introduce Chalil as a writer on Islamic themes. Syafi'i, however, pays more attention to the historical development of Islamic theology, presenting Chalil's theological views only in a sketchy manner.<sup>3</sup>

Chalil also receives little attention from scholars who have devoted their work to the field of reform. It is only in Howard M. Federspiel's work on the *Persatuan Islam*, the organization with which Chalil was associated ideologically, that some attention is given to his participation in the organization.<sup>4</sup> No serious attempt is made by other scholars to discuss Chalil and his views or to place him among those reformists with whom he shared all his talents and knowledge. Even Deliar Noer, who wrote a Ph.D. dissertation in 1963 entitled "The Rise and Development of the Modernist Muslim Movement during the Dutch Colonial Period, 1900-1942," fails to mention Chalil's name, even though his work aims at

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<sup>3</sup>Mohamad Syafi'i, "Konsepsi Theology K. H. Munawwar Kholil: Suatu Studi Komparatif" (Drs. thesis, I.A.I.N. Walisongo, Semarang, 1989).

<sup>4</sup>Howard M. Federspiel, *The Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1970).

tracing the historical development of various reform organizations.<sup>5</sup> Yet, credit should be given to reformist thinkers such as Chalil, whose contribution to formulating the modernists' religious vision can scarcely be ignored. Chalil had, after all, written some substantial works on legal issues as early as the 1930s, when he was active in the *Muhammadiyah*.

Other works too ignore Chalil's role due to their focus on reform's anthropological and socio-political aspects. Nakamura's work on the *Muhammadiyah* movement in a central Javanese town, for example, views the *Muhammadiyah* from an anthropological dimension. As such, his book is primarily concerned with identifying the patterns of religious behavior of the followers of the *Muhammadiyah* at Kotagede, as expressed in the popular social and religious traditions that direct their day-to-day practical life. There is no discussion here of the doctrinal issues that play a central role in defining the ideological framework of the *Muhammadiyah*.<sup>6</sup> Boland's work, which surveys the political attitudes of the Indonesian Muslims with no particular emphasis on Islam as a system of faith, mentions Chalil's role in passing and only in his capacity as a pamphleteer.<sup>7</sup> Other works focusing on particular reform movements, such as Alfian's work on the *Muhammadiyah*, do not concentrate on individual reformist figures such as Chalil.<sup>8</sup> Although Bisri Affandi's thesis deals with the reformist figure Shaikh Ahmad Al-Shurkati, he, nevertheless, concentrates on Al-Shurkati's role in the formation of *Al-Irshād*. As a result, Al-Shurkati's reformist thought remains a side issue, with the main discussion being directed to the

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<sup>5</sup>Deliar Noer, "The Rise and Development of the Modernist Muslim Movement during the Dutch Colonial Period, 1900-1942," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1963).

<sup>6</sup>Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gajahmada University Press, 1983).

<sup>7</sup>B. J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

<sup>8</sup>Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gajahmada University Press, 1989).

historical necessity of the movement's foundation, its interaction with other reformist associations and its religious and social activities.<sup>9</sup>

### III. Description of the Contents

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The first chapter surveys the salient features of reformist thought, which is outlined to serve as a loose guide in the identification of Chalil's contribution in the field. This will necessarily involve a discussion of classical issues, such as attacks on the practice of *ṣūfism*, the liberation of reason from *bid'ah*, *taqlid* and *madhhab* and appeals for the exercise of *ijtihād*. The chapter also discusses the question of the absolute authority of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* and the necessity of their explanation in the light of rationality in order that they might better serve as a guide for human life. The survey in this chapter concentrates, above all, on the reformist doctrine of the need for a return to pristine Islam and its insistence to the compatibility of Islam with modernity.

The second chapter briefly surveys Chalil's education and career, the main feature of which was his exposure to various reformist ideas and his interaction with reformist figures. The chapter is also concerned with Chalil's association with reformist legal institutions affiliated with the modernist organizations as well as other institutions and how this affected his commitment to work for the progress of reform. His publishing activity in various reformist newspapers and magazines as well as in his own books is investigated to characterize the general tendency of his thought. The third chapter will discuss his conception of Dīn, Islam and Īmān, in order to detect his theological convictions and to place them in the context of his purification efforts. Another part of the discussion is an observation of his appeal to the spirit of activism, in which his attitude toward *ṣūfism* and his concept of *zuhd*, *ḡu'ā'* and *ikhtiyār* and the like are analyzed.

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<sup>9</sup>Bisri Affandi, "Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Shurkati: His Role in Al-Irshād Movement," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1976).

The fourth chapter will discuss Chalil's concept of a return to the primary sources of Islam, which mainly involves his revitalization of the "lost function" of the *Qur'ān*. This will be seen through an analysis of his approach to *Qur'ān*-interpretation, which he employed to stress the compatibility of the *Qur'ān* with present modes of thought and its function as a guide for modern life. The fifth chapter will present his championing of the *sunnah* as the supreme authority for Muslim religious observances. His concept of following the Prophetic *sunnah* will be studied in order to situate it within the reformist doctrine of emulating the Prophetic traditions. As part of the discussion, a comparison between his *fiqh al-sunnah* and the conventional *fiqh* will be made, so as to analyze his claim that the former is more authentic in its textual deduction than the latter.

The sixth chapter will study Chalil's concept of *ijtihād* and examine its implementation in order to assess whether it was exercised to accommodate the new realities or simply to refute established practices. His concept of *ijmā'* will also be presented in this chapter, as it was often associated with the principle of *ijtihād*. Both were often regarded as means of promoting the dynamics of Islam and of allowing it to adapt to change. His questioning of the validity of *taqlīd* and *madhhab* and his championing of *im'bā'* will receive considerable attention, since they became his chief concerns in opposing the traditionalist practices. In the course of the discussion, his references to the opinions of earlier scholars and those of the proponents of *taqlīd* are examined in the light of his arguments. The seventh chapter will deal with the polemics between Chalil and the traditionalists surrounding popular religious celebrations. In this chapter, the validity of his text-based rules are examined alongside the opinions of the early scholars.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Some Characteristic Features of Reformist Thought: A Historical Continuity

All reformist movements in the later Islamic period were based on the move towards Islamic purification as advocated by Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328 A.D.), who bowed to no authority other than the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth* and the practice of the *salaf*. During his lifetime, he led a campaign against various superstitious rites in order to recover the soul of uncompromising monotheism (*rūḥ al-tawḥīd*). Ibn Taymiyah's intellectual heritage had a great influence on subsequent Islamic movements, as the religious issues he raised in his struggle to purify Islam became archetypes, which all later reformers, to varying degrees, made their vehicle for expressing their religious convictions and thoughts.

Ibn Taymiyah believed that Islamic principles were sufficient for creating the ideal community. To achieve this ideal community, he proposed that a proper understanding of Islam be a prerequisite. This required first of all an understanding of the circumstances and the spirit in which the *Qur'ānic* text was revealed. Such an understanding would be formed by following closely the text and by disregarding any human mediation.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence of his disbelief in human mediation, Ibn Taymiyah condemned *taqlīd* (unquestioning acceptance), particularly on the part of those who are able to exercise *ijtihād*. Every able Muslim must try freely to reach his own decision regarding unsolved problems. Only if he fails in this attempt, might he imitate another *mujtahid*. The practice of *ijtihād*, in the eyes of Ibn Taymiyah, was central to Islamic thought. In his book *Muwāfaqat al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Manqūl li-al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ma'qūl*, for example, he illustrates how reason which became the primary tool of *ijtihād* and *shar'* agree with each other and present a safe path for human intellect and thought. By opening the gate of *ijtihād*, Ibn Taymiyah, sought

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<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad al-Bāḥī, "Factors of the Islamic Movements in the Arab World" (unpublished paper, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1956), 13.

recognition of the sense of independence in man, a sense which would make it necessary for him to avoid imitating others, as infallibility falls to no one.

Closely connected to his attacks on *taqlid* was his condemnation of popular religious practices. In general, according to Ibn Taymiyah, these popular practices were linked to a time and a location. The element of time can be seen, for example, in the veneration of the first Thursday and the following Friday night of the month of *Rajab* called *al-Raghā'ib*, which were marked by *Ṣalāt al-Raghā'ib* (communal supererogatory prayer). In a *fatwā* Ibn Taymiyah stated that since the Prophet never offered this prayer, nor any of his *ṣaḥābah* or the *ṭābi'ūn*, this prayer was *bid'ah*. He also attacked those practices which were linked to the element of location, such as the veneration of saints at their tombs, which he believed had deleterious influence upon the moral life of Muslims, since it directly promoted *shirk*<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Taymiyah criticized some *ṣūfīs* because of their belief in pantheism and their practice of exempting themselves from religious duties. He attacked such *ṣūfīs* as Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Sab'īn and Ibn Fāriḍ, calling them "the apostatizing *ṣūfī*-philosophers." Meanwhile, he showed respect and praise for the earlier *ṣūfīs*, such as al-Faḍl Ibn 'Ayyād, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī and al-Junayd. These he called the learned *ṣūfīs*, because their *ṣūfism* derived from Ibn Ḥanbal's book *al-Zuhd wa al-Wara'*, and were true representatives of the "monasticism" of Islam, not the *ṣūfism* of the philosophers. Moreover, he accepted the existence of *ahwāl* and the experience of *ma'rifaḥ* as having some kind of validity. He himself was invested with the *ṣūfī khirqah* (cloak) by Ibn Qudāmah, whose own *silsilah* extended back to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyah's Struggle against Popular Religion with an Annotated Translation of His Kitāb Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm Mukhālafat Asbāb al-Jahīm* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Hourani, "Rashid Rida and the Sufi Order: A Footnote to Laoust," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, 29 (1977), 234; G. Makdisi, "The Hanbali School and Sufism," *Humaniora Islamica*, 2 (1974), 61f.

A fierce opposition was mounted against Ibn Taymiyah by the possessors of traditional religious authority, since none of them were safe from his attacks which were extended from *sūfīs*, philosophers and *mutakallimūn* to *shī'īs*. He criticized the philosophers, showing that the philosophical thought of Muslims, which was based on Greek philosophy, did not serve the dogmatic tenets of Islam, but rather harmed them. As a puritan who regarded the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* as the sole references for any formulation of thought, Ibn Taymiyah rejected all types of philosophical speculation, accusing the philosophers of being *muḥtadī'ah* (condemnable innovators) and *malāḥidāh* (heretics). He argued that the conclusions to which the philosophers had come were basically Greek in nature and had nothing to do with Islam.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Taymiyah's criticism of the *mutakallimūn* was no less harsh than that which he had aimed at the philosophers. He held that *kalām* was suffused with Hellenism and contained more falsehood than truth. *Kalām*, which had begun as a device for defending religious principles from the attacks of non-Muslims, developed into a distinctive Islamic discipline which claimed to be *'Ilm Uṣūl ul-Dīn* (the science of the principles of religion *par excellence*). Ibn Taymiyah rejected that claim as a flagrant *bid'ah* and maintained that the principles of religious doctrine could be understood only through the right conception of the nature of prophecy and the prophetic mission. Muḥammad had already explained all the aspects of God's teachings needed for the human perception of religion, he maintained.<sup>5</sup>

The careful reader may discern in Ibn Taymiyah's ideas an inclination to go behind the historic formulations of all Muslim groups and to confine itself solely to the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. It was from this point of departure that he attacked the enthusiasm shown for any leading jurist and warned against the unquestioning acceptance of any juristic rite. He

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<sup>4</sup>Nurcholish Madjid, "Ibn Taymiyya on Kalam and Falsafa: A Problem of Reason and Revelation in Islam," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1984), 151, 183.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 113.

believed that such an acceptance is religiously forbidden and denied to those who can exercise *ijtihād*.<sup>6</sup>

The characteristic features of Ibn Taymiyah's religious reform did not disappear with his death, but were revived and implemented by many of the later reformers. The earliest among them was Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1791 A.D.), who inherited from Ibn Taymiyah the concept of uncompromising monotheism. Like Ibn Taymiyah, the Wahhābīs also displayed a rigid intolerance towards many popular religious practices, which eventually widened the gap between them and other Muslims. A case in point was their excessive disapproval of visits to shrines, a practice which was often motivated by natural piety, quite reasonable in itself. This attitude, which led them to desecrate the places of the dead, especially the most eminent companions and to show disrespect even for the Prophet's sanctuary, planted a feeling of hatred towards them among Muslims.

Although the *Wahhābī* movement was directly inspired by the ideas of Ibn Taymiyah, it departed from him in some important aspects. This is particularly the case with the Wahhābīs for they rejected all forms of *sūfism*. Moreover, the Wahhābīs violently opposed the intellectual trend in Islam. Even though they agreed with Ibn Taymiyah in rejecting the authority of the schools of law and insisted on *ijtihād*, they did everything in their power to discourage the actual tools of *ijtihād* by rejecting and hampering intellectualism.<sup>7</sup> The Wahhābīs had no interest in examining the opinions of the dogmatic and juristic schools and then adopting the best rulings on the basis of their own *ijtihād*. Rather, they accepted uncritically the sum total of the Islamic legacy of the first century and a half.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, their advocacy of *salafī* beliefs was maintained through the simple

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<sup>6</sup> al-Bāhī, "Factors of the Islamic Movements," 34.

<sup>7</sup> Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2 (ed.) P. M. Holt et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 632-638.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

acceptance of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* as sources of Islamic legislation, regardless of analogy and custom. Moreover, their promotion of the *salafī* practices primarily meant nothing more than the eradication of *bid'ahs* that had been introduced after the death of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, *Wahhābism* could not claim to have reawakened Islam through the introduction of *ijtihād*, in spite of their belief that it would prove to be the vehicle for helping Islam adapt to change.

However, despite all of its shortcomings, *Wahhābism* must be given some credit for introducing the ideas of Ibn Taymīyah which had been disregarded and looked upon as heresies for some four centuries. As such, *Wahhābism* could claim to be the precursor of the progressive ideas which criticized the established historical interpretation of Islam, ideas which became the staple diet of the later reformers. It must also be remembered that the Wahhābīs were the ones to stir interest in the canonical collections of *ḥadīth* and to publish the works of Ibn Taymīyah and his pupil, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah.<sup>10</sup>

*Wahhābism* spread its wings outside of Arabia. In India, for instance, the *Farā'īdī* of Bengal, the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* of the Punjab and the *Tarīqah Muḥammadiyah*, all called for opposition to *bid'ah* and insisted on the emulation of simple Islam. Like the Wahhābīs, the *Farā'īdī* movement advocated a strict observance of the *farā'īd* (duties) enjoined by Islam. It also aimed at enforcing the original teachings of Islam and at purging Muslim society of its various superstitious rites and ceremonies.<sup>11</sup> As for the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, the name itself indicates their opposition to *ra'y*; both they and the Wahhābīs displayed a marked intolerance towards any method of deriving religious knowledge which was not based squarely on the traditions of the Prophet.<sup>12</sup> The *Tarīqah Muḥammadiyah* was identified

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<sup>9</sup>al-Bāhī, *Factors of the Islamic Movements in the Arab World*, 23.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Abdus Subhan, "Social and Religious Reform Movements in the 19th Century Among the Muslims: A Bengali Reaction to the Wahhabi Movement," in *Social and Religious Reform Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, (ed.) S. P. Sen (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1979), 485.

<sup>12</sup>Arthur Jefferey, "Present Day Movements in Islam," *Muslim World*, 33 (1943), 169.

by some Muslims as an Indian version of the puritanical *Wahhābī* movement. Despite the fact that there is some question as to its ideological connection to *Wahhābism*, the *Tarīqah Muḥammadiyah* may be found to agree with *Wahhābism* in its basic tenets in as much as it too rejected the principle of blindly following the decisions of the medieval jurists. This movement also stressed the importance of the principle of independent judgment.<sup>13</sup>

The *Wahhābī*, the *Farā'īdī*, the *Ahl al-Hadīth* and the *Tarīqah Muḥammadiyah* movements were all manifestations of the Islamic reformist tendency that had become a conspicuous phenomenon in the Muslim world during the nineteenth century. From a universal perspective, they may be classified with the other reformist movements of the pre-modern period of Islamic history, such as the *Sanūsī* movement of Libya, the *Fulānī* movement of Nigeria and the *Padri* movement of Indonesia. They inherited the reformist outlook of Ibn Taymiyah and all of them featured a strong commitment to revive simple and uncompromising monotheism and to purge Muslim society of all the polytheistic accretions that had crept into it over the course of time.<sup>14</sup>

As pre-modern reformers, they were predominantly schooled in the medieval culture of Islam. Their attitude was a by-product of pre-nineteenth century culture in which the challenge and impact of modernism and scientific discoveries, although posing a certain threat, had not seriously confronted Islam. In pursuing reform, they looked to the external form of early Islam as the ideal religious paradigm. In so doing, they called for inward reform and a restoration of the ideal pattern of Islam through a restatement of its teachings. Their argument was that the root of the moral decadence of Muslim society and its backwardness must lie in ignorance of the enduring values of Islam itself. Hence, pre-modern Islamic reform may be described as having had a conservative spirit.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Mu'in-ud-din Ahmad Khan, "Farā'īdī Movement: An Historical Interpretation," *Islamic Studies*, 9 (1970), 123.

Like all great religions, Islam felt the impact of and responded to the manifold forces of modernity. There was hardly a facet of Muslim society which remained untouched by these forces. In his poem "Complaint and Answer," Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877-1938) eloquently expressed the stirrings, anxieties, and wonders of the Muslim soul in the presence of the new challenges that modernity imposed upon it at the turn of the century. In his poem, Iqbāl gives a voice to a complaint about Islam's agonizing condition and God's answer to it.<sup>15</sup> The need for an intellectual reorientation of Muslim society had, indeed, been felt by modern reformers as early as the latter half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Islamic world was in a state of submission to the Western powers. In 1774, the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarja was signed, in which Ottoman Turkey had to accept humiliating terms from Russia and cede many of its territories to the latter. Prior to this, in 1757, the battle of Plassey had taken place and as a result Bengal had passed to British rule. Then in 1758, the whole of the Indian subcontinent came under British suzerainty. This was followed by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. These events simultaneously created problems as well as challenges for Muslims and made them painfully aware of the need to seek the cause of their military and political weakness. Needless to say the challenge of modernity has become even more apparent and intimidating since then. The birth of modern Islamic reform could, therefore, be said to have been greatly influenced by the West.

In presenting Islam, modern reformers made use of the rational approach, so that its message, they hoped, would be in tune with the modern mind. Rationality became their vehicle for safeguarding religious doctrines. Unlike the reformers of pre-modern Islam, who were modest in their application of rationalism and maintained a balance between

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<sup>15</sup>Hassan Saab, "The Spirit of Reform in Islam," *Islamic Studies*, 2 (1963), 22.

reason and tradition, the modern reformers were prepared to put reason over tradition and to apply rational inquiry to their interpretation of religious principles.<sup>16</sup>

Modern reformers have claimed that Islam is a religion of rationality, a claim intended to prove that Islam is open to new ideas, creativity and progress. It came as a result of the pressing need to convince men of modern culture, who doubted the ability of Islam as a valid guide in modern life. Hence, they wrote works in which rationality was given a prominent place in theological discussions. For them, whatever reason commanded was God's command and whatever reason rejected could not be part of the *Qur'ān*. Using reason, they argued, Muslims could borrow from modernity whatever they needed to improve their lives, as long as the borrowing was in harmony with the reinterpreted *Qur'ānic* text. For them, there was nothing wrong with any new phenomenon so long as it was for the benefit of Muslims.

One of Muḥammad 'Abduh's favorite themes in his theological writings was the essential harmony between reason and revelation. 'Abduh (1849-1905 A.D.) declared that when properly expressed and understood, there could be no conflict between the two. Conflict only arose from the fact that men often misunderstood and supposed that the two were contradictory. The adoration of reason led 'Abduh to discuss the role of reason in human affairs and to specify its proper limits, using the principles of cause and effect as a way of explanation. He declares in one of his works that: "It is not possible for a Muslim to deny the sequence of cause and effect among natural phenomena, except by renouncing allegiance to his religion, even before he denies the validity of his reason and intelligence." He further states that those who do not employ the normal procedures of causation, which were ordained by God, should be charged with *shirk*.<sup>17</sup> In defense of the principle of

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<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad Daūd Rahbar, "Shāh Walī Allāh and Ijtihād," *Muslim World*, 45 (1955), 346; Muḥammad 'Abduh, "al-Radd 'alā Farāḥ Anṣūn," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh*, (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālīdah Sa'īd (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 78.

<sup>17</sup> Mazheruddin Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," *Islamic Studies*, 9 (1970), 38.



rationality in Islam, 'Abduh also seemed prepared to favor reason over revelation, when the two were in conflict.<sup>18</sup>

Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), a disciple of 'Abduh, was very much in favor of reason, stating that "the *Qur'ān* has said that *Ahl al-Kitāb* agreed that reason and religion were opposed to each other and that whatever reason concluded outside the text of the scriptures was invalid."<sup>19</sup> In another passage, he summarizes the role of reason as depicted in the *Qur'ān*, saying:

The *Qur'ān* taught its followers to ask for arguments and our virtuous ancestors followed the same course. They themselves held to arguments, they asked for arguments [from others] and they forbade people to accept anything without arguments. Then came the later generations who decided things in accordance with *taqlīd*, asked people to abide by *taqlīd* and forbade them to argue until Islam became the very opposite of what it was.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Iqbāl discussed the importance of reason in human life and claimed that Islam had given the latter its full due. The birth of Islam, he explained, was the birth of intellect, which alone made man master of his environment. The constant appeal to reason and experience in the *Qur'ān* and the latter's emphasis on nature and history as sources of human knowledge were, according to Iqbāl, all different aspects of the same idea. It was due to the prominent position which Islam ascribes to reason that *ijtihād* (creative interpretation) became an integral part of Islamic doctrine. For him, *ijtihād* signified the principle of movement in Islam and a means by which changes could be effected in the *Shari'ah*.<sup>21</sup>

Modern reformers were resorting to *ijtihād* in order to justify their efforts towards the modern and progressive goals that they had set for themselves. Through *ijtihād* they

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<sup>18</sup> 'Abduh, "al-Radd 'alā Farah Anṣūn," 78.

<sup>19</sup> Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," 42.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Mazheruddin Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Principle of Movement and Its Application to the Present Muslim Society," *Islamic Studies*, 5 (1966), 9.

returned to the *Qur'ān*, to the *sunnaḥ* of the Prophet and his companions and to the practice of the *salaf* in order to find the bases for new legal precepts. They, therefore, rejected obligatory adherence to the opinion of any *madhhab* (Islamic school of law), since they considered the latter to be guilty of maintaining inaccuracies and beliefs that would not stand the test of reason. In addition, *madhhabs* did not belong to pure Islam, since they did not come into existence until the third century of Islam. Worsening the reputation of the *madhhabs* in the eyes of modern reformers was the fact that affiliation to them had been one of the causes of disunity amongst Muslims, since they compelled Muslims to follow different opinions.<sup>22</sup>

Rationality, however, did not prevent modern reformers from remaining loyal to traditional Islam. None of them challenged the absolute truth contained in the message of the *Qur'ān* and only a few, like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1889 A.D.), held that a sizable number of traditions contained in the six sound works of *ḥadīth* were false.<sup>23</sup> It would be untrue, however, to claim that Sayyid Aḥmad Khān ever went so far as to reject the science of *ḥadīth*. He certainly acted on *ḥadīths*, whenever it was feasible to do so, provided that he was satisfied with their authenticity.

Since modern reformers regarded the *Qur'ān* as the chief vehicle for modernizing society, they approached it with modern concepts and tools, believing that the time had come for it to be explained in the light of rationality. The *Qur'ān* was to be purified of irrational elements and all the fantastic stories contained within it known as the *Isrā'īliyyāt* (Jewish legends).<sup>24</sup> Unlike medieval commentaries, reformist *Qur'ānic* commentaries were characterized by evocations of its moral message rather than by attention to the

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<sup>22</sup>Rudolph Peters, "Ijtihād and Taqlīd in the 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt Des Islams*, 20 (1980), 132.

<sup>23</sup>Hafeez Malik, "The Religious Liberalism of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," *Muslim World*, 54 (1964), 165.

<sup>24</sup>Assad Nimer Busool, "Shaikh Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā's Relations with Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh," *Muslim World*, 66 (1976), 278.

grammatical, lexicographical or rhetorical beauty of the *Qur'ān*. Their commentaries also brought didactic considerations to the fore.<sup>25</sup>

They rejected the idea of miracles, which were often attributed to some *Qur'ānic* verses by earlier commentators. In this respect, 'Abduh denied that miracles had any place in Islam, since Islam was a religion in which belief in the *sunnat Allāh* (natural law) was demanded by faith. Sayyid Ahmad Khān also denied miracles, declaring that the incidents which were regarded as miracles were, indeed, causal happenings which took place according to natural phenomena.<sup>26</sup> He cautioned Muslims that senseless statements attributed to the Prophet and all the fantastic stories about his life would only expose Islam to contempt and ridicule.<sup>27</sup> He rejected the concept of miracles not because it was in contradiction with reason, but because of its lack of a textual basis. He felt that the *Qur'ān* did not lend support to such happenings, which contravened nature or ran counter to the principles on which the universe had been created. According to him, the bulk of medieval *tafsīrs* involved *khawāriq al-'ādah* (supernatural phenomena), which he considered irrelevant in explaining the holy message of God. In his *tafsīr*, therefore, he tried to explain the miraculous elements of the *Qur'ān* in terms of natural causation, an explanation which led his opponents to accuse him of being a naturalist.<sup>28</sup>

Riḍā approached the controversy of miracles from a sociological perspective. He argued that with the coming of Islam, the days of miracles were over, as man had by that time reached the stage of intellectual maturity.<sup>29</sup> The reformers' disbelief in miracles, thus, implied a protest against the doctrine of *jabr* (compulsion), which had reduced man to a nonentity and denied his causal efficacy. Hence, their belief in the world as a system of

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<sup>25</sup>Mahmudul Haq, *Muhammad 'Abduh: A Study of a Modern Thinker of Egypt* (Aligarh: Islamic Studies, Aligarh University, 1970), 111.

<sup>26</sup>Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," 43.

<sup>27</sup>Malik, "The Religious Liberalism of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," 167.

<sup>28</sup>Muhammad Daūd Rahbar, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān's Principles of Exegesis: Translated from his *Taḥrīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*," *Muslim World*, 46 (1956), 105.

<sup>29</sup>Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," 42.

causes and effects led them either to a denial of miracles or to an explanation of them in more or less rational terms.

The characteristic feature of reformist Islam, in all its variety, was the call for the rejection of *taqlid*. Like Ibn Taymiyah, modern reformers tried to liberate reason from all the fetters of *taqlid* that had enslaved it. It was then, they believed, that reason would be restored its proper dignity, subject only to God and in conformity with the latter's sacred law. The protest against *taqlid* was ultimately intended to deny the authority of a few and their control over the beliefs of others. For reformers, any person who controls the belief of another is committing a grave sin which is tantamount to infidelity.<sup>30</sup>

*Taqlid*, 'Abduh states, is a malaise and society must be cured of this social malediction first, since no step towards progress can be taken without this first being done. 'Abduh's attack on *taqlid* should not be understood merely in terms of its doctrinal content, but also in terms of its ethical message. Taking the ethical appeal of Islam as his point of departure, he advocates his concept of social responsibility, by quoting the *Qur'anic* verse: "Verily God will not change the state of a people until they change their own state."<sup>31</sup> In fact, the whole corpus of 'Abduh's criticism was directed against social conservatism in the guise of *taqlid*. Conviction, according to him, must be based on an intelligent acceptance of faith, since the acquisition of faith without investigation is as bad as faithlessness.<sup>32</sup>

Simplicity of faith was also frequently discussed by reformers. Simplicity for them meant delivering Islam from the medieval morass in which it had become entangled. This was seen in what Sayyid Ahmad Khān had said about his whole attempt at reform. His reform was directed at restoring the simplicity of faith, since he thought many fields of

<sup>30</sup>Muhammad 'Abduh, *Tafsir Juz' 'Amma* (Cairo: al-Maṭābi' al-Sha'bi, n.d.), 175.

<sup>31</sup>The *Qur'an*, 13: 11; P. J. Vatikiotis, "Muhammad 'Abduh and the Quest for a Muslim Humanism," *Islamic Culture*, 31 (1957), 115.

<sup>32</sup>Haq, *Muhammad 'Abduh*, 88.

belief and conduct had been wrongly brought under the purview of religion. Islam, which was entangled with additional materials, should be simplified and confined only to the *Qur'ān*, and a few authentic *ḥadīth*, provided that these last could stand the test of reason.<sup>33</sup>

In so far as the simplification of faith and the exclusion from religion of all its later accretions were concerned, Iqbāl was very much in line with the thought of the other Muslim reformers. In this respect, Iqbāl called the simplification of faith "a return to pure Islam." He even concluded that the essence of Islam was summed up in the two words *Lā Ilāh* (there is no God [but God]) as illustrated in two lines of a poem he composed: "The Qalandar has nothing with him except two words *Lā Ilāh*, but the jurist in the city is rich in Arabic lexicography."<sup>34</sup> 'Abduh, on the other hand, viewed simplicity as a means of avoiding *al-ghulāt fī al-dīn* (excess of religious zeal), which was forbidden by Islam. Excessive religious zeal was condemned, he pointed out, because excessiveness would be counter-productive for Muslims. Similarly, an over-concern with religion would result only in the negligence of material progress and worldly affairs, he concluded. The principle of simplicity helped to foster the reduction of a rigid affiliation to any particular *madhhab*. The reformers' approval of the application of *talfīq* (moving from one *madhhab* to another), for instance, was a way of simplifying the practice of religious duties and led to the abandonment of the opinion of one *madhhab* for that of another, which was found to be more simple, accommodating and expedient.<sup>35</sup> In other words, according to the principle of *talfīq*, rulings do not have to stem from the same *madhhab* all the time. A follower of Abū Ḥanīfah, for example, should not be restricted to the *Ḥanafī* interpretation of the *Shari'ah*, nor should the follower of al-Shāfi'i be bound to the interpretations of the latter.

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<sup>33</sup>Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," 36-37.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>35</sup>Fazlur Rahman, "Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives," *IJMES*, 21 (1970), 325.

The reformers claimed that the concept of simplicity, which was intended to make life easier and less exacting on people, was in agreement with the aims of the *Shari'ah*. The *Qur'ān* says: "God desireth for you ease. He desireth not hardship for you."<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the traditions of the Prophet further emphasize this point: "Make things easier, not more difficult, bring good things to the people and don't drive them away." "Assume unto yourself such work as you are able to perform." "Refrain from doing that which I have prohibited, and carry out that which I have ordered you to do within the limits of your capability." Therefore, it was argued that one of the implications of these texts was that the believer does not have to feel guilty if he fails to live strictly in accordance with the traditional Islamic precepts. Moreover, a "modern" Muslim, a prototype that reformers wished to create, could remain a faithful adherent of Islam, even if he did not fulfill the strict rulings of the *Shari'ah*.<sup>37</sup>

Like Ibn Taymiyah, modern reformers often attacked *sūfism*. They did so quite cautiously, since they believed that some *sūfī* teachings could lead to the positive attitude required for the needs of a life which demanded strong spiritual abilities. 'Abduh, for example, admired *sūfism* when it functioned as a means of introducing the emotional part of a person to the love of God and humanity. This, according to him, built up one's tolerance and motivated the mind to understand matters that would, otherwise, have remained impenetrable. Describing the deep feelings left by a *sūfī* experience he had during his early life, 'Abduh admits that: "All the grace I now enjoy in my religion I have because of *sūfism*."<sup>38</sup> His overall attitude towards *sūfism*, however, was one of condemnation and rejection of the *sūfī* concepts of *ḥulūl*, *maqāmāt*, *ahwāl* and others.

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<sup>36</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 2: 185.

<sup>37</sup>Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn li-al-Ṭibā'ah, 1987), 10; Elie Salem, "Arab Reformers and the Reinterpretation of Islam," *Muslim World*, 55 (1965), 314.

<sup>38</sup>Nabeel A. Khoury and Abdo J. Baaklini, "Muḥammad 'Abduh: An Ideology of Development," *Muslim World*, 69 (1979), 47-48.

His disciple, Rashid Riḍā, on the other hand, mainly criticized certain practices of one particular *ṭarīqah*, the *Mawlawīyah*, which he feared could distract the believer and might even replace the forms of worship prescribed by the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. He also illustrated the dangers of *ṣūfism*, an illustration that became a characteristic of his work whether in the long section of the *Tafsīr al-Manār* or in his articles scattered throughout his periodical, *al-Manār*. The dangers of ascribing *karāmah* to *ṣūfī*-saints were also illustrated in the course of his attack on *ṣūfism*.<sup>39</sup>

In general, the modern reformers' attacks on *ṣūfism* came as a consequence of their confidence in the ability of man to realize his ends through struggle and effort. This was in contradiction to *ṣūfism* which insisted upon individual self-purification as the highest end of life. By so doing, *ṣūfism* taught passivity, produced a certain apathy towards worldly affairs and neglected society at the expense of the individual. There was also an added factor in their criticism against *ṣūfism*, i.e., that *ṣūfism* upheld *jāh*, while the reformers incited Muslims to a concerted effort for the reformation of their society and for the defense of their religion.

Reform movements engulfed every corner of the Muslim world. Reformers' awareness of the importance of disseminating their ideas and the need to influence the public made them all the more committed to the establishment of newspapers and magazines. The influence of reformist journals was so immense that it was claimed that "the newspaper, *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, was capable of causing a revolution even before the next issue was out." Indeed, no one doubted that *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* would have created a great revolution in the Muslim world, had it survived long enough.<sup>40</sup> If it were not for *al-Manār*, most of 'Abduh's thought would have been lost and his reforms would have remained unknown. It is due to *al-Manār's* influence that 'Abduh managed to

<sup>39</sup>Hourani, "Rashid Rida and the Sufi Orders," 236.

<sup>40</sup>Busool, "Shaykh Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā," 273.

establish a party and to have followers outside Egypt. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān also undertook the reformation of the Muslim community through the publication of a journal, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, which was meant to be a forum for discussion of prevailing customs and social habits on the basis of rational principles. The role of his journal cannot be underestimated, since it was through *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* that he was able to voice his utter disappointment and to suggest changes to the current religious practices.<sup>41</sup>

Modern reformers were keenly aware of the need for radical reform in Muslim society. They stood for the simplification of faith and a return to the pristine purity of Islam. To this end, they presented a world-view in which man, far from being a prisoner of blind fate, was an efficacious agent in controlling his destiny. In so doing, they also described the world as a system of causes and effects in which he, by taking appropriate means, could bring about desired results and changes. Modern reformers were interested in the reconstruction of Muslim society, since they were preoccupied with social issues more than the individuals who composed it. This emphasis on society led them to oppose traditions which taught passivity, as reflected in their reaction against the practices of *ṣūfism* and *naqlīd*. Hence, it was emphasized that Islam was a rational religion and one which exhorted its followers to ponder, to think and to act rationally. Although a difference in their various methods and approaches is discernible, yet the results of their thought were not very different.

The reform movements of the pre-modern and modern Islamic periods reflected trends and currents, rather than doctrines or schools of thought systematically elaborated. There were certainly a number of differences between the two, yet, they could be said to represent concerns and problems very similar to one another. The two trends were equally disgusted with the present and strove to change and ameliorate it. The appeal of those reformers, both pre-modern and modern, lay in the fact that they were in tune with their

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<sup>41</sup>Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Muslim Modernism," 36.



time. They were also united in calling Muslims to return to the *Qur'ān* and to abandon partisanship in favor of religious rites that were sometimes preferred to the *Qur'ān* itself. In addition, principles of their reformist belief included a call for religious purification with the aim of establishing a society as idealized by the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. Lastly, the presence of uniformity and similarity between the religious issues they discussed indicates that reformers followed a single stream of thought, notwithstanding differences attributable to time and circumstances.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A Biographical Sketch of Moenawar Chalil: His Life and Writings

Moenawar Chalil was born at Kendal, central Java, on February 28, 1908. He came from a respectable *kiyai* (religious scholar) family, whose members had established themselves as successful traders. He received a traditional education at the hands of his father, Muhammad Chalil, and his uncle, Muhammad Salim as well as other *kiais* at Kendal, such as Abdulchamid and Irfan.<sup>1</sup> Although Chalil's family had the financial means to educate their son at a modern educational institution, Chalil was not destined to do so. This was in compliance with his mother's wish who wanted him to become a *kiyai* rather than a *priyayi* (bureaucrat), who received his training at the modern educational system.<sup>2</sup> His mother's hope was only partially realized, since Chalil's career led him to become both a prominent *kiyai* and a respected *priyayi*. However, he could not claim the title of *priyayi*, after abandoning his position as the head of the Department of Religious Affairs in the Semarang district.

At the age of seventeen, Chalil became involved in the nationalist movement and joined in a political uprising at Kendal, an uprising linked to the activities of *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Unification) at Solo.<sup>3</sup> As a militant movement, the activities of *Sarekat Islam* sometimes led to social and political unrest and, as a result, were closely watched by the colonial government.<sup>4</sup> It was due to his involvement in militant activities that an order to exile Chalil to Boven Digul in Irian Jaya was issued by the assistant regent of the sub-district of Kendal. This order was never executed, thanks to Chalil's father who persuaded the assistant regent to annul the order. At that time, Boven Digul was a designated place

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<sup>1</sup>Fadhloellah Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup Almarhum K. H. Moenawwar Chalil" (unpublished paper, Bogor, 1993), 2; M. Fadhil Munawwar, "Riwayat Hidup Almarhum K. H. Munawwar Chalil," (unpublished paper, Semarang, 1987), 1.

<sup>2</sup>"H. Moenawar Chalil," *Minggu Abadi* (February 28; 1960).

<sup>3</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 1; Munawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 3.

<sup>4</sup>For the activities of the *S. I.* local branches which often led to uprisings and clashes with other social forces, see *Sarekat Islam Lokal* (Jakarta: Arsip Nasional, 1975).

where political detainees were imprisoned during the colonial era. According to "Riwayat Hidup", Chalil's father petitioned for the reversal of the exile order on the ground of sending his son to study in Arabia.<sup>5</sup> This early experience left an indelible mark on Chalil and, to a great extent, foreshadowed his future struggle against established religious dogma.

Thus, shortly after his release, Chalil was sent by his father to study in Arabia, where he spent four years (1926-1929). It was during this stay that he was influenced by the *Wahhābī* reformist spirit, which later manifested itself in his own reformist writings and activities. His time in Arabia was a critical one, because it witnessed the efforts on the part of the Wahhābīs to establish their political and religious supremacy over the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, *Wahhābism* was not an unfamiliar ideology to Chalil who had been exposed to such ideas by his teachers from Solo.<sup>6</sup> *Wahhābism* had been introduced to the Malay archipelago in the nineteenth century by pilgrims returning from the Hejaz.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Arabia was frequently visited by many young Indonesian students. They went there to study and to learn new ideas, which they disseminated upon their return to their country. The impact of *Wahhābī* radicalism was not only reflected in the religious zeal directed against anything considered incompatible with the purity of Islam, but also in political confrontations against the existing political structures. The best example of this impact was the sectarian antagonism between the advocates of *Wahhābism*, on the one hand, and the defenders of traditions, on the other, which manifested itself in the *Padri* war (1821-1837) in west Sumatra, a region where *Wahhābism* found a fertile land for growth.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 1; Munawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 3.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>In an effort to spread their new ideas, reformists from west Sumatra used force against the possessors of religious and political authority, whom they considered to have hampered their reform mission. Their radicalism eventually brought about a large-scale counter-attack from the established '*ulama*' and the political elite, a counter-attack which ultimately broke out in a civil war, known as the *Perang Padri* in which the established authorities, in

Many prominent leaders of the Indonesian Muslim community went to Arabia to further their religious education with some of them becoming agents of change upon their return to their society. Hasyim Asy'ari and Ahmad Dahlan, the founders of the two largest Islamic organizations the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'* (the Renaissance of the *'Ulamā'*) and the *Muhammadiyah* respectively, as well as Hamka, an eminent scholar who held various religious posts, were prime examples of this trend.

There were a number of prominent Indonesian scholars teaching in Arabia, whose academic fame attracted students from the far-off corners of Indonesia. Scholars such as Ahmad Khatib, Muhammad Ibn 'Umar al-Bantani, 'Abd al-Karim and Maḥfūz al-Tirmidhi were among the most prominent ones. Among these, Ahmad Khatib should be given the utmost credit for contributing to the future destiny of Islamic organizations in Indonesia. It was the graduates of his *ḥalaqah* (study circle) that come to lead the reformist as well as the traditionalist groups in the archipelago.<sup>8</sup>

During his stay in Mecca, Chalil's preoccupation with the existing trend of religious thought was exhibited by his active participation in an organization established by his fellow expatriates in Arabia. It is also reported that he practiced law in an Islamic court there, an experience that eventually gave him more insight into *Wahhābism* as a legal institution.<sup>9</sup> This experience certainly enriched his religious views and was partly responsible for the formation of his puritanical convictions as defined by the Wahhābis.<sup>10</sup>

Chalil also became aware of the reformist trend in Egypt and its surrounding regions during his stay in the Hejaz. Indeed, he was greatly influenced and impressed by

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collaboration with the Dutch, were able to win the battle. M. Sanusi Latief, "Gerakan Kaum Tua di Minangkabau," (Ph.D. dissertation, I.A.I.N. Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, n.d.), 54-64.

<sup>8</sup>For a detailed account, see Tamar Djaja, *Ulama Sumatera Barat* (n.p.: Pusaka Indonesia, n.d.).

<sup>9</sup>Munawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 2; Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 2; "H. Moenawwar Chalil."

<sup>10</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 4.

the modernist outlook of Muḥammad 'Abduh, as can be discerned from the number of 'Abduh's writings that he read and cited in many of his works. Furthermore, the structure of Chalil's *tafsir* and his interpretation of particular *Qur'ānic* verses were obviously inspired by 'Abduh's style. His discussion of the compatibility of religion with modernity, which dominated his debate over the innate human need for religious guidance, showed the dialectical approach employed by 'Abduh in his apologetic defense of Islam against non-Muslim attacks.<sup>11</sup>

Not surprisingly, his respect for 'Abduh reached the point of adoration, the adoration of a *murid* (a devoted pupil) for his teacher who was nobly protecting the faith from the incursions of non-Islamic elements into the structure of Muslim religious practices. When quoting 'Abduh's ideas, Chalil often refers to him as "*yang mulia*" (his excellency), thus showing his deep respect and affection for the person whose faith in the truth of Islam and whose struggle for its adaptation to modernity was, in Chalil's eyes, an example to all subsequent generations of reformists.

It is known that 'Abduh's writings and fame spread as far as Indonesia. Not only did 'Abduh's ideas on Islamic reform influence the thought of individual reformists such as Chalil, but it also inspired the birth of a number of reformist organizations in Indonesia in the early twentieth century, such as the *Jam'iyat Khayr* (the Association for the Good founded in 1905), the *Persyarikatan Ulama* (the Union of Muslim Scholars founded in 1911), the *Muhammadiyah* (founded in 1912), the *al-Irshād* (the Guidance founded in 1913) and the *Persatuan Islam* or *Persis* (the Unity of Islam founded in 1923).<sup>12</sup> Of

<sup>11</sup>See Moenawar Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayat-Rahmaan*, vol. 1 (Solo: Siti Sjamsijah, 1958).

<sup>12</sup>Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 73. While studying under Indonesian teachers at Mecca, many Indonesian students there also became acquainted with Muḥammad 'Abduh's reformist ideas. 'Abduh's ideas were later studied more in depth when these students continued their intellectual journey at al-Azhar. The same students were later among the transmitters of 'Abduh's ideas in Indonesia. Zamachsyari Dhofier, "K. H. Hasyim Asy'ari Penggalang Islam Tradisional," *Prisma*, 1 (January 1984), 77.

these, the most puritanical one was the *Persis*, with which Chalil was associated as chairman of its *Majlis 'Ulama'*.<sup>13</sup> 'Abduh's ideas were disseminated through his articles in the periodical, *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, which was imported or smuggled into Indonesia through direct subscription or via pilgrims returning home from Mecca or traders from Singapore.<sup>13</sup>

Chalil tried to model himself after both Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and 'Abduh. While he subscribed to an uncompromising monotheism clearly based on Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's teachings, he also adopted the idea of the suitability of Islam to modernity and scientific discoveries, which was the main focus of 'Abduh's thought. This deep admiration for both reformers was expressed in his book, *Dua Sedjoli Pembangun Alam Islamy: Muhammad Abdul Wahhab dan Muhammad Abduh* (The Duumvirate, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad 'Abduh: The Architects of the Muslim World).<sup>14</sup> In general, however, Chalil was very receptive to the views of other Middle Eastern reformers and thinkers. The ideas of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Rashīd Riḍā, Shakīb Aarsalān, Ṭanṭawī Jawhārī and others also received Chalil's attention. Chalil, for example, translated a part of al-Afghānī's book *al-Radd 'alā al-Dahriyyā* and the whole of Aarsalān's book, *Limādhā Ta'akhkhar al-Muslimūn wa Taqaddama Ghayruhum*.<sup>15</sup> It was owing to this translation that Aarsalān's viewpoint on the causes of the stagnation of Muslim religious life as well as the loss of Muslim political power became quite popular in Indonesia.<sup>16</sup>

Upon his return from Arabia, Chalil became involved in both bureaucratic tasks and

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<sup>13</sup>See Deliar Noer, "Masjumi: Its Organization, Ideology and Political Role in Indonesia," (M. A. thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca New York, 1960), 13.

<sup>14</sup>See "H. Moenawar Chalil."

<sup>15</sup>Chalil translated one chapter of al-Afghānī's book *al-Radd 'alā al-Dahriyyā* entitling it "Kepentingan dan Kemanfaatan Agama" and including it in the last chapter of his *Definisi dan Sendi Agama* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970); Chalil's translation of Aarsalān's work was the only translated version available in the Indonesian language. A sporadic translation of the book appearing in several issues of *Pembela Islam* may be another version of his translation. See Moenawar Chalil (trans.), *Mengapa Kaum Muslimin Mundur* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1954); *Pembela Islam* 53, 54, 23-26.

<sup>16</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 46.

reformist activities. Unlike some of the leading figures of the reform movements, who were sometimes in opposition to the regime and rejected any government appointments, Chalil was willing to work for the regime. For almost ten years, he served as the head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the district of Semarang.<sup>17</sup> Even though he initially seemed to recognize the legitimacy of the ruling regime, he later made clear his disagreement with the political leadership of the country. This political stance, however, was slow to manifest itself<sup>18</sup> and became known when charges of his involvement in an abortive Islamic rebellion, known as the *Pemberontakan Dār al-Islām*, the *DI* (the Rebellion of the House of Islam), became public.<sup>19</sup> His hostile attitude toward the government was translated into action with his resignation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1951. In 1952, he refused Soekarno's offer of a high position in Jakarta and he also declined the position of Minister of Religious Affairs offered to him by the Indonesian Nationalist Party (*P.N.I.*)-*Masjumi* coalition cabinet. He believed that becoming a member of the ruling political elite in the capital city would force him to give up his oppositional stance, which was far more important for his moral integrity and political convictions than a respected status in Jakarta.<sup>20</sup>

Chalil's political stance places him among those puritan Muslims who believed that politics made men corrupt and worldly. They felt that it was lust for worldly gains and not divine guidance that controlled the ambitions of political leaders. Puritan Muslims believed

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<sup>17</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 4.

<sup>18</sup>He became the head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the Semarang district after the Japanese occupied the country in 1942. It was a Japanese army commander who appointed him as the head of the ministry's district office in Semarang, central Java. Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 4-5.

<sup>19</sup>A document sent by the head of the *Dār al-Islām* or *DI* (the House of Islam) and the *Tentara Islam Indonesia T.I.I.* (Indonesian Muslim Military Forces) to Moenawwar Chalil promised him the governorship of the province of central Java, provided that the revolt of the *Dār al-Islām* met with success. When the document was discovered in Cirebon in late 1951, he was jailed for seven months and released by the authorities after the charges proved lacking in supporting documents. Ibid.; see also Moenawwar Chalil, *Al-Qur'an Dari Masa Ke Masa* (Solo: Ramadhani, 1985), viii.

<sup>20</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 5; "Munawar Kholil," in *Ensiklopedi Islam di Indonesia*, vol. 2, (ed.) Harun Nasution et. al. (Jakarta: Departemen Agama R. I., 1988), 630.

that these leaders had lost all religious commitment and had, therefore, adopted a secular ideology in order to remove Islam from politics. In their hands, Islam had come to be an object of manipulation and a tool for political ends. This belief led Chalil to end his career as a bureaucrat and to take up again his activities in several reformist religious movements and to do some writing.<sup>21</sup>

Soon after his return from Arabia, Chalil rose to prominence and held a number of religious offices. He became a member of the *Majlis Tarjih Pusat* (the Central Board of *Fatwā*) of the *Muhammadiyah* two years after its establishment. The *Majlis Tarjih* came into existence when the proposal for the foundation of a council of Islamic jurisprudence was approved in the 28th *Muhammadiyah* convention held in Yogyakarta in 1928.<sup>22</sup> The *Majlis Tarjih* was founded in response to the growing need of *Muhammadiyah* members for *fatwās* on matters related to the *furū'* (details) and the *khilāfiyāt* (disputed issues). It should be noted that the period from the 1920s to the early 1960s was marked by intense debates between the supporters of the reformist and the traditionalist factions over the issues of *furū'* and *khilāfiyāt*.

The *Muhammadiyah*, which claimed to be the guardian of reformist principles, used the *Majlis Tarjih* as a platform for its '*ulamā*' to express their reformist views on question pertaining to *fiqh*.<sup>23</sup> The word *tarjih*, which was thought to reflect the idea of *ijtihad*, betokened the *Muhammadiyah's* conscious effort to establish rulings independent of any earlier juristic opinions. Some members of the *Majlis* were even of the opinion that

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<sup>21</sup> Chalil's objection to working for the government was presumably also inspired by the behavior of many of the earliest jurists and theologians who refused any government appointment for fear of losing the courage to speak the truth. He claimed that many respected *ḥadīth* scholars and founders of *madhabs* refused to become *qādis* for the reason stated above. Moenawar Chalil, *Biography Empat Serangkai Imam Madzhab* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1955), 87-88, 193.

<sup>22</sup> Asmuni Abdul Rahman, et. al. *Majlis Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Research dan Survey IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1985), 27.

<sup>23</sup> Fathurrahman Djamil, "Ijtihad Muhammadiyah Dalam Masalah-Masalah Fikih Kontemporer: Studi Tentang Penetapan Teori *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*," (Ph.D. dissertation, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 1993-1994), 101.



the efforts exerted by the *Majlis Tarjih* had reached such an ideal level as to warrant changing the name from *Majlis Tarjih* to *Majlis Ijtihad*. This proposal, however, was turned down, because other members held that the sense of the word *tarjih* was more in keeping with the historical and institutional development of the *Majlis*.<sup>24</sup>

From its establishment, the *Majlis Tarjih* dealt mainly with questions related to pure ritual practices (*'ibadah mahdah*), a subject in which Chalil was a most competent scholar.<sup>25</sup> Chalil had written some books and articles as early as 1933 which were more or less prepared as practical manuals for ritual duties. It was in consideration of his educational training as well as his reformist conviction that the founder of the *Majlis Tarjih*, Mas Mansur, appointed Chalil as a member of the *Majlis Tarjih* two years after its foundation.<sup>26</sup>

The *Majlis Tarjih* stipulated two criteria for any potential member: first, a candidate must be a member of the parent organization (the *Muhammadiyah*) and second, he must be capable of performing the task of *tarjih*. The first and foremost requirement of any member undertaking the latter was the ability to deduce rulings from the *naṣṣ* (texts).<sup>27</sup> Chalil was the best choice for this post, since he specialized in the science of *tafsir* and *ḥadīth*, two sciences which later led him to prominence in the field of religious scholarship in Indonesia.<sup>28</sup>

Before Chalil took up his duties in the *Majlis Tarjih*, he was already an active member of the *Muhammadiyah*, teaching in the organization's *al-madrasah al-wuṣṭā* (secondary school) and leading the *Majlis Tabligh* (the Propagation Board) of the

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<sup>24</sup>Amir Maksum, "Pemahaman Tajdid dalam Muhammadiyah," (unpublished paper presented in the 22 *Muhammadiyah* Convention of 1989), 15.

<sup>25</sup>Djamil, "Ijtihad Muhammadiyah Dalam Masalah Fikih Kontemporer," 102.

<sup>26</sup>*Soeara Moehammadiyah* (September, 1940), 178.; Sutrisno Kutoyo, *Kyai Mas Mansur* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982), 75.

<sup>27</sup>Cited in Djamil, "Ijtihad Muhammadiyah Dalam Masalah Fikih Kontemporer," 107.

<sup>28</sup>"H. Moenawar Chalil."

*Muhammadiyah* branch at Kendal.<sup>29</sup> In some branches, the *Majlis Tabligh* ran *tabligh* schools, where the graduates of the *al-madrasah al-wustā* were taught the Islamic sciences and were instructed in the skill of propagation (*'ilm al-da'wah*) and the science of comparative religion.<sup>30</sup> The graduates of the schools were expected to become leading propagandists to spread the message of reformist ideas to their fellow Muslims.<sup>31</sup> As such, the *Majlis Tabligh* anticipated a number of challenges facing its mission, particularly from the opponents of reform. While there is no record indicating the establishment of such a *tabligh* school at Kendal, nevertheless after Chalil moved to Semarang in 1933, he was assigned to teach a propagation course at the *Muhammadiyah* branch there. This assured him of a role in the *Muhammadiyah's da'wah* activities, given his position in charge of teaching the subject of theology in light of reformist views, for which course he prepared a book on the purification of Islamic theology.<sup>32</sup>

Chalil was also the secretary of the *Lajnah Ahli-Ahli Hadīth Indonesia* (the Committee of the Indonesian Experts on *Hadīth*) from its inception in June 1941, a position that he held until his death on May 23, 1961. The *Lajnah* was chaired by Imam Ghozali, a prominent *'ālim* (singular of *'ulamā'*) from Solo. Ghozali was assisted by a deputy, Muhammad Ma'shum, a scholar with a considerable reputation in the field of *hadīth*. Both belonged to reformist organizations and the latter was even a regular columnist writing in the section *Sual-Djawab* (Questions and Answers) devoted to religious issues for various *Persis* journals, which became an important forum for propagating the puritanical views of the organization's *'ulamā'*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Sejarah Pendidikan Swasta di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1976), 82.

<sup>31</sup> Musthafa Kamal, et. al. *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan Islam, 1988), 118-122.

<sup>32</sup> See his book *Cursus Pengadjaran Oentoek Membersihkan Kalimah Tauhid* (Soerabaya: n.p., 1933); Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 2.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Ma'shum wrote his *fatwās* in *Sual-Djawab* under the initials Mhd. Ms. See *Sual-Djawab*, vols. 1-8, 11-15, (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, n. d.); for the importance of *Sual-Djawab*, see Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 21.

The establishment of the *Lajnah* was an interesting phenomenon, since not only did it reflect a desire to promote and rejuvenate the study of the science of *ḥadīth*, but it also gave impetus to the effort to prepare standard book of *fiqh* more in tune with the reformist perspective.<sup>34</sup> The reformists believed that the science of *ḥadīth* tended to receive much less attention than that of *fiqh*. The blame for this was placed on the traditionalists by the reformists, who accused them of not giving the study of *ḥadīth* its full share of attention. This lack of attention, the reformists argued, inhibited the traditionalists and prevented them from maintaining and transmitting the authentic teachings of the Prophet. They held that the curriculum of the *pesantrens* (traditional religious seminaries), which were mostly run by the traditionalists, relied too heavily on the study of *fiqh*.<sup>35</sup>

It was no coincidence that the project of creating a "new" *fiqh* was also one of the major concerns of some reformers in the Middle East, such as 'Abduh. 'Abduh's proposal of a new Islamic law was aimed at replacing an archaic *fiqh*, which he considered incapable of responding to new demands and needs. Similarly, the new version of *fiqh* proposed by the *Lajnah* was designed to replace the existing *fiqh* books, the contents of which, the reformists believed, were not directly derived from the primary sources of Islamic law.

Although the *Lajnah* was a body in which each of its members could claim to be an active participant, yet the main credit for its pioneering work must be attributed to the constant dedication of three persons: Moenawar Chalil, Imam Ghazali and Muhammad Ma'shum. It was in recognition of their cooperation for the sake of maintaining the centrality of the *Qur'ān* and of promoting the role of *ḥadīth* in Muslim life that the three were called the *trio-ʿulamāʾ*.<sup>36</sup> The role of Chalil was central in the affairs of the *Lajnah*.

<sup>34</sup>Imam Ghazali and Moenawar Chalil, *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawī: Fiqih Berdasar Atas Pimpinaan Nabi s. a. w.* vols. 1-18 (Solo: Al-Ma'murijah: n. d.).

<sup>35</sup>A. Farichin Chumaidy, "The Jam'iyyah Nahdlatul 'Ulama': Its Rise and Early Development, 1926-1945," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1976), 117.

<sup>36</sup>M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Melihat ke Belakang Merancang Masa Depan: Pengantar," in

The latter's objective in writing a "compendium" of Indonesian *fiqh*, for example, was not put into effect until Chalil became involved in the undertaking soon after his retirement from government service and his release from prison.<sup>37</sup> The fruit of the work of the *Lajnah* was the publication *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawy*, which was written in eighteen volumes. Each volume consisted of about forty pages and was issued separately, so that the public could afford to buy them. This was an important goal for their mission, which sought to provide a guide for the public on the religious duties prescribed by the Prophet.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from its central mission to spread the Prophet's traditions to the *ummah*, the *Lajnah* tried to open a new dimension in the socio-religious life of Muslims by attempting to eradicate sectarianism through the creation of its *Mustashār Khāṣṣ* (the Special Advisory Board). Hasyim Asy'ari, a prominent scholar and the founder of the traditionalist organization *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'* was included on this board.<sup>39</sup> This non-sectarian policy was stated literally in its statutes and underlay its main objective of establishing a coordinating forum, in which both the *kaum muda* (the modernists) and the *kaum tua* (the traditionalists) experts on *ḥadīth* would work together in the interest of promoting the Prophetic traditions.<sup>40</sup> In reality, however, the members of the *Mustashār Khāṣṣ* were predominantly modernists, such as Mas Mansur, chairman of the *Majlis Targīb* of the *Muhammadiyah*, Hadjid, a member of the Central Board of the *Muhammadiyah*, A. Hassan, chairman of the *Persis* in Bangil and Ahmad Al-Shurkati, founder of the *al-Irshād*, to name but a few.<sup>41</sup>

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*Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan*, (ed.) M. Dawam Rahardjo (Jakarta: P3M, 1989), 1-2; M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Inteligensi dan Perilaku Politik Bangsa: Risalah Cendekiawan Muslim* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 33.

<sup>37</sup>The project to write a new *fiqh* book was hampered by many difficulties. The first edition of its kind was issued in 1952, more than ten years late, due to, among other things, the Japanese military invasion and occupation of the country from 1942 until 1945 as well as the detainment of Moenawar Chalil and Muhammad Ma'shum in the early 1950s. See *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawy*, vol. 1, 3-4.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>See item two of its stipulation, *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

It seems, therefore, that the appointment of Asy'ari to the office of *Mustashār Khāṣṣ* was prompted more by recognition of his broad-minded personality rather than in acknowledgment of his capacity as the *Ra'īs 'Āmm* of the *Shūnīyah* (chairman of the Advisory Board) of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'*. His academic reputation and wisdom had won the sympathy of the reformists, who clearly did not consider Asy'ari to be an advocate of the "traditionalist" faction, but, instead, as a senior scholar, whose influence among the Muslim masses could hardly be matched by any Muslim leader.<sup>42</sup>

Hamka describes Asy'ari as a religious scholar who preferred a gradual approach towards transforming Islamic thought. Hamka also approves of Asy'ari's commitment to the establishment of *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) among Muslims. In comparing Dahlan with Asy'ari, Hamka states that while the former expressed his ideas in a "revolutionary" way the latter promulgated his in an "evolutionary" way. That Hamka decided to spread Asy'ari's *mawā'iz* (guiding messages) in his reformist journal *Pandji Masjarakat*, messages in which the latter appealed to both the reformists and traditionalists to close their ranks and to work side by side, indicates Asy'ari's acceptability within the modernist circle.<sup>43</sup>

While acknowledging the importance of the *Lajnah's* efforts in promoting sectarian reconciliation, Chalil, nevertheless, chose to put his energy into a plan to establish a coordinating office for the '*ulamā'*'. As a member of the corps of '*ulamā'*', Chalil realized that they had a moral authority over the Muslim population and that because they were

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<sup>42</sup>During the War of Independence, Hasyim Asy'ari issued *fatwās* (legal opinions) in which he declared that war against the Dutch was a *jihād* (holy war) and that using a Dutch ship to go on pilgrimage was prohibited by Islamic law. His campaign to spread the spirit of *jihād* and to boycott the Dutch transportation met with a remarkable success due to his strong influence among the Muslim masses and the role of his *Tebuireng pesantren* within the circle of *pesantren* community, particularly in the densely populated regions of East and Central Java. It seems, therefore, that it was due to his respected position and strong influence among the Muslim masses that the reformists often sought his involvement in their project. Noer, "Masjumi: Its Organization, Ideology and Political Role in Indonesia," 77.

<sup>43</sup>See Hamka, "Al-Mawaa'izh Sjaich Hasjim Asj'ari," *Pandji Masjarakat* (August, 15; 1959), 3-6; Solichin Salam, *Kiai Hadji Hasjim Asj'ari, Ulama Besar Indonesia* (Djakarta: Djaja Murni, 1963), 52-56.

heard on social and political matters as well, the '*ulamā*' had a greater responsibility to act with prudence and wisdom. The '*ulamā*' should work for the unity of the *ummah*, since they were the transmitters of the message of God to subsequent generations following the Prophet.<sup>44</sup>

Through their role as transmitters of the divine message and as guardians of its pristine truth, Chalil states that the '*ulamā*' had built up considerable respect among lay Muslims. He further maintained that lay Muslims would often respond to the words of the '*ulamā*', while at the same time remaining deaf to similar orders from state officials. In his works, Chalil strongly condemns those '*ulamā*' who abused the trust bestowed on them by the population and who manipulated it for material gain and high positions, while leaving the *ummah* in a state of sectarian fragmentation. He declares that type of '*ulamā*' to be '*ulamā*' *sū*' (deceiving) or *nashqiyyā*' (immoral). Those who belonged to the '*ulamā*' *sū*', Chalil maintained, usually feared to speak the truth and were blindly loyal to rulers, who were in turn often oppressive.<sup>45</sup>

For this reason, Chalil appealed to the Department of Religious Affairs to form a council of the Indonesian '*ulamā*' modeled after the *Hay'at Kibār al-'Ulamā*' of Egypt. The proposal aimed at closing the gap between the '*ulamā*' and creating a channel through which better understanding among members, irrespective of their sectarian affiliation, would be maintained. Owing to the dictates of their own religious outlook and political orientation, the '*ulamā*' often issued different *fatwās* on a similar question.<sup>46</sup> This of

<sup>44</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Fungsi Ulama Dalam Masyarakat Dan Negara* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1957), 27-28.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.; see also Moenawar Chalil, "'Ulama dan 'Ulama: Imam al-Ghazali Mengutuk 'Ulama Penggila Kedudukan Disamping Baginda Radja," *Pandji Masyarakat* (January 1; 1960), 11-12; idem, "Fungsi Ulama dalam Masyarakat dan Negara," *Hikmah* (May 29; 1954), 23-25.

<sup>46</sup>Muslims were divided into several political and religious factions and each established its own council of '*ulamā*'. While the *Muhammadiyah* had the *Majlis Tarjih*, the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā*' established the *Majlis al-Shūriyah wa al-Fatwā*. The *Masjumi* named its council of '*ulamā*' *Majlis al-Shūriyah* and the *Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia*, the *P. S. I. I.*, founded its *Majlis al-Shar'iyah*.

course, Chalil believed, only caused confusion in the *ummah*, who, thus, became the victims of the religious disputes among the '*ulamā*' who were supposed to provide guidance, rather than friction. Chalil, therefore, welcomed the initiative of the Department of Religious Affairs in organizing, for the first time, a convention of all '*ulamā*' in Jakarta in 1951. He also recommended that such conventions be continued and expanded and that, if necessary, a permanent office called *Dār al-Iftā'* (Office of *Fatwā*) be established, which would serve as the religious body in Indonesia with a full mandate to issue *fatwās* to the *ummah*.<sup>47</sup>

Chalil's concept of unity, however, could not be easily applied. His understanding of unity did not respect the right of individuals to have different opinions, but rather called for the amalgamation of differences into a single opinion which, he claimed, should be in accordance with the *Qur'ānic* norms and the Prophetic traditions.<sup>48</sup> The traditionalists were certainly wary of such demands, regarding the call for a single opinion as favoring the conclusion of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*-based reformists over their own-*madhhab* based interpretations of the sources. Chalil's efforts, however, should be perceived as a genuine attempt to repair the fragmentation of the *ummah* by abolishing partisanship of the Islamic rite and by a unanimous return to the original sources of Islam.

After his resignation from his government post in 1951, Chalil found a new outlet for his political aspirations in the reformist political party, the *Majlis Shūrā Muslimin Indonesia*, or *Masjumi* (the Indonesian Muslim Consultative Council) and was quickly appointed to its *Majlis Shūrā Pusat* (Central Religious Consultative Board). This *Majlis* was primarily in charge of the proclamation of *fatwās*. The task of the *Majlis Shūrā* was far from being purely religious, since the *Majlis* regularly issued *fatwās* in answer to any

<sup>47</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Pertemuan Alim Ulama," *Pemandangan* (August, 17; 1951).

<sup>48</sup>See his "Persatuan dan Kesatuan, 1," *Abadi* (August 26; 1960); idem, "Persatuan dan Kesatuan, 2," *Abadi* (September 7; 1960); idem, "Hikmah Dan Filsafat Salaam," *Abadi* (February 13; 1953).

question that concerned the party and the *ummah*.

The political role of the *Majlis* was made possible by the fact that the *Masjumi* itself was organized in such a way to enable the '*ulamā*' to be involved at all levels of the party's structure. There was always at least one '*ālim*' on the control board of each level of the organization.<sup>49</sup> The role of the '*ulamā*' in the organizational structure of the *Masjumi* was to accommodate the fact that in Indonesia the '*ulamā*' could not be ignored as a political force and that whoever gained their political approval would consequently gain a large following, particularly in the rural areas.<sup>50</sup> M. Isa Anshary, one of the chairmen of the *Masjumi* Central Board, believed that the unpredicted electoral success of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā* in the 1955 general election lay in the trust bestowed by the population on its '*ulamā*', who exerted a strong influence on the masses.<sup>51</sup> The *Masjumi* underestimated the immense influence enjoyed by the '*ulamā*' of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā*, and even went so far as to consider it a marginal Islamic party before the election. The *Nahdat al-'Ulamā* had previously received a "quota" of eight seats only in the legislative body, when it was still affiliated with the *Masjumi*. However, the result of the electoral vote was a big step forward for the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā*, representing a gain of forty five seats and third position after the *Masjumi* in terms of the number of seats held in the legislative body.<sup>52</sup>

The '*ulamā*'s political role was more or less confined to the sphere of issuing *fatwās* relevant to the questions that arose at particular times. During the first general election of 1955, for instance, Chalil issued a *fatwā* declaring that winning the political contest in the election was a religious obligation. Using analogical reasoning, he equated a general election with a *jihād* (holy war), in which every able Muslim was obliged to

<sup>49</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 182.

<sup>50</sup>Noer, "Masjumi," 50.

<sup>51</sup>M. Isa Anshary, "Mu'tamar Masjumi Bandung adalah Permulaan Bajangan Gelap," *Dawlah Islamiyah*, (1957), 20; for an account of the role of the '*ulamā*' in the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā* and their strong influence among its supporters, see Chumaidy, "The Jam'iyyah Nahdlatul 'Ulama'," 53-59.

<sup>52</sup>Alfian, *Pemikiran dan Perubahan Politik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1978), 33.



participate for the glory of the faith. According to him, a Muslim who committed himself to fight for the victory of Islam by all possible means in the election deserved noble rewards equivalent to those promised by God to the *mujaḥidīn* (religious fighters). Furthermore, he appealed to Muslims to donate part of their alms to the political cause, so that sufficient funding would be available for the Islamic parties enabling them to carry out activities leading to their electoral victory.<sup>53</sup>

His other political *fatwās* were typical of the *Persis fatwās* and were concerned with the general content of nationalism, the philosophical bases of a nation-state and the condemnation of political trends opposed to Muslim political goals.<sup>54</sup> In one of his writings, for instance, he criticizes the secular nationalists for denying the strong Islamic element which historically had been present in Indonesian nationalism. For him, it was only through Islam that the edifice of Indonesian nationalism had been erected. He further argues that Indonesian secular nationalists who were trying to adopt the model of the Turkish secular nationalists' thought were misled. In Turkish nationalism, Chalil explains, Islam had played an important role in unifying all ranks within Turkish society, a unity which determined the Turkish victory in their War of Independence and in their efforts at driving the Greeks from their soil.<sup>55</sup>

As a reformist who strove for the implementation of the *Shari'ah* as a positive law in the country, Chalil believed that Islam, as an ideal political system, had been relegated to the background by the secular nationalists.<sup>56</sup> He further accused them of ignoring Islam in

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<sup>53</sup>See Moenawar Chalil, "Menggunakan Zakat Utk Pemilihan Umum," *Abadi* (April 4; 1954; idem, "Beranilah Berqurban Utk Pemilihan Umum," *Abadi* (August 6; 1954).

<sup>54</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 134.

<sup>55</sup>See Moenawar Chalil, "Kebangsaan Jang Tinggalkan Agama," *Abadi* (February, 12; 1954).

<sup>56</sup>Moenawar Chalil criticized those who claimed to be the followers of Islam, but who were politically involved in hampering the establishment of Islam as the only ruling system in Indonesia. He, therefore, articulated that Islam should be the only true ideology for the state and hoped that the cause of Islam would gain ground. See Moenawar Chalil "Umat Islam Harus Ta'ashub Kepada Agamanya," *Abadi* (September, 24; 1954); idem, "Beranilah Berqurban Utk Pemilihan Umum."

the *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (Constitution of 1945), on which the foundations of the Republic of Indonesia were built. He also shared with the *Masjumi* politicians a common opposition to the secular nationalists, a stand which reached its climax in the early 1950s with the rise of several Muslim rebellions against Soekarno's regime in various parts of the country. Nevertheless, Chalil's opposition certainly never extended beyond promoting the concept of an Islamic state through democratic means.<sup>57</sup>

His political aspirations were in line with the *Masjumi's* political stance, even before he became a member of its *Majlis Shūrā*. In the *Kongres Muslimin Indonesia* (the Indonesian Muslim Congress) held in Yogyakarta from 20-25 December, 1949, he proposed a resolution demanding that the *Kongres* not condemn the *Dār al-Islām* movement and that it differentiate between renegade groups creating terror in the countryside and the true members of the *Dār al-Islām*. According to him, it was due to the terror spread by those renegade groups that the reputation of the leader of *Dār al-Islām*, Kartosuwirjo, had been tarnished. He made this statement in reply to Musaddad, a participant in the *Kongres*, who had earlier argued that once the *Dār al-Islām* was able to establish a provisional government in the districts under its control, it began to impose heavy taxes and to create terror among the population. This, in turn, led many of its supporters to defect and caused the *Dār al-Islām* to lose its reputation.<sup>58</sup> In his argument, Musaddad mentioned that he was a member of the *Dār al-Salām* (the House of Peace), an organization that was initially involved in conducting *pengajiann* (religious gatherings) only, but which had later developed into a para-military force. The *Dār al-Salām* had lent its military support to the *Dār al-Islām*, when the latter launched a campaign against Dutch attempts to reoccupy the country. However, as soon as the *Dār al-Islām* began to exploit and abuse the population, the former severed its association with the latter.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup>B. J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

<sup>58</sup>*Boeah Kongres Muslimin Indonesia* (Djogdjakarta: Badan Usaha dan Penerbitan Muslimin Indonesia, n.d.), 41-47.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

In this debate, Chalil's opinion won strong support from many of the participants in the *Kongres*, especially from his close associates in the *Persis*, the *Muhammadiyah* and the *Lajnah Ahli-ahli Hadith Indonesia*, such as Imam Ghozali, Muhammad Ma'shum and Hadjid. The session of the *Kongres* finally issued a resolution fully supporting the *Masjumi's* attempts to resolve the question of the *Dār al-Islām* in a spirit of peace and compromise.<sup>60</sup> Throughout the 1950s, Moehammad Natsir, speaking as the *Masjumi* leader, deplored many government attempts to resolve the *Dār al-Islām* problem by force of arms.<sup>61</sup> It seems that the difference of opinion over the question of the *Dār al-Islām*, as reflected in the debate between Chalil and Musaddad, had proceeded along reformist and traditionalist political lines. It should be noted at this point that [Anwar] Musaddad was later one of the chairmen of the Central *Shūriyah* (consultative) Board of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'*.<sup>62</sup>

As a person who faithfully approached issues from a puritanist perspective, Chalil, a member of the *Majlis Shūrā*, criticized any religious ruling which, according to him, was not properly and accurately devised. He, for example, accused the chairman of the *Shūrā*, Shalih Su'aidy, of negligence in issuing a *fatwā* permitting a female member of the Central Board of the *Masjumi* to travel to Russia without a *muḥrim* (a close male relative). The permission was based on a *Qur'ānic* verse which, according to Su'aidy's interpretation, allowed a female to travel alone, provided that the journey was done in fulfillment of a religious duty. Her journey to Russia, which was intended to uncover the plan of the enemies of Islam (the communists), certainly met the criteria suggested by the *Qur'ān*. Su'aidy even went so far as to declare that such a journey could rightly be called a *jihād*.

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.: the fourth *Masjumi* Convention declared, through a committee established for this purpose, that the *Republik Indonesia Serikat* or *R. I. S.* (the United Indonesian Republic) should approach the question of the *Dār al-Islām* rebellion in peaceful way. M. Isa Anshary, "Masjumi dan D. I.," *Suara Partai Masjumi*, 6 (June; 1951), 9; *D. I./ T. I. I. Tidak Ditolerir* (Jakarta: Majalah Islam Kiblat, 1983), 7.

<sup>61</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 108.

<sup>62</sup>For the role that Musaddad played in the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'*, see "Prof. K. H. Anwar Musaddad Pelindung dan Payung N. U. Sunda," *Aula* (March; 1995), 81-86.

The term *jihād*, Su'aidy added, should be understood in broader terms as not only fighting non-Muslims in the battlefield, but also traveling to a non-Muslim country in order to obtain information about the strength and weaknesses of potential enemies. Chalil, on the other hand, declared that not only did the *Qur'ānic* verse quoted by Su'aidy not apply to the case in point, but that Su'ady's argument was entirely invalid, having been put forward merely to avert the prohibition prescribed by Islamic law.<sup>63</sup>

Chalil also denounced the validity of the *ḥadīth* used by Su'aidy and questioned the reliability of one of its transmitters. Despite the fact that the *ḥadīth* was transmitted by 'Adī Ibn Ḥātim and was contained in al-Bukhārī's collection, Chalil found that one of its transmitters, Isrā'īl Ibn Yūnus Ibn Ishāq, was an unreliable authority on the basis of the opinion of such great scholars as Ibn Sa'd, 'Alī al-Madanī, Ibn Ḥazm and Ja'far Ibn Shaybah. Therefore, Chalil concluded that the *ḥadīth* suffered from a serious defect which rendered the use of the *ḥadīth* unacceptable.<sup>64</sup> Citing a *ḥadīth* only after strictly scrutinizing the reliability of its transmitter, as practiced by Chalil, was typical of a puritan who did not want to employ any tradition, unless its authenticity was established. According to Chalil, any religious scholar who loosely quoted a *ḥadīth* without subjecting its transmitter to strong scrutiny should be called a *dajjāl* (imposter).<sup>65</sup>

Chalil also doubted Su'aidy's claim that some medieval jurists, whom al-Nawawī mentions in his *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, had declared that such travel is lawful. Chalil said that Su'aidy's manner of quoting al-Nawawī's opinions was not correct and that he only took note of those '*ulamā'*' who permitted such travel and discounted those who were against it. Chalil further claimed that he had verified Su'aidy's argument and

<sup>63</sup>See his article, "Fatwa Model Pimpinan Harian Madjelis Sjura Pusat Masjumi Tentang Safarul Mar-ah," *Daulah Islamiyah* (August; 1957), 22; idem, "Hukum Wanita Islam Belajar Sendirian," *Abadi* (August 13; 1954).

<sup>64</sup>See his two articles, "Fatwa Model Pimpinan Harian Madjelis Sjura Pusat Masjumi tentang Safarul Mar-ah," 22; idem, "Islam Tinggal Nama," *Abadi* (March 5; 1954).

<sup>65</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Djangan Mempermudah Urusan Hadits," *Abadi* (July 16; 1954); idem, "Awat Partai Dadjdjal," *Abadi* (February 27; 1953); idem, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemat Islam," *Pembela Islam*, no. 52, 10-13.

discovered that in *al-Majmū'*, al-Nawawī advanced opinions both for and against travel by an unaccompanied female. Authenticity was the guiding factor in Chalil's approach to making any religious ruling, particularly if the arguments cited were derived from the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*.<sup>66</sup>

The highest position Chalil held was that of chairman of the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* (Council of the 'Ulamā') of the Central Board of the *Persis*. He had been a member of the *Persis* since the early 1930s, at which time he was serving as a regular columnist for its periodical, *Pembela Islam*, for the Kendal region. From that time onward he had held a dual membership: as a leading member of the *Muhammadiyah* and a columnist for the *Persis*.<sup>67</sup> It must be noted that many persons belonging to the *Persis* were influential members of other religious, political and social organizations as well. Moehammad Natsir, for example, belonged to the *Jong Islamieten Bond*, while Sabirin was a prominent member of the *Sarekat Islam*.<sup>68</sup> This phenomenon may be an indication that its members regarded the *Persis* as a group formed for religious study and education and that other groups could be used to attain other goals.<sup>69</sup> As the head of the *Persis Majlis 'Ulamā'*, Chalil also spoke for *Persis'* views. In his polemics with Su'aidy, for example, Chalil can be said to have been representing the *Persis*. Indeed, he declared that the arguments he had put forth were in support of the opinions of A. Kadir Hassan, the son of the founder of the *Persis* in Bangil and Chalil's colleague in the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* of the *Persis*.<sup>70</sup> His political stance also fell within the realm of the political aspirations of the *Persis*. His critical attitude towards the secular nature of the constitution of the country, for example, was in harmony

<sup>66</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa Model Pimpinan Harian Madjelis Sjura," 23.

<sup>67</sup>'Abdu-l Mu'ti 'Alī, "The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1957), 80; Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 2; Munawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 5.

<sup>68</sup>Aboebakar, *Sedjarah Hidup K. H. A. Wachid Hasjim dan Karangan Tersiar* (Djakarta: Panitia Buku Peringatan Alm. K. H. A. Wachid Hasjim, 1957), 80; *Pembela Islam*, 34 (September, 1931), frontispiece.

<sup>69</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 17-18.

<sup>70</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa Model Pimpinan Harian Madjelis Sjura Pusat," 24; H. M. A. "Perempuan Berdjalan Keluar Negeri," *Sual-Djawab*, No. 4, 30-31.

with Moehammad Natsir and Isa Anshary's position, which never lost sight of the goal of establishing an Indonesian state based on Islamic principles.<sup>71</sup> While both Natsir and Anshary were chairmen of the *Persis*, the former was also the general chairman of the *Musjumi* and the latter a member of its central leadership.<sup>72</sup>

Among the other religious posts that Chalil held, one can count that of adviser to the *Pusat Pendidikan Islam* (Center for Islamic Education) at Solo and member of the *Panitia Pertimbangan Kesehatan dan Shar'* (Committee for Health and *Shar'* Consultation) of the Department of Health.<sup>73</sup> There is no detailed record of Chalil's contributions in the *Pusat Pendidikan Islam*, while his activities in the *Panitia Pertimbangan Kesehatan dan Shar'* could be gleaned from a number of pamphlets. The *Panitia* was established on August 12, 1954, with the primary mission of discussing medically-related issues from the viewpoint of *Shar'* (divine law).<sup>74</sup> The *Panitia* published its religious rulings through the journal that it had founded. Apart from the internal members of the committee, who were mainly modernist Muslims working in the Department of Health and Religion, there were also several non-civil servant members who were for the most part modernists, such as Moenawar Chalil, A Hassan, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and Fuad Mohamad Fachruddin. Unlike others, however, who were either representatives of institutions or appointed individuals, Chalil was admitted into the *Panitia* in his capacity as the chairman of the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* of the *Persis* and as the secretary of the *Lajnah Ahli-Ahli Hadith* as well.<sup>75</sup> This certainly enabled him to exercise greater influence, when he was able to, upon the other members of the *Shar'* section, who alone had the authority to issue *fatwās*. As a

<sup>71</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 120.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 123-125.

<sup>73</sup>Moenawwar, "Riwayat Hidup," 2-8; Munawwar "Ril," 530; Kementerian Kesehatan R. I. "Putusan Panitia M.P.K.S. no. 2/ 1954," in *Kesehatan dan Syara'*, 5 (December: 1954), 54; "K. H. Moenawar Chalil Diangkat Sebagai Aggauta Panitia Madjelis Pertimbangan Kesehatan R. I.," *Suara Merdeka* (December 27; 1954); "Berdirinja Madjlis Pertimbangan Syara' dan Kesehatan di Indonesia," *Hikmah* (August 21; 1954) ?

<sup>74</sup>Kementerian Kesehatan R. I. "Kata Pengantar," in *Kesehatan dan Syara'*, 1 (September; 1954), 3.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 54.

consequence of the modernist domination of the *Panitia*, the manner of approaching the cases under discussion was reformist in the sense that the deduction of the rulings was made with reference to the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth* and other literature which the reformists considered acceptable, such as *Zād al-Ma'ād* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah and *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid* by Ibn Rushd. They did not use the *fiqh* books referred to by the traditionalists.<sup>76</sup>

The reformists held that the traditionalist *fiqh* books, such as the *Tuḥfat al-Maḥallī*, *al-Qalyūbī* and many others, which were widely studied in the *pesantrens*, were not acceptable on account of their incompatibility with the spirit of modernity which demanded analysis.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, they discovered that the works of reformist '*ulamā*', such as Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Qayyim, 'Abduh and Riḍā were analytical and, thus, were more in keeping with modern approaches.<sup>78</sup>

Chalil's reputation was due, in part, to his wide knowledge of the Islamic sciences, which he shared with the Muslim community through his writings. Judged by the standards of Indonesian scholarship at the time, he was among the most productive writers. In 1958, a poll was conducted by the *Himpunan Pengarang Islam Indonesia* (the Association of Indonesian Muslim Writers) to determine the ranking of the writers of the day and Chalil was ranked in fifth place. He came out ahead of such celebrated writers as Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, whose authority in Islamic legal matters remains unrivaled until the present time, and A. Hassan, whose polemical style of writing in support of purifying the faith is the basis of his wide popularity throughout the country even today.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>They referred to *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb* by Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj li-Sharḥ al-Minhāj* by Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, *al-Maḥallī* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and *Hāshiyatūn: al-Qalyūbī wa 'Amīrah* by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qalyūbī and al-Shaykh 'Amīrah. A. Halim Hasan, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 2," *Pandji Masjurokat* (February, 15; 1960), ?; see, Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb bi-Sharḥ Taḥrīr Tanqīh al-Lubāb* (Indonesia: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, n.d) and Qalyūbī wa 'Amīrah, *Hāshiyatūn: al-Qalyūbī wa 'Amīrah 'alā Sharḥ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī*, 4 vols. (Miṣr: Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣābiḥ, 1949).

<sup>78</sup>Hasan, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 2."

<sup>79</sup>"Hasil Angket Sepuluh Pengarang Islam Terkemuka Sekarang," *Dawlah Islamiyah*,

Reformists realized the importance of periodicals as vehicles for disseminating their views and for challenging the traditionalist religious beliefs perpetuated in the curriculum and propagation emanating from the traditionalist centers of learning, notably in the countless *pesantrens* and *pengajian* circles. In the field of publication, the reformists were, therefore, far ahead of the traditionalists in terms of producing a larger number of books, magazines and pamphlets. This is particularly true for *Persis* which was even more active in this area than its fellow reformist groups, particularly in the publication of journals. *Persis*, which was a small and loosely knit organization, was able to publish ten journals and many practical guides to Islamic rituals, which served as manuals for reformist adherents throughout the country. Indeed, had it not been for its journals and books, the puritan teachings of *Persis* would have remained unfamiliar to non-*Persis* members.<sup>80</sup>

Chalil had already established a magazine "*Swara Islam*" (the Voice of Islam) in 1935. This magazine was founded for the sake of reviving the *sunnah* of the Prophet and eradicating *bid'ah* (*anggegesang sunnah, mbongkar bid'ah*).<sup>81</sup> Chalil, who might have wanted to reach a larger audience, chose Javanese, the *lingua franca* of the largest Indonesian ethnic group, as the language of his magazine. The magazine was the first of its kind to target Javanese readers and was the only organ in Javanese that the reformists ever produced in the region of Semarang and its adjacent areas or presumably in the whole Javanese speaking areas.

The themes that appeared in the magazine dealt mostly with theology, rituals and ethics. As a typical reformist magazine, it provided a column for polemical issues, which were presented in the form of *munāzarah* (exchange of ideas) or *su'āl-jawāb* (questions

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(December, 1957), 23-27; Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1980), 161.

<sup>80</sup>This figure is mentioned in the bibliography of Federspiel's *Persatuan Islam*. Some of the journals appeared for a few months only, while many others were able to survive for a number of years. *Anti Komunis* (a weekly magazine), for example, was issued seven times only from January 1958 to March 1958. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 233.

<sup>81</sup>See its motto on the cover of *Swara Islam*, 4 (April; 1935), 5.



and answers). The magazine had two goals: the first was to sound the trumpet of puritan ideas and the second to educate those Muslims who had a rudimentary knowledge of Islam. In pursuing the first goal, discussion focused on such disputed issues as debates over touching the *Qur'ān* during minor ritual impurity or pronouncing the *qunūt* etc., while discussions revolving around the second goal consisted of lessons on the moral standards of Islam, rituals formulas and basic beliefs regarding God, the Prophets and the like. Needless to say, all discussions followed the puritan point of view.<sup>82</sup> Following the aggressive tradition of *Persis* in conducting *tabligh*, Chalil chose debate as the means of propagating his puritanist views and challenging his opponents. His debates, which were published in *Swara Islam*, showed no tolerance for his rivals. This attitude was an outcome of the religious antagonism that plagued Muslims during Chalil's lifetime. His intolerance was similar to that of other *Persis* scholars who often used harsh language and resorted to a polemical style of expression.<sup>83</sup>

Writing in modernist journals came easily to Chalil, whose membership in the *Masyumi* party provided him with the opportunity to write for the party's magazines and its newspaper, *Abadi*. His articles in *Hikmah*, a popular magazine whose chief editor was Natsir, generally exalted Islam, warning against relaxation in the observance of its teachings and appealing for broad-mindedness. Chalil too called for the acceptance of Islam in its entirety, since this, according to him, was the only way to achieve progress. In one of his articles, for instance, he points out that the unequal distribution of wealth was due to the Muslims' reluctance to observe wholeheartedly the duty of *zakaat*. He believed that if the doctrine of *zakaat* were observed and implemented in a proper way, the problems of

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<sup>82</sup>See, for example, *Swara Islam*, 4 (April; 1935); 5 (May; 1935); 6 (December; 1935).

<sup>83</sup>Compare, for example, the way Chalil treated his rival, a *Shāfi'ite 'Alim*, in a debate over the validity of *ṣalāh qabliyah* (a recommended prayer done before a mandatory one) in the Friday prayer, with the treatment by a certain scholar of the *Persis* with respect to his rival, Mahfudz Shiddiq, in which he equated Shiddiq's action with the behavior of a bat, which feared light, because Shiddiq was reluctant to conduct an open debate with him. See *Swara Islam*, 4 (April; 1935), 19-24; *Al-Lisan*, 4 (March 27; 1936), 30.

famine, starvation and the gap between the rich and the poor would disappear.<sup>84</sup>

In another article written for *Hikmah*, Chalil also dealt with themes which called for strict adherence to Islamic messages and for rejection of any compromises in implementing its principles, as the only way to manifest a genuine *imān* (belief) and to reflect the spirit of *jihād* (struggle) exemplified in the Prophet's uncompromising attitude during his struggle for the victory of Islam.<sup>85</sup> Through his articles, Chalil introduced his audience to different opinions formulated by medieval jurists about rituals, without favoring any single opinion over the others. In doing this, he wanted to educate and to provide Muslims with a variety of views, so that strict adherence to one particular juristic rite would no longer be practiced.<sup>86</sup> Chalil claimed that difference of opinions was acceptable, provided that each was supported with strong arguments. Nonetheless, when he took part in any debate, he often supported his arguments with the opinions of modernist thinkers, whom he considered capable of providing a sound analysis due to their acquaintance with both traditional learning and modern science.<sup>87</sup>

Chalil also wrote a religious column for *Abadi*, the *Masjumi* party's daily newspaper, which was published throughout the 1950s.<sup>88</sup> Chalil's writings mostly appeared in 1953, 1954 and 1955 and were published separately in the form of pamphlets numbering approximately one hundred in all. His role in the *Majlis Shūrā* may have been a factor in gaining the party's trust, enabling him to act as the "preacher" to its supporters of the religious themes he explored in the newspaper. In short, Chalil's writings in *Abadi* called for moral activism, gave lessons on basic rituals, acted as a guide to a better

<sup>84</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Fungsi Zakat Dalam Masyarakat, 2," *Hikmah* (April 4; 1954), 20-21; idem, "Fungsi Zakat Dalam Masyarakat, 3," *Hikmah* (July 3; 1954), 20-22.

<sup>85</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Tjara dan Djedjak Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. Dikala Hendak Menegakkan Hukum Allah Dimuka Bumi," *Hikmah* (October 12; 1956), 4-6.

<sup>86</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Kaifiat Tjara Tjara Berchutbah Djum'at Sepandjang Pimpinan Nabi s.a.w." *Hikmah* (September 1; 1956), 21-22.

<sup>87</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Alam Fikiran Manusia Terhadap Peristiwa Israa dan Mi'radj Nabi Muhammad s.a.w." *Hikmah* (March 20; 1954), 19-21.

<sup>88</sup>See bibliography in Federspiel's, *Persatuan Islam*, 247.

understanding of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* and launched attacks on popular religious practices.

As a reformist, Chalil advocated the concept of social responsibility and criticized both the passivity of Muslims and their quest for material progress, faults which, he believed, were partly due to a misinterpretation of the concept of *du'a* (prayer). According to Chalil, *du'a* alone is incapable of changing the conditions of a society unless accompanied by active effort in this direction.<sup>89</sup> This view seems to support the belief of earlier reformists that creation was ordained by God to follow the principles of nature and revolved around the system of cause and effect. No wonder, he adds, that Muslims are still enslaved by ignorance and immersed in complete stagnation, since what is preached to them every Friday from the pulpit means nothing. Muslims, he points out, have had failed to grasp the true spirit of Islam which, indeed, teaches the principles of dynamism and a strong work-ethos, which alone can translate worldly progress into reality.<sup>90</sup>

In his capacity as a religious scholar, Chalil often wrote about issues of ritual practice in his articles for *Abadi*. He also discussed doctrinal matters, this in keeping with the newspaper's dedication to the cause of religion (*untuk agama*). His writings on doctrinal themes elaborated in particular the meaning of the pillars of Islam, i.e. prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage and *tawhid*.<sup>91</sup> In addition, Chalil wrote on legal topics, in which he presented a variety of views to provide a broader perspective and meet the complex nature of contemporary problems. The topics he dealt with in this connection involved social issues, such as alcohol addiction, gambling, forced marriage, polygamy and the like.<sup>92</sup> Chalil was also concerned with moral issues and wrote a number of pamphlets

<sup>89</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Do'a Jang Maqbul," *Abadi* (January 2; 1953).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.; Moenawar Chalil, "Sebaik-baik Manusia Sepanjang Pimpinan Islam," *Abadi* (April 8; 1960).

<sup>91</sup>See the following articles by Moenawar Chalil, "Kaum Muslimat Dan Sembahjang Hari Raja," *Abadi* (May 28; 1954); "Apakah Hasil Puasa Kita?" *Abadi* (April 1; 1960); "Zakat Fitrah," *Abadi* (March 25; 1954); "Kewajiban Zakat-Fitrah," *Abadi* (June 5; 1953).

<sup>92</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Hukum Lotere," *Abadi* (October 9; 1953); idem, "Kawin Paksa

aimed at disseminating the moral standards of Islam.<sup>93</sup>

Chalil's concern with the *Qur'ān* as the primary source of the *Shari'ah* constitutes an important part of his writings in *Abadi* and indicates his strong adherence to the principle of a return to the *Qur'ān*. Chalil, thus, attacked those who, in his eyes, had abused the *Qur'ān* in putting it to irrelevant issues, such as remedying the sick, making amulets and other folk practices.<sup>94</sup> An uncompromising attitude towards popular religious beliefs was taken up by Chalil who embarked upon the grand mission of challenging those traditions which, in his view, had corrupted the purity of Islamic teachings and had contaminated its noble message. He raised his voice against belief in the *kāhin* (soothsayer), *takhayyul* (magic tricks) and *khurāfāt* (superstitions), as well as the excessive religious celebrations on *Mawlid al-nabī* (the Prophet's birthday), '*Āshūrā*' (the tenth day of the month of al-Muharram) and *halāl bi-al-halāl* (the '*Īd al-Fitr*').<sup>95</sup>

*Aliran Islam*, which claimed to be a progressive magazine and which was devoted

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Betulkah Dari Pimpinan Islam?," *Abadi* (October 23; 1953); idem, "Soal Wali Hakim," *Abadi* (April 9; 1954); idem, "Hukum Bersumpah," *Abadi* (November 20; 1953); idem, "Kufu Dalam Perkawinan," *Abadi* (December 11; 1953); idem, "Mana Jang Lebih Benar: Kedjelekan Atau Kebaikan Poligami," *Abadi* (October 29; 1954); idem "Mengapa Agama Islam Memperkenalkan Poligami? Poligami Adalah Tabiat Kaum Lelaki," *Abadi* (October 10; 1954); idem, "Tudjuan Pokok Dari Poligami Adalah Menolong Anak<sup>2</sup> Jatim Dan Kaum Wanita," *Abadi* (October 15; 1954).

<sup>93</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Amal Perbuatan Jang Ichlas," *Pemandangan* (June 3; 1951); idem, "Apakah Dan Siapakah Munafiq itu?" *Abadi* (December 4; 1953); idem, "Arti Mensjukuri Nikmat," *Abadi* (March 13; 1953); idem, "Djangan Meremehkan Dan Menghina Jang Ketjil," *Abadi* (May 20; 1955); idem, "Hikmah dan Filsafat Salaam," *Abadi* (February 13; 1953); idem, "Kesempitan dan Kelapangan," *Abadi* (?); idem, "Kewadajiban Menegur Orang Jang Zhalim," *Abadi* (May 6; 1960); idem, "Kupasan Arti Sjukur," *Pemandangan* (July 2; 1951); idem, "Sekitar Soal Bachil," *Abadi* (January 5; 1954).

<sup>94</sup>See his "Al-Quraan," *Abadi* (February 4; 1953); idem, "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (November 27; 1953); idem, "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (April 17; 1953); idem, "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (September 4; 1953); idem, "Al-Qur'anul Hakim," *Abadi* (October 3; 1953).

<sup>95</sup>See the following articles by Chalil, "Djangan Pertjaja Kepada Kahin," *Abadi* (August 23; 1954); "Djangan Pertjaja Kepada Tachajul dan Churafat," *Abadi* (October 30; 1954); "Djangan Pertjaja Akan Tangkal dan Guna-Guna," *Abadi* (July 10; 1953); "Djangan Pertjaja akan Sihir," *Abadi* (March 6; 1953); "Bid'ah pada Asjuraa," *Abadi* (September 25; 1953); "Hadits2 Mauludan," *Abadi* (February 20; 1953); Menjingkap Tabir Kepalsuan Dari Hadits2 Mengenai Kekeramatan Dan Kesaktian Hari Asjura," *Abadi* (July 15; 1960); "Peringatan Asjura," *Abadi* (August 3; 1954); "Tachajul Dlm Bulan Shafar jang Harus Dibongkar," *Abadi* (November 6; 1953).

to Islamic thought in religious doctrines, politics, society and culture, was another of the publications for which Chalil wrote. The editor-in-chief of *Aliran Islam* was a prominent *Masjumi* figure, namely M. Isa Anshary. The magazine invited modernist thinkers like Moehammad Natsir, M. Isa Anshary, M. Rasjidi and Abu Hanifah, who were well-informed on the relation between religion and modernity, to contribute to its forum. The magazine also published articles written by such nationalist figures as Sukarno, M. Hatta and M. Yamin, provided they dealt with the interests of all groups including Muslims.<sup>96</sup> Chalil for his part wrote on religious subjects and adopted a rational approach in his writing in order to demonstrate that Islam was compatible with modernity.<sup>97</sup>

Chalil's participation in the *Masjumi* publishing efforts was not only confined to writing, but extended to membership on the editorial board of *Dawlah Islamiyah*, a highly regarded *Masjumi*-affiliated magazine which identified itself as "the voice of the Islamic revolutionary group."<sup>98</sup> In *Dawlah Islamiyah* Chalil wrote several articles, one of the more daring of which denounced the validity of the *fatwā* issued by the chairman of the *Majlis Shūrā*.<sup>99</sup> Several articles were also written by him in *Masjumi's* official magazine, *Suara Partai Masjumi*. One of these articles deals with the role of the Imām in Islam and traces the significance of the office of *imāmah* in the system of government of early Islam.<sup>100</sup> Chalil's treatment of the concept of *imāmah* may have represented an attempt on his part to recreate the image of the golden period of the *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn* (the first four orthodox Caliphs).<sup>101</sup> Many reformists had earlier laid an emphasis on this aspect of

<sup>96</sup>See Sukarno, "Revolusi Indonesia adalah Sebagian dari Revolusi Dunia," *Aliran Islam*, (July-August; 1949); M. Hatta, "Politik Synthese," *Aliran Islam*, (December; 1948); M. Yamin, "Pengaksanaan Kemerdekaan," *Aliran Islam*, (February; 1949).

<sup>97</sup>See, for example, his two articles, "Pendjelasan Para Filosof Islam Tentang Israa dan Mi'radj," *Aliran Islam* (?); idem, "Peristiwa Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. Disihir Orang Jahudi dan Munafiq," *Aliran Islam*, (July-August; 1949), 529-535.

<sup>98</sup>See the inside of the *Dawlah Islamiyah* front cover.

<sup>99</sup>For another article that he wrote, see his "Peraturan Allah Atas Segenap Bangsa dan Hubungannya Atas Kaum Muslimin, 2," *Dawlah Islamiyah*, (October; 1957), 25-33.

<sup>100</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Kedudukan Imam Didalam Islam," *Suara Partai Masjumi*, 7-8 (?), 26-27, 31.

<sup>101</sup>Although Chalil did not explicitly speak of the era of the four orthodox Caliphs, he

Muslim history in order to attract the attention of Muslims to the past "glory" of Islam.

Chalil's other writings were scattered in other modernist publications, such as *Pandji Masjarakat*, a magazine established in Jakarta as a continuation of a previous one published in Medan under the title of *Pedoman Masjarakat*. Although *Pandji Masjarakat* did not claim affiliation to any particular sectarian group, the names of those serving on its board of editors show a clear allegiance to the *Muhammadiyah*.<sup>102</sup> In *Pandji Masjarakat*, Chalil wrote at least two articles in which he condemned the 'ulamā' for having become the political brokers and called for enjoining good and forbidding evil.<sup>103</sup> Chalil wrote for *Pandji Masjarakat* on a regular basis, being appointed as the permanent correspondent for the Semarang region.<sup>104</sup> Finally, it should be mentioned that Chalil contributed several articles on moral uprightness as prescribed by Islam to the newspaper *Pemandangan*.<sup>105</sup>

Chalil disseminated his reformist views through his books as well.<sup>106</sup> However, unlike the case with his articles, the issues he raised in his books were rather similar and can, therefore, be divided into three categories. The *Qur'ānic*-related studies make up the first category, wherein the discussion reflects his faith in the superiority of the teachings of the *Qur'ān* over man-made ideological concepts. He argues in these works that a return to

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believed that those four were the ones chosen by the Prophet to be the Caliphs for his *ummah* as stated in his *ḥadīth*. As for other *ḥadīths* which included the Umayyads among the Caliphs promised by the Prophet, Chalil doubted the reliability of its *matn* (content), which contradicted their tyrannical and oppressive rule. Moenawar Chalil, *Chalifah Atau Kepala Negara Sepanjang Pimpinan Qur'an dan Sunnah* (Solo: Siti Sjamsijah, 1957), 42-44.

<sup>102</sup>Mohd. Faqih Usman who was elected as the chairman of the Central Board of the *Muhammadiyah* in 1968 became its general editor, while Hamka, who was one of the advisers for its central board from 1978-1984, was its editor-in-chief. See the board of editors of *Pandji Masjarakat* published at the end of 1959 and the early 1960s and the list of names in the leadership board of the *Muhammadiyah* in *Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah, n.d.), 15-16.

<sup>103</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Ulama dan 'Ulama: Imam Al-Ghazali Mengutuk 'Ulama Penggila Kedudukan Disamping Baginda Radja." *Pandji Masjarakat* (January 1; 1960), 9-12.

<sup>104</sup>See *Pandji Masjarakat* (March 28; 1960), 31.

<sup>105</sup>See, for instance, his writings under the titles of "Amal Perbuatan Jang Ichlas," *Pemandangan* (June 3; 1951), "Kupasan Arti Sjukur," *Pemandangan* (July 2; 1951) and "Idul Fitri Lambang Keluhuran Budi Pekerti," *Pemandangan* (July 5; 1951);

<sup>106</sup>See the titles of Moenawar Chalil's books in the attached bibliography.

the *Qur'ān* was the only assurance for progress and victory. The second category includes material related to the Prophet as an exemplary figure. He discusses in particular those traditions which support and promote the idea of purification. The third category comprises miscellaneous writings discussing the true meaning of Islam and seeking to rectify misconceptions of its noble mission. Other subjects in this category include the duties and rights of the '*ulamā*' in society and the state, the role of women and the function of rulers according to the prescriptions of the *Shari'ah*.

Chalil's biography reflects a series of activities inspired by the spirit of religious reform and manifested in his involvement in a number of reformist institutions. His association with the *Majlis Tarjūh*, the *Majlis Shūrā* and the *Majlis 'Ulamā*' indicates his strong commitment to the cause of reform through those councils, which were charged with preserving, developing and spreading reformist principles. His opinions on various subjects were spread through pamphlets, articles and books and served as a means of hastening the propagation of reformist ideas, which would have, otherwise, been overshadowed by traditionalist thought, rooted as it was in the traditional learning institutions for centuries. Although the subjects Chalil covered extended from the basic doctrines of Islam to disputed matters, the final analysis bear the hall-mark of the reformist thesis of a return to the pristine purity of Islam and the eradication of non-Islamic practices. As a reformist, Chalil was one of the many who were committed to challenging the traditionalist views, not only through publications, but also through screening the ideological orientation of members working in religious institutions.

Chalil's reforms were linked to the concept of a nation-state, i. e., an ideal Islamic state where Islam could be observed without hindrance. This political stance was in harmony with *Masjumi's* political doctrine, which relentlessly fought to achieve this goal. It seems, therefore, that the ambition of realizing such "an Islamic state" inspired Chalil to raise the issue of the unity of the '*ulamā*'. In his view, the role of the '*ulamā*' in

Indonesian society would be to serve as co-rulers with the *zu'ama'* (the authorities), once Islam became a ruling system. His ideas pertaining to religious reform and his political awareness were intertwined and sprang from a spirit of activism which he gained through his intellectual interaction with the Middle Eastern reformists, who sought to establish belief in the superiority of unspoiled Islamic teachings over man-made ideological concepts.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### Moenawar Chalil's Basic Beliefs: His Concept of Dīn, Islam and Īmān

Muḥammad 'Abduh's *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* was written with the aim of establishing the position of religious belief and doctrine in modern society. The way in which he approaches the theme of the unity of God in this work represents an attempt to redefine Islam and Īmān. Indeed, the whole final section of *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* constantly speaks of Islam, its beliefs, principles, spirit and extension.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of the "true" definition of Islam was urgent for 'Abduh, since Islam was constantly under attack by his contemporaries. 'Abduh had addressed himself to a society permeated with "rationality," a society doubting the validity of Islam as a guide to life.<sup>2</sup> His work, thus, responds to the test of rationality by restating the fundamental position of Islam and by reformulating its doctrines in order to render them more compatible with modern thinking and the needs of the Muslim community of his time.

The restatement of the concepts of Islam and Īmān by Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb gave rise to a movement to purify the faith. He called for the rediscovery of the purity of Islam and the reformulation of the concept of Īmān, which had been infiltrated by polytheistic practices prevalent in his time. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's concern with the reintroduction of the "true" meaning of Islam and Īmān led him to choose theology as the main theme of his work.<sup>3</sup> Unlike 'Abduh, who was motivated to defend Islam against liberal trends in thought and culture, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's aim was to lead his tribal society back to an essentially unspoiled Islam. Therefore, in his approach of defining Islam

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<sup>1</sup>See the outline of 'Abduh's *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* in Mahmudul Haq's *Muḥammad 'Abduh: A Study of a Modern Thinker of Egypt* (Aligarh: Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh University, 1970), 81-82 and Muḥammad 'Abduh's *Theology of Unity*, (trans.) Ishāq Mī'a'ad and Kenneth Cragg (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 123-160.

<sup>2</sup>Mahmūd Ayyūb, "Islam and Christianity: A Study of Muhammad Abduh's View of the Two Religions," *Humaniora Islamica*, 2 (1974), 122.

<sup>3</sup>Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Mahmūd, *al-Salafiyyah wa Da'wat al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb* (n.p.: 'Ukāz, 1981.), 61-62.

and Īmān Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb provided insufficient rational arguments quoting solely from the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* in support of the themes that he proposed. This textual-based redefinition of Islam and Īmān has led some scholars to consider *Wahhābism* as lacking in intellectual depth.

The redefining of Islam and Īmān was also attempted by the Indonesian reformists, this in response to the incursion of local traditions into Islamic religious practices and the questions raised by secularist thinkers as to the relevance of religion in the modern era. A. Hassan is one of those who were involved in the re-examination of religious doctrines and beliefs. In his book *Ar-Tauhid*, he explains his belief in God and man's relationship with the Divine. He also refutes therein the Christian concept of the Trinity, the worship of saints and certain animistic practices prevalent in Java. In *An-Nubuwwah*, Hassan outlines his concept of prophethood to demonstrate to the secular nationalists and the Christians that Islam was progressive and in conformity with scientific thought. *Islam dan Kebangsaan* is another of his works in which he explains his view of man's obligation towards God and his fellow men and demonstrates to Muslims the proper role of Islam in public life.<sup>4</sup>

Chalil's discussion of Islam and Īmān was also motivated by consideration similar to those preoccupying his fellow reformists. He believed that Islam and Īmān had been greatly misunderstood, since people did not define them in light of the prescriptions of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. Consequently, he argued, many of those who professed Islam were misled by a wrong understanding of the fundamental positions and the theological tenets of their own religion.<sup>5</sup> Chalil found, for example, that people did not know the distinction between Dīn and *agama* (the Indonesian word for religion).<sup>6</sup> He views that the word

<sup>4</sup>A. Hassan, *Ar-Tauhid* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, 1958) idem, *An-Nubuwwah* (Malang: Toko Buku Bupemi, n.d.); idem, *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (Bangil: LP3B, 1984).

<sup>5</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970), 12.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 19; in this discussion Chalil referred to the definition of *agama* given by Fachroeddin Al-Kahiri in his book, *Islam Menyoerok Fahaman Filosofi: Choetbah di Radio V.O.R.I* (Bandoeng: n.p., 1938), 3.

*agama* implies the divine concept as it is formulated within the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. In its technical sense, he explains, *agama* indicates the concept of belief in a supernatural power, the spirits of one's ancestors, idols and gods.<sup>7</sup> This concept of belief is, thus, in direct opposition to the very foundation of divine unity in Islam. By juxtaposing the two terms *Dīn* and *agama*, Chalil wants to attribute the concept of *agama* to pre-Islamic religions and *Dīn* to the religion of Islam alone. At the same time he corrects those who traced the derivation of the word *agama* to an Arabic root.<sup>8</sup>

In defining the word *Dīn*, Chalil resorts to its various meanings as found in the *Qur'ān* which he estimates to be about ten in number. In his analysis, Chalil maintains that the word *Dīn* mostly refers to the idea of judgment, obedience and regulation, which were promulgated through divine revelation (*Sharī'ah*).<sup>9</sup> He then goes on to quote in particular the *Qur'ānic* verse: "*inna al-dīn 'inda Allāh al-Islām*" (the religion before God is Islam) and analyzes the technical meaning of the word *Dīn* in the verse quoted above as interpreted by several commentators.<sup>10</sup> In his analysis, Chalil points out that the commentators elucidated the expression *Dīn* to mean *al-millat* and *al-sharī'ah*. He explains that 'Abduh, for example, said that *Dīn* was called *al-millat* because the word *Dīn* demanded the enforcement (*taklif*) of its regulations, and *al-sharī'ah* because it had a system of regulations (*awḍā'*).<sup>11</sup> In this regard, Chalil affirms, the word *Dīn* in the verse quoted should be equated with Islam, since the latter is often defined as a system of regulations (*awḍā'*) which are deemed to be enforced (*taklif*).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Chalil then referred to the definition of *agama* provided by Sutan Mohammad Zain in the latter's *Kamus Modern Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Grafika, n. d.), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> The *Qur'ān*, 1: 3; 51: 6; 82: 17; 7: 29; 39: 2; 12: 76; 42: 13; 109: 6; 16: 52; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 20-23; the *Qur'ān*, 3: 19;

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad 'Abduh, *Tafsir al-Manār*, vol. 3 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Āmmah li-al-Kitāb, n.d.), 257.

<sup>12</sup> Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 20-23.

Chalil's interpretation of the word *Dīn*, which for him meant Islam, merits discussion. He held that the *Qur'ān* used the word *Dīn* to identify all religions, yet the religion that was revealed to all Prophets was Islam.<sup>13</sup> To support his opinion, Chalil quotes three verses declaring that the *al-dīn al-ḥaq* (Religion of Truth) is Islam. As such, according to Chalil's view, Islam was not one religion among others, but the only one revealed from Nūḥ to Muḥammad and that the other religions could be referred to as *Dīn* only in so far as they conformed to Islam.<sup>14</sup> Thus, according to Chalil, Islam alone was the *al-dīn al-ḥaq*, because each time the expression *al-dīn al-ḥaq* appears in the *Qur'ān*, it is to confirm that Islam has primacy over all domains of religion.<sup>15</sup>

The idea of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* was often identified with the process of its transmission. Muslim writers usually claimed that Islam was the only religion which had been passed down from messengers to succeeding generations through chains of reliable transmitters. It was due to the merit of its full transmission that Islam deserved the name of *al-dīn al-ḥaq*.<sup>16</sup> The historical clarity of Islam was, however, not a factor mentioned by Chalil, who chooses to speak of Islam's authenticity instead. He emphasizes the latter because he regards it as the main factor behind Islam's survival and resistance against human interpretation. He, therefore, explains that the opposite of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* is *al-dīn al-mubaddal* (a corrupt religion) like that of the *Majūs* (Zoroastrians), the *Sābi'ūn* (Sabians), the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book) and the *Wathaniyyūn* (Idolaters).<sup>17</sup> Chalil associates the notion of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* with certain characteristics among them the quality of being moderate, a characteristic not shared by the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, who, according to Chalil, were

<sup>13</sup>He quoted a *ḥadīth* which said "We, the Prophets, only have one religion [Islam]." Ibid., 23-25.

<sup>14</sup>It should be mentioned that the setting of Ādam at the head of the line of Prophets was probably a later development of thought, as there are other passages in which Nūḥ appears to be the first in the line of messengers. Arthur Jefferey, "The Qur'ān as Scripture, 2," *Muslim World*, 40 (1950), 117; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 23-24.

<sup>15</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 9: 33; 61: 9; 48: 28.

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, 'Abduh's commentary on *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 33. *Tafsīr al-Ma'ān*, vol. 9, 338.

<sup>17</sup>Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 28.

exaggerated in their religious practices. It is due to its simplicity and avoidance of excess that Islam may be distinguished from the other religions.<sup>18</sup>

Chalil goes on to say that this character can only be maintained by ensuring that its principles not be corrupted by its religious leaders (*rijāl al-dīn*). It was due to the modifications, changes and additions imposed by their religious leaders, Chalil argues, that Judaism and Christianity lost their originality.<sup>19</sup> This point leads him into a discussion of how the *al-dīn al-ḥaq* is related to *Qur'ānic* expressions *al-dīn al-qayyīm* (the Immutable Religion) or *dīnan ḥanīfan* (the faith of Ibrāhīm).<sup>20</sup> According to Chalil, the concept of *dīnan ḥanīfan* goes back to the original concept of monotheistic religion as voiced by Ibrāhīm. The latter had called for a religion that was unspoiled by deception and falsehood. It is, therefore, with this *dīnan ḥanīfan*, a pure monotheistic religion, that the concept of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* may also be identified.<sup>21</sup>

Chalil then moves on to a discussion of the word Islam. He considers how the word Islam is used in the *Qur'ān* and discovers eight different senses which he divides into three categories of meaning, namely the connection between Dīn and Islam, the interior quality of Islam and conversion to Islam.<sup>22</sup> Chalil further explains the word Islam by quoting the opinions of some *Qur'ānic* commentators. He was keenly attentive to the interpretation of 'Abduh who identified the word Islam with the concept of *al-tawḥīd*

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; the *Qur'ān*, 2: 171; 5: 77; 7: 31.

<sup>19</sup> Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajat-ur-Rahmān*, vol. 1 (Solo: Siti Sjamisjah, 1958), 228, 229, 352, 360-361; Yvonne Haddad traces various meanings of Dīn in the *Qur'ān* and some of them show similarities with those put forth by Chalil. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Conception of the Term 'Dīn' in the Qur'ān," *Muslim World*, 64 (1974), 114-125.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; the *Qur'ān*, 6: 161.

<sup>21</sup> See Chalil's interpretation of the verse "They say: Become Jews or Christians, if you would be guided (to salvation). Say, No (I would rather have) the religion of Ibrāhīm the True and he joined not gods with God (in Islam)." Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajat-ur-Rahmān*, 350-353; the word *ḥanīf*, which means one who professes the true religion, was mostly followed by the name of Ibrāhīm and the phrase *min al-mushrikīn*, which indicated that the true religion must be committed to the principle of monotheism. See 'Abduh's commentary on *Sūrat al-Az'īm*, 61. *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 7, 211.

<sup>22</sup> The *Qur'ān*, 5: 3; 3: 19; 3: 85; 6: 125; 61: 7; 29: 22; 9: 74; 49: 17; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 23.

(divine unity). 'Abduh believed, according to Chalil, that Islam was revealed to purify the human heart and mind from belief in superstitions, so that man may be totally free and dependent only on God.<sup>23</sup> According to 'Abduh, a true Muslim was a person who purified himself from the "filth of polytheism" (*min shawā'ib al-shirk*) and whose acts were a reflection of genuine faith (*al-īmān*) in any place and time.<sup>24</sup> Chalil further explains that emphasizing the purity of one's heart and conduct from *shirk* is central in defining Islam, since all rulings prescribed in the *Shari'ah* are intended to secure *tawhīd* from anything that could tarnish it.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Chalil concludes that Islam cannot be isolated from the concept of *tawhīd* (Īmān), since the two words, Islam and Īmān, are terms frequently used inseparably in the *Qur'ān*.<sup>26</sup>

Chalil takes up the discussion of the concept of Īmān by tracing its meaning in the vocabulary of the *Qur'ān* and by relying on the two *Qur'ānic* verses that employ the word Īmān in the sense of belief.<sup>27</sup> He also employs the definitions provided by the *ḥadīth*, *athar* and the jurists, all of which suggest, according to Chalil, that Īmān consists of assertion by tongue (*qawl*), internal judgment by heart (*maḍq*) and affirmation by deeds (*a'māl*). Thus, Chalil insists that true Īmān is not only witnessed by words (*shahādah bi-al-lisān*), but must be made alive by adherence of the heart (*'ahd bi-al-qalb*) and proved by works (*a'māl bi-al-arkān*). These three elements of the act of Īmān were extracted from various sources, one from 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib who is quoted as having said: "Belief in God is assertion by tongue, confirmation by heart and good works," another, which sounds very similar, cited by Chalil from 'Ā'ishah and the final one attributed to the Prophet who said that "Īmān is not merely an adoration of God, but acceptance in one's mind and implementation of one's duties."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.; See also 'Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 3, 257.

<sup>25</sup>Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajatul-Rahmaan*, 362.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 12: 17; 9: 62; Chalil, *Definis: dan Sendi Agama*, 32.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Chalil then expands this definition of *Īmān* by adding what was mentioned in the *sunnah* about it, regarding this as an important element. In doing so, he cites the opinion of al-Awzā'ī who insisted that true *Īmān* could be judged by the conformity of one's acts with the *sunnah* of the Prophet.<sup>29</sup> This was in line with the Ḥanbalī opinion which suggested that *Īmān* consists of words, works, the right intention (*niyyah*) and attachment to the *sunnah*. This assertion was also supported by some *ḥadīth* scholars who, according to Chalil, did not accept *Īmān*, unless it denoted one's adherence to all religious orders and avoidance of all the prohibitions (*ma'siyahs*) that He had laid down in the message expounded in Muḥammad's *sunnah*.<sup>30</sup>

Lastly, Chalil mentions the opinion of Sahl al-Tustarī, who had held that attachment to the *sunnah* was an important component of *Īmān*. Making pious statements without good deeds, al-Tustarī argued, was infidelity (*kufṛ*), while assertion by the tongue with no internal affirmation was hypocrisy (*mīfāq*) and acceptance by the heart without following the *sunnah* of the Prophet was heresy (*bid'ah*).<sup>31</sup> Chalil does not mention any opinion which considers the implementation of *Īmān* in overt acts as a secondary element. Such an opinion was not rare among the theologians, particularly those who belonged to the *Māturidī* school of theology. Even if Chalil were not familiar with the theological principles advocated by the *Māturidīs*, he might have become so through some Ash'arīs, whose opinions received an acceptance in Indonesia. The latter stressed the importance of conviction or internal judgment, saying that a *taṣḍīq* in God is an internal judgment of truthfulness, which denotes obedience to God. As such, it does not forcefully require the performance of duties.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>32</sup>L. Gardet, "Īmān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (eds.) B. Lewis et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 1170.

Does Īmān increase and decrease? In the *Qur'ān* the increase of Īmān is frequently mentioned. The *Qur'ān* in *Sūrat Al 'Imrān*, 173, for example, states: "Those to whom people said, 'People have gathered against you, so fear them,' this increased their faith and they said, 'Sufficient is God for us, for He is the best Guardian.'"<sup>33</sup> And again in *Sūrat al-Fath*, 4, the *Qur'ān* mentions the possibility of the increase of Īmān by saying: "It is He who sent tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they may add faith to their faith."<sup>34</sup> On this matter, Chalil was in accordance with the opinion of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥafḥānī, who did not come down on the question of whether the act of Īmān can increase and decrease. Nevertheless, on the question of whether Īmān remains valid when one does not practice what he believes in, al-Ḥafḥānī affirmed that in such an instance Īmān would be lost accordingly. In supporting his argument, al-Ḥafḥānī quoted a *ḥadīth* which affirmed that "An adulterer while committing an act of adultery was not a believer (*mu'min*)."<sup>35</sup>

Chalil supported al-Ḥafḥānī's analysis that an act of disobedience could cause the loss of Īmān saying that Īmān lay strictly in the external expressions without which it would be lost.<sup>36</sup> By saying so, Chalil did not see that while acts of disobedience certainly diminish Īmān, Īmān itself, nonetheless, essentially remains. The implication of this is that he did not perceive Īmān as susceptible to growth and decrease. Such a view was in contradiction with the doctrine of al-Ash'arī, who believed in that Īmān could both develop and diminish, a view that generally guides the theological approach of Muslims in Indonesia.<sup>37</sup> Rather, his opinion was closer to that of Abū Ḥanīfah, who held that Īmān would neither increase nor decrease. This was despite the fact that Abū Ḥanīfah did not

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<sup>33</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 3: 173.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 48: 4.

<sup>35</sup>Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 52.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>37</sup>Unlike the Ash'arīs, the Ḥanafīs denied that Īmān could increase and decrease. W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 78.



include actions in his conception of *Īmān*, as Chalil had done.<sup>38</sup> The fact that Chalil held that *Īmān* was concomitant with the performance of all rites and duties was intended to challenge those who accepted Islam only as an official religion. This is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where a substantial number of Indonesians were Muslims by confession, but, in fact, rejected most religious rituals and obligations.<sup>39</sup>

Chalil's opinion was also in conformity with the "doctrine" of the reformists, who desired to translate belief into works and acts. They condemned the traditionalists, who sometimes laid more weight on verbal confessions and less on acts. A case in point is the traditionalists' literal translation of a *ḥadīth* which states that whoever pronounces the *kalimah ṭayyibah* ([two] sentence[s] of witness) on his death bed will enter heaven without judgment (*bi-ghayr ḥisāb*). The reformists, on the other hand, did not accept such a verbal-metaphysical confession and required real actions instead. This was so, because the reformists always persisted in their belief in human responsibility and, therefore, only accepted human acts as proofs of what men confessed.

The essential theological question on which the schools of *kalām* were divided was that of the distinction or non-distinction between Islam and *Īmān*. In the *Qur'ān*, the terms Islam and *Īmān* are sometimes used interchangeably, since "Muslim and Mu'min constitute the body of those who escape from hell by embracing Islam."<sup>40</sup> This statement, however, is not absolute, since in some instances the *Qur'ānic* usage seems to suggest that the two held different connotations.<sup>41</sup> Also, one *ḥadīth* states that there was a difference between

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<sup>38</sup>Ziauddin Ahmed, "A Survey of the Development of Theology in Islam," *Islamic Studies*, 11 (1972), 107.

<sup>39</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Islam Tinggal Nama," *Abadi* (March 5, 1954); this definition of *Īmān* was not peculiar to Chalil as some theologians shared his view. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 134-135.

<sup>40</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 49: 17.

<sup>41</sup>Jane I. Smith, "Īmān and Islām," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 7. (ed.) Mircea Eliade (London: Macmillan, 1987), 119.

Islam and Īmān.<sup>42</sup> Īmān, which also expresses itself in the performance of rites and duties, lies deeper than Islam, just as the roots of the tree lie beneath the earth. This difference is briefly explained by a tradition in which the Prophet is quoted as having said: "Islam is external, Īmān belongs to the heart". Thereupon he [Muḥammad] pointed to his own heart three times saying: "The fear of God is here." The Ḥanafites affirmed this distinction between Islam and Īmān. They assume that Īmān and Islam signify two different meanings; the former belief in God and His Apostle and the latter denoting submission thereto.<sup>43</sup>

Chalil's stand differed from that of the Ḥanafites in that he sees Īmān and Islam as an inseparable entity. His view was based on al-Ghazālī's interpretations of the terms Islam and Īmān. al-Ghazālī said that the two sometimes make up different sets of acts, which he called *ikhtilāf* (difference). While Islam is a submission by action, Īmān is an affirmation by the heart, each has its own norms and does not interact with the other. At that time, however, Islam and Īmān were seen as intertwining in meaning, which al-Ghazālī referred to as *tarāduf* (synonymity). Islam and Īmān, thus, compose two inseparable entities, since the outer expression (Islam) must be generated from the inner affirmation (Īmān). Islam exists because of Īmān and Īmān because of Islam. Nevertheless, on still other occasions the link between the two is not synonymous, but rather accidental, which al-Ghazālī calls *taḍakkul* (intervention). In such instances, Islam indicates both inward and outward submission, while Īmān subsists as one component of Islam only.<sup>44</sup> In his analysis of al-Ghazālī's approach to the issue, Chalil supports the second meaning, as proved by his quotation of a number of opinions that were similar to this meaning as given by al-Ghazālī.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup>The best known *ḥadīth* defining Islam as being distinct from Īmān is the one which describes the five duties of Islam (*arkān al-Islām*) and the six pillars of Īmān (*arkān al-Īmān*). For the definition of *arkān al-Islām* and *Īmān*, see Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn li-al-Ṭibā'ah, 1987), 66, 73.

<sup>43</sup>Ziauddin Ahmed, "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Problem of Īmān," *Islamic Studies*, 12 (1973), 265.

<sup>44</sup>Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 44.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

Īmān through *naqlid* (unreasoning imitation) was condemned by Chalil. Īmān, according to him, must be based on an intelligent acceptance, the absence of which rendered the acquisition of Īmān invalid. In order to be fully convinced of their Īmān, Muslims should investigate the signs of the universe and the indication of events that reflect divine existence.<sup>46</sup> Chalil supports this statement with a number of traditions that reported the Prophet as having said that: "Reason is man's custodian (*qiwām al-mar'*) and religion is only for man with the [sound] reason."<sup>47</sup> In another instance, he selects a *ḥadīth* which enjoins people to seek logical proofs on matters of Īmān: "Oh men, search for evidence (*a'qilū*) of your God and urge one another with your reason (*bi-al-'aql*), so that you know what is enjoined and forbidden, because that is the only way to save you on the Day of Judgment." Chalil also advances a *ḥadīth* which associates reason with the level of Īmān, as seen in a *ḥadīth* which reads: "Don't be impressed by a man's Īmān, until you know how his intellect perceives [things] (*mā dā'a 'aḡada 'aqluh*)."<sup>48</sup>

Chalil's argument was in line with that of other reformists who condemned uncritical acceptance of Īmān. They were opposed to blind submission to Īmān on the grounds that reason is capable of having a comprehensive knowledge of God. For them, reason has to seek the Creator of this world through His signs, irrespective of the level of reason. According to them, Muslims must shun submission to conjecture and not be content with mere imitation, since a belief that is not supported by proofs and reason will inevitably hamper the progress of their intellectual faculties.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 85-86; Moenawar Chalil, "Bagaimana Berdzikir Kepada Allah," *Abadi* (April 23; 1954).

<sup>47</sup>Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 88.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. 88-89.

<sup>49</sup>Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, *Refutation of the Materialists*, in Nikki R. Keddie *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din 'al-Afghānī'* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 171; Aminah Muḥammad Naṣīr, *al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb wa Manhajuh fi Mabāḥith al-'Aqīdah* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1983), 84; Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Durūs min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-'Ulūm, 1980), 72-73.

The view that *Īmān* requires demonstrative reasoning was a classical argument. It became an essential principle in scholastic theology (*kalām*), which was built on rational demonstration and relied only occasionally on dogmatic traditions. It is well known that the method of *kalām* rested on advancing the rational arguments (*dalil 'aqli*) first, before establishing doctrinal arguments (*dalil naqli*). *Īmān* as defined by Chalil above cannot, therefore, be seen as a reformist definition, but rather as a restatement of the old theological formula dressed up to fit his reformist campaign against *taqlid* and traditions. It should also be noted that the traditionalists, who were regarded as ardent practitioners of *taqlid*, also required logical proofs with respect to matters of *Īmān*. Machfudz Shiddiq, the chairman of the Central Executive (*Tanfidhiyah*) Board of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'*,<sup>50</sup> explains that since *Īmān* is the foundation of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*), rational arguments are, therefore, of unquestioned necessity. He believes that such requirements are not hard to fulfill even on the part of the least talented man, since logical proofs based on sensible phenomena are in abundance.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Chalil who refers to the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* only, Shiddiq, in giving his definition, refers to *al-Luma'*, a text written by a Shāfi'ite scholar. Despite their different methods in deducing the definition of *Īmān*, both reformists and traditionalists came to the same conclusion, i.e. that reason is of prime importance in developing a sense of *Īmān*, even for those who are not trained at all in reasoning, logical proofs or the art of dialectics. This is so because the common people are still capable of reaching logical conclusions through *dalil ijmālī* (inconclusive arguments).<sup>52</sup>

What differentiated the reformists and traditionalists on the issue of *Īmān* was the fact that while the former confined themselves to its cognitive message, the latter went beyond that message by giving to the principle of *Īmān* an emotional dimension. This

<sup>50</sup>For Machfudz Shiddiq's role in the *N. U.*, see a brief account on that issue in A. Muchith Muzadi, "Al-Maghfur-lah K. H. Machfudz Shiddiq: Tokoh Penegak Khittah," *Aulan* (September, 1991), 47-52.

<sup>51</sup>Machfudz Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Idjtihad dan Taqlid* (Soerabaja: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, 1959), 60.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 60; A. Hassan, *Ar-Tauhid*, 3-5.

dimension may be seen in the didactic poems (*manzūmahs*) which were introduced by the traditionalists to disseminate love and appreciation of their religion in the heart of a reciter. There are a number of *manzūmahs* that sing of God's omnipotence, names and attributes and of the Prophet's exemplary conduct expressed in theological terms.<sup>53</sup> The *manzūmah*, which is composed in a metrical rhyme-scheme, aims at arousing the emotion of its reciter and at heightening his religious feeling. The intensity of the reciter's emotion was expected to increase the psychological element in his faith, so that the emotional aspect was maintained. Needless to say, the Indonesian reformists rejected the recitation of *manzūmahs*, an example of this being the *Persis*' attack on the tradition of chanting a particular *manzūmah* prior to the *Subh* prayer.<sup>54</sup>

Chalil's perspective on *taqlid* in *Imān* led him to believe that its practice had prevailed long before the coming of Islam among the followers of previous religions. He declares that this practice did not die away and that a theological revision should be constantly undertaken in order to correct the situation. He affirms that the practice of *taqlid* is based on the belief that the acceptance of *Imān* in the eyes of God is dependent on following a religious leader (*ketua agama*) or a holy man (*orang suci*). He states that holy men have created the notion that ordinary men lack the power to present their own prayers to God and that in order to obtain forgiveness they must depend on the mediation of holy men. Chalil accuses those who wield religious authority of treating others like babies (*bayi*), since the basic right of ordinary men to exercise their own rational power is taken over by their so-called superiors.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> There are number of *manzūmahs* famous among which are the *manzūmahs* describing God's twenty attributes (*wujūd, qidām, baqā'*, etc.) and exalting the Prophet and his *ṣaḥābah* (*ṣalawāt al-badr*).

<sup>54</sup> The *manzūmahs* were recited, while the prayer attendants were sitting in preparation for the obligatory (congregational) prayers and waiting for the coming of other attendants or the *imām* (leader of prayers). The *manzūmahs* were also commonly chanted in *pengujians* (religious gatherings). See "Pantoen Made in Ba'alwij," *Pembela Islam*, no. 51, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 96-98; idem, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidaajatul-Rahman*, 359, 361.

Chalil's approach in linking the practice of *taqlid* to the followers of pre-Islamic religions coincides with that of al-Afghānī, who asserted that in Christianity men are treated differently according to religious hierarchy and race. al-Afghānī also said that only the priests are given control over the acceptance of belief and the forgiveness of sins. Other men, even if they were to achieve a high degree of perfection, would not be allowed to present their own sins before the divine threshold and to seek forgiveness.<sup>56</sup> al-Afghānī's criticism of Christian dogma ultimately sought to affirm that Islam, unlike Christianity or other faiths, was the only religion that removed class distinctions and that, indeed, if there was any distinction in Islam it was based only on intellectual and spiritual perfection.<sup>57</sup> However, unlike al-Afghānī, Chalil's attack on *taqlid* was an act of revision not affirmation, since it was aimed at redressing the *īmān* of his co-religionists. In this respect, Chalil shared more with 'Abduh than al-Afghānī. In his criticism of the practice of *taqlid*, 'Abduh wanted to free his fellow Muslims from the shackles of *taqlid* that they had imposed upon themselves due to their belief in the authority of religious leadership (*al-sulṭah al-dīniyah*).<sup>58</sup>

Although Chalil gives reason a very high rank with regards to *īmān*, he is still traditional in his views that it is revelation and not reason that made the knowledge of God obligatory, as can be seen in the extensive textual citations that he advances. He certainly does not dare to deny or even question the role of revelation or to consider reason as self-sufficient in guiding the human mind towards knowledge of God. It is true that reason can attain knowledge of God's existence, but it is revelation that commands reason to explore the signs of God's creation.<sup>59</sup> In this regard, he does not break away from the theological

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<sup>56</sup>Keddie *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*. 171.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 130-187 and Muḥammad 'Abduh's "al-Radd 'alā Farah Anṭūn," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh* (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālidah Sa'īd (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 81-82.

<sup>59</sup>Compare this, for instance, with al-Zamakhshari's opinion on the role of reason in *īmān*. Lutpi Ibrahim, "The Relation of Reason and Revelation in the Theology of Az-Zamakhshari and al-Bayḍāwī," *Islamic Culture*, 54 (1980), 63-74.

paradigm laid down by the early theologians. The fact that his support and that of his reformist counterparts for the possibility that God's existence might be known through investigation "struck" a chord in Indonesian society, does not necessarily mean that they were offering a concept in any way different from that of the early theologians.

Chalil believed that releasing human reason from the bondage of *taqlid* had far-reaching implications for the status of rational thought, science and human obligations in Islam. Islam, he affirms, is a pure religion (*agama fitrah*) which does not hamper progress but rather condemns the intellectual stagnation that has arisen as a result of *taqlid*. It greatly encourages its followers to broaden their intellectual vision, in as much as the *Qur'ān* repeatedly orders them to use their reason and intelligence in understanding the mystery of creation. Not only is the exercise of reason in Islam intended to consolidate belief in God's existence, but it is also of use in analyzing factors that are conducive to material strength and progress. He further explains that it is on man's power [reason] and not that of any religious authority that achieving progress in his life depends, as implicitly stated by the Prophet.<sup>60</sup>

In Chalil's eyes, every human being is created with a desire for perfection which is expressed in his relentless efforts to pursue that perfection (*mencari kesempurnaan*) in his life. Thus, it is only through the maximum exercise of human reason that progress and perfection can be obtained. Referring to a *Qur'ānic* injunction, Chalil argues that God created the whole universe to provide man with the resources necessary for his daily requirements and welfare.<sup>61</sup> Logically, he states, God has also obliged human beings to explore and maintain what has been created for them on earth.<sup>62</sup> In order to accomplish the

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<sup>60</sup>The Prophet has been reportedly said: "In religious matters you have to follow me, but in worldly matters you know them better than I do." In this respect, Chalil also quotes several *Qur'ānic* verses underlining the necessity of understanding, intelligence and reflection. Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 107; the *Qur'ān* 10: 101; 10: 19.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 1: 29; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 100-105.

<sup>62</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Islam dan Economie* (Djogjakarta: Penjiaran Islam, n.d.), 96-97.

duty of exploiting the wealth of the earth and of maintaining it, science has to be developed and studied. The *Qur'ān* itself even declares, Chalil explains, that since God endowed human beings with a little knowledge, so man is recommended to pray for the increase of that knowledge. Therefore, in Islam the possessors of knowledge are favored with a prominent place and are distinguished as a special class. This means, Chalil further states, that worldly progress which can only develop in a climate of freedom of thought and scientific advances has a sound basis in Islam.<sup>63</sup>

In Chalil's view, Islam is an all-embracing religion that encompasses both spiritual and material matters. It regulates all kinds of mundane activities, such as transactions, commercial enterprises (*urusu syarikat*), agriculture, trade and others.<sup>64</sup> He challenges the traditional image of austere Islam, stating that Islam is not a religion for those who flee from worldly pursuits. Islam, he explains, is more than merely an institution that seeks spiritual enjoyment through *du'ā'*, *dhikr* (repetition of God's names through certain formulas), *ṣalāh*, etc.<sup>65</sup> Again, Chalil cautions his co-religionists that earthly progress should be pursued through their own endeavors and not through imitation (*taqlid*) of the previous generations, whose glory and achievements were appropriate only to their own time and place. He supports this assessment with the *Qur'ānic* injunction stating, "That was a people that has passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and you of what you do. Of their merits there is no question in your case."<sup>66</sup>

In connection with the role of reason, Chalil condemns misconceptions regarding *ikhtiyār* (effort). He affirms that all the miseries and misfortunes inflicted upon Muslims are the outcome of their own deeds. His opinion on *ikhtiyār* should be connected with his concept of *du'ā'*, since both point to his views on the dynamism and work-ethos

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<sup>63</sup>See his interpretation of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 31-33 in his *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahman*, 126-129.

<sup>64</sup>Chalil, *Islam dan Ekonomi*, 14-15.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.* 17.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.* 107; the *Qur'ān*, 2: 141.



prescribed by Islam. In elaborating on the meaning of *ikhtiyār*, Chalil cites a *Qur'ānic* injunction that was popular with the reformists: "Verily God will not change the state of a people until they change their own state."<sup>67</sup> According to Chalil's opinion, Muslims often fail to interpret correctly the concept of *ikhtiyār*. *Ikhtiyār*, he states, should be understood as essential in life, for without it everything would come to a standstill and progress would never be realized. What one usually fails to understand, in his view, is the fact that in the operation of *ikhtiyār*, reason (*'aql*) is a determining factor, since it is reason alone that controls the person who exercises the *ikhtiyār*. Furthermore, Chalil states that *ikhtiyār* consists of two components, one being the outer and the other the inner element. The latter, to which reason belongs, should be elevated to a position superior to that of the former, due to its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, a capacity which directs the outer component on the road to success. Chalil further states that change in man must come about through his own reason and it is up to every individual to view himself critically, for he cannot blame anyone other than himself for his failure.<sup>68</sup> As such, Chalil's concept of *ikhtiyār* aims at promoting the idea of "change through reason and action" which constituted a prerequisite to human progress.

Pursuing worldly progress was an important issue in the reformist tradition. It was out of confidence in the ability of man to realize his ends through struggle and effort that Chalil attacked the practice of *zuhd* (abstinence).<sup>69</sup> Chalil states that *zuhd* was commonly misunderstood as abstinence from worldly things and detachment from all that God has created. In adopting this practice, he argues, Muslims become apathetic in the pursuit of

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<sup>67</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 13: 11; 'Abduh invokes this verse repeatedly in *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*. See Vatikiotis' comment on this issue in P. J. Vatikiotis, "Muhammad 'Abduh and the Quest for a Muslim Humanism," *Islamic Culture*, 31 (1957), 115.

<sup>68</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Arti Ichtiar Sepandjang Pimpinan Agama Islam," *Abadi* (April 30; 1953); idem, "Pendjelasan Arti Tawakkal," *Abadi* (June 26; 1953); idem, "Peraturan Allah Atas Segenap Bangsa Dan Hubungannya Atas Kaum Muslimin," *Dawlah Islamiyah* (October; 1957), 26.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

worldly progress and inevitably leave many fields of life untended.<sup>70</sup> *Zuhd* in its true meaning, Chalil further remarks, seeks to place all material accomplishments within the framework of divine grace. He consolidates his opinion by quoting a *ḥadīth* which states: "*Zuhd* is not to declare lawful what is forbidden and not to neglect material pursuit, but *zuhd* is that you do not regard wealth in your hands superior to God's power." In fact, *zuhd*, Chalil states, is not an abandonment, but a search for and pursuit of material achievements, as 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib has said: "Whoever strives in the world with the intention of seeking it for God's sake is exercising the practice of *zuhd*."<sup>71</sup> Material gain itself, therefore, is not condemned, but is prescribed by textual injunctions. What is condemned by Islam, Chalil confirms, is the accumulation of wealth which denies a share to others or excessive attachment to worldly comforts and pleasures that divert one's attention from God.<sup>72</sup>

As was the case with other reformists, Chalil's attitude towards *sūfism* was hostile. He denounced the *ṭarīqah* (*sūfī* order) as having no religious basis whatsoever in Islam. All the major *ṭarīqahs*, such as the *Qādiriyyah*, the *Nashqbandiyyah*, the *Dasūqiyyah*, the *Shādhiliyyah*, the *Tijāniyyah* and others, he states, came into being in the fifth and sixth centuries of the *Hijrah* long after the Islamic era *par excellence*. He points out that the advent of the *ṭarīqah* coincided with the "golden age of Islam", when the faithful had lost their grip on the pristine teachings of Islam, the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. What the *ṭarīqah* introduced, such as *dhikr* and other *sūfī* formulas, were ritual innovations (*bid'ah*), according to Chalil, which were performed neither by the Prophet nor by his *ṣaḥābah* (companions) nor even by his *raḥbi'ūn* (the following generation).<sup>73</sup> In his reflections on the emergence of the *ṭarīqah*, Chalil isolates the *ṭarīqah* from the context of its gradual

<sup>70</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Zuhud Sepandjang Pemimpin Islam," *Abadi* (July, 17; 1053); idem, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemmat Islam," *Pembela Islam*, no. 56, 25-27; idem, *Islam dan Economic*, 44.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>73</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Apa Arti Thariqat Itu?" *Abadi* (February 19; 1954).

development. He does not view it as a crystallization of spiritual tendencies rooted in ascetic practices apparent in early Islam. Asceticism emerged in response to the change in the economic circumstances during the Umayyad period, when there was an influx of wealth from the conquered lands. Chalil's view that the prime mover of *ṭarīqah* was man's inability to cope with the pressure of worldly progress is not entirely correct either. He fails to realize that, apart from the pressure of worldly life, the *Qur'ān* itself speaks of the relationship of individuals to God in an intense and passionate way, which is conducive to the birth of mystical experience.<sup>74</sup> As for his attack on the practice of *dhikr*, Chalil does not discuss the *Qur'ānic* text which, indeed, enjoins on every Muslim the practice of recollecting God, a practice which was translated into the tradition of *dhikr* by the *sūfis*.<sup>75</sup>

It is due to the reformists' attack on *sūfism* as a deviation from the practice of the Prophet and the *salaf* that controversy over the *ṭarīqahs* arose. Citing Ibn Khaldūn's opinion on *sūfism*, Siradjuddin Abbas, a leading traditionalist scholar, challenged this notion saying that *sūfism* was historically rooted in the religious practices of the *ṣaḥābah* and the *salaf*. The practice was later shaped into an established form in the second and the third centuries of *Hijrah* in response to the society's increased appetite for worldly life.<sup>76</sup> Yet, Abbas did not discuss the central issue raised by Chalil concerning the absolute obedience of a *murīd* (disciple) to his *shaykh* (master), which was part and parcel of the basic rules of *sūfī* life.<sup>77</sup> The *shaykh's* absolute authority over his disciples could prove very dangerous due to possible misuse.<sup>78</sup> It was on the issue of the *murīd-shaykh* relationship that a bitter conflict between the reformists and the traditionalists broke out in

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<sup>74</sup> The *Qur'ān*, 2: 115; 50: 16.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 33: 41.

<sup>76</sup> Siradjuddin Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 3 (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1992), 34-35.

<sup>77</sup> Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

west Sumatra in the early twentieth century, signaling the beginning of a more intensive reform movement in Indonesia.<sup>79</sup>

Chalil's discussion of Dīn affirmed that Islam was not one religion among others, but the one and only Dīn revealed throughout the chain of prophethood extending from Nuḥ to Muḥammad. The concept of Dīn in Islam should not be confused with other belief systems, which may be described by other terms, such as *agama* or the like. The disconnection of Dīn from non-Islamic elements was an initial step for Chalil in his attempt at purifying the faith, before building a fresh understanding of Islam and Īmān and making further endeavors to purify Islam of other non-Islamic elements. Islam should be defined in reference to the concept of *tawḥīd*, he advocated, which constitutes the core of the system of belief in Islam. Apart from that Islam is not only a complete submission to God, but also a comprehensive system of living. The division of life into sacred and profane is dedicated to God and nothing that is so dedicated can be profane. This is particularly true, since Islam, according to Chalil, obliges its followers to be active players in secular life. Because Islam is an all-embracing religion, it is impossible to deny that Islam is a true guide for human life, if correctly defined and understood.

Chalil was an advocate of the purity of Īmān, which alone can validate the whole fabric of religious life. For him, true Īmān means its confession by the tongue and its expression by acts. It is only by saying and acting that man can find a true basis for his relationship with God. As Īmān is the essence of the spiritual message of Islam, the meaning of Īmān must be correctly understood. Anything that can distort the right conception of Īmān should be eliminated, so that Īmān will always be prosperous and pure. Īmān was considered by Chalil as the first thing inscribed in human minds. If one's mind

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<sup>79</sup>Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), 147.

were to become idle and adulterated, it would be no longer possible to distinguish between good and evil, and adversity and misfortune would then overtake one from all sides.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Moenawar Chalil and the *Qur'ān*: His Approach to Exegesis

Muslim reformists of the modern period, who always upheld the supreme authority of the *Qur'ān*, emphasized the necessity of its reinterpretation in response to the dynamic evolution of life and the emergence of new ideas and perceptions, which are constantly being formed and reformed. They felt that if the progress of Muslim society was to be realized, rigorous efforts had to be exerted in reinterpreting the divine message according to the new challenges and developments of the modern era.<sup>1</sup> It was not a coincidence, therefore, that reformists tended to follow a particular method of elucidating the *Qur'ān*, which differed from that of the early *mufasssirs* (*Qur'ān* commentators).

The chief example of this new trend in exegesis was Muḥammad 'Abduh. 'Abduh's interest in *tafsīr* was reflected in a series of lectures that he delivered on the *Qur'ān*. Apart from his monumental *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 'Abduh also composed another *tafsīr* on *Juz' 'Amma* as well as a number of works which interpreted individual *āyāt* (verses).<sup>2</sup> The method 'Abduh adopted became the archetype upon which subsequent *mufasssirs* modeled themselves, thus making 'Abduh the "founding" father of the modern school of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (*Qur'ān* exegesis).<sup>3</sup>

Another figure in the field was Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who while he did not produce a book on *tafsīr*, nevertheless wrote an extensive commentary on selected verses of the *Qur'ān* in the form of essays. Although Sir Sayyid's contribution is not to be measured

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<sup>1</sup>J. M. S. Baljon, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation, (1880-1960)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>See his writings on the controversial issue of *al-gharānīq*, *al-ummah* and *al-khalīfah* and others. Muḥammad 'Abduh, "Mas'alat al-Gharānīq," in *Durūs min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm, 1980), 121-129; idem, "Fī Ma'nā al-Ummah," "al-Ummah al-Wasaṭ," and "al-Khalīfah," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh* (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālīdah Sa'id (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 37-56; idem, *Mushkilāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Tafsīr al-Fāṭihah* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat bi-al-Ḥayāh, n.d.); idem, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm: Juz' 'Amma* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyah, 1322).

<sup>3</sup>Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssirūn*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1962), 214.

against 'Abduh's *tafsir*, one cannot deny the impact that his *tafsir* had on the minds of Indian Muslim thinkers.<sup>4</sup> Sir Sayyid, for example, had a significant influence on the Indian reformist Abul Kalam Azad, who produced a work on *tafsir* which he entitled *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān*.<sup>5</sup> Even though all of these reformists displayed different characteristics in their respective *tafsirs*, yet all their approaches originated from the same nurturing source. This source was the rational inclination to interpret the *Qur'ān* and to prove that its message is eternal and compatible with the needs of the present. Moenawar Chalil's *tafsir* also constituted an attempt to elucidate the *Qur'ānic* verses according to rational principles, all the while emphasizing the compatibility of the *Qur'ān* with present modes of thought and stressing its function as a guide for modern life, as we shall see later.

If one is to look at the study of the *Qur'ān* in the Indonesian context, one will find a long tradition of scholarship. Indeed, *Qur'ānic* studies were a fundamental part of traditional Islamic learning, which comprised three broad disciplines, namely *fiqh* (Islamic law), *tauhid* (theology) and *ilm al-ālā* (Arabic related subjects). These subjects formed a comprehensive syllabus, which had presumably been taught since the establishment of the *pesantren*. However, in spite of the presence of these studies many ordinary Muslims did not have sufficient knowledge of Arabic to read scholarly works such as *tafsirs*. Therefore, attempts were made to translate the *Qur'ān* into Indonesian and local vernaculars in order to make the *Qur'ān* accessible to the masses.<sup>6</sup>

Mas Ngabehi Muhammad Amin rendered the *Qur'ān* into Javanese in the early 1930s and named his translated work *Kur'an Djawen*. Amin had served as a royal

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<sup>4</sup>Muhammad Daūd Rahbar, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān's Principles of Exegesis: Translated from his *Taḥrīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*," *Muslim World*, 46 (1956), 105.

<sup>5</sup>S. A. Kamali, "Abul Kalam Azad's Commentary on the Qur'ān," *Muslim World*, 49 (1959), 5-18.

<sup>6</sup>For *tafsir* in Malay and Indonesian, see Anthony H. Johns, "Quranic Exegesis in the Malay World: In Search of a Profile," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān* (ed.) Andrew Rippin (London: Clarendon Press, 1988), 257-287; Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'ān* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1994), 14.

*penghulu* (*mufī*) of Kepatihan Surakarta and as a senior instructor in the Surakarta Sultanate's *Madrasat Manba' al-'Ulūm*.<sup>7</sup> Amin's *tafsīr*, which embraced the whole *Qur'ān*, was written in a script known as Arab *pegon* or Arab *Jawi*.<sup>8</sup> Arab *pegon* had been employed in Javanese literary works and in translation of Arabic grammar, stylistics and *fiqh*. This script was particularly useful, because at the time many Javanese Muslims could not read Roman script. Bishri Muṣṭafā, a *kiyai* who ran a *pesantren* in Rembang, central Java, wrote his *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat al-Qur'ān al-'Aziz* in Arab *pegon*. His *tafsīr* was probably among the most widely read, since his method exemplified the approach to *tafsīr* commonly employed by the traditionalists. Muṣṭafā's *al-Ibriz* was an exposition of all thirty chapters of the *Qur'ān* and was published in 1959.<sup>9</sup>

Before the works of Amin and Muṣṭafā were written, there appeared *Tafsīr al-Quran Suci Basa Jawi*, which was written by Raden Muhammad Adnan in Arab *pegon*. Adnan's work was first published in 1924 and dealt with individual *sūrah*s. Later, in the early 1950s he resumed his work and completed his translation of the whole *Qur'ān*. Unfortunately, the work was not published until 1981. Interestingly, even though it was finished in the 1950s the published version of Adnan's *Tafsīr* employed Roman script and not Arab *pegon*.<sup>10</sup> Adnan was the first director of the *Madrasat Manba' al-'Ulūm*, the *penghulu* of the Sultanate of Surakarta and a professor at the *Institut Agama Islam Negeri* (I.A.I.N.) in Yogyakarta.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Mahmud Junus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1979), 286-287.

<sup>8</sup>See, for example, the first *juz'* which was published in 1932 and the thirtieth *juz'* which was published in 1936. Mus Ngabehi Muhammad Amin, *Kur'ān Djawaen*, vol. 1 (Solo: Siti Sjamisjah, 1932); *Kur'ān Jawaen*, vol. 30 (Solo: Siti Sjamisjah, 1936).

<sup>9</sup>Bishri Muṣṭafā, *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aziz bi-al-Lughah al-Jāwiyah*, vol. 1 (Kudus: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Manārā Quds, 1959).

<sup>10</sup>See the introductory assessment by Adnan's son in Muhammad Adnan's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān Suci Basa Jawi* (Bandung: Almaarif, 1981), 5.

<sup>11</sup>Junus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, 286-87.



The Javanese were fortunate in having translated into their language not only the *Qur'ān*, but also the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. The latter version was produced by Bagus Arafah of Surakarta and was published in Arab *pegon* in 1913.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, a unique way of translating the *Qur'ān* was developed using Javanese rhymed verse known as *mocopar*.<sup>13</sup> The so-styled literary version of *mocopar tafsīr* had a strong appeal for those who maintained a strong cultural bond with traditional Javanese *tembangs* (recited poetical songs). The *mocopar* followed a set of metrical rhymes which served as the prosody for the Javanese *tembang* composition. Finally, *Al-Huda: Tafsīr Qur'ān Basa Jawi* written by Bakri Syahid should be mentioned in any list of *tafsīrs* written in Javanese. Syahid, who served in the Indonesian armed forces, occupied the post of Rector of the *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, Yogyakarta, between 1972 and 1976 after his retirement from the army.<sup>14</sup>

It was in the above-mentioned tradition of translating the *Qur'ān* that Chalil's *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajat-Rahmaan* was published in 1958. It was written in Javanese, but employed Roman script. He had intended to write a multi-volume *tafsīr*,<sup>15</sup> but his death in 1961 put an end to this plan. Accordingly, he was only able to produce a *tafsīr* on the first *sūrah* of the *Qur'ān* and almost two thirds of the second, occupying 367 pages. His *tafsīr* together with his other *Qur'ān*-related books and articles provide us with the raw material from which we can discern his opinions and analyze his approach to *Qur'ānic* exegesis.

In the introduction to his *tafsīr*, Chalil complains of works on *tafsīr* that are flat and tasteless and which do not bring out the comprehensive teaching of the *Qur'ān*. His words carry a couched criticism of the tradition of *Qur'ānic* translation and express a need for *tafsīr* instead.<sup>16</sup> What is more, he explicitly attacks the works of the *ṣūfis* and *ahl al-*

<sup>12</sup>Adnan, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān Suci*, 7.

<sup>13</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajat-Rahmaan*, vol. 1 (Solo: Ab. Siti Sjamisjah, 1958), 3.

<sup>14</sup>Bakri Syahid, *Al-Huda: Tafsīr Qur'ān Basa Jawi* (Yogyakarta: Percetakan Persatuan, 1979).

<sup>15</sup>Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'ān*, 14.

<sup>16</sup>Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajat-Rahmaan*, vol. 1, 33-34.

*bid'ah* (the heretics). To him, the so-called *ṣūfī*, *bāṭinī* and *ishārī tafsīrs*, which explain the hidden mystical meaning behind the text of the *Qur'ān*, are nothing but unlawful *tafsīr* (*tafsīr palsu*). He criticizes *tafsīr bāṭinī* and *ishārī* and denounces such books as *Ḥaqā'iq al-Tafsīr* by Abū 'Abd Raḥmān al-Sulamī and *Lubāb al-Tafāsīr: Kitāb al-'Ajā'ib wa al-Gharā'ib* by Maḥmūd Ibn Ḥamzah al-Kirmānī.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, citing Ibn Ṣalāḥ's opinion, Chalil holds that considering such works as *tafsīr* is *kufr* (infidelity). He also rejects the *tafsīr ishārī*, which formulates ideas and concepts contrary to the explicit teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. Chalil refers also to the work of Ibn 'Arabī, which he believes should be attributed to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, who, according to Chalil, was also a renowned *bāṭinī* scholar.<sup>18</sup>

It should be borne in mind that neither *tafsīr bāṭinī* nor *tafsīr ishārī* was accepted by the orthodox faction of the *sunni* community. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī and al-Suyūṭī, for instance, condemned al-Sulamī's *tafsīr* and while the former considered it to be the product of infidelity, the latter dubbed it as heresy.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, some kinds of *ṣūfī tafsīr* were unquestionably accepted in the *sunni* milieu.<sup>20</sup> Although Chalil might not have realized it, he himself had quoted the opinion of Sahl al-Tustarī, a *ṣūfī mufasssīr*, when defining the requirements of *īmān*, as discussed above in chapter three.<sup>21</sup> By treating the *ṣūfī*, *bāṭinī* and *ishārī tafsīrs* indiscriminately, Chalil adopted the typical reformist stance

<sup>17</sup>For the verification of al-Kirmānī's work on *tafsīr* as stated by Chalil, see *al-Fihris al-Shāmī li-al-Turāth al-'Arabī al-Islāmī al-Makḥūṭ*, vol. 1 (Oman: al-Majma' al-Mulki, 1989), 130.

<sup>18</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Al-Qur-an Dari Masa Ke Masa* (Solo: Ramadhani, 1985), 213-214; Ibid., 3; Chalil refers to *Tafsīr Ibn 'Arabī* which is in fact should be attributed to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī who compiled the most widely known *ṣūfī tafsīr*. Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," (ed.) Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 242.

<sup>19</sup>Maḥmūd Basūnī Fawdah, *Nash'at al-Tafsīr wa Manāḥijuh fī Daw' al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyah* (Cairo Maṭba'at al-Amānah, 1986), 399.

<sup>20</sup>I. H. Azad Faruqi, *The Tarjuman al-Qur'an: A Critical Analysis of Maulana Abu'l-Kalam Azad's Approach to the Understanding of the Qur'an* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), 18.

<sup>21</sup>Sahl al-Tustarī wrote an important commentary of the *Qur'ān* with *ṣūfīstic* approach entitled *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* Ibid. 19.

which never entertained the idea of a mystical dimension giving shape to the *Qur'ān* and embodying its meaning.<sup>22</sup>

Chalil, however, goes a step further in equating *hāpinī tafsīr* with those written by the traditionalists (whom he refers to as "heretics") on the ground that both types of *tafsīr* could prove deleterious to the Muslim faith. This is despite the fact that his preoccupation with the "danger" of heresy could not be substantiated by empirical evidence or proofs.<sup>23</sup> In fact, there were no substantial differences between the traditionalists' and the reformists' *tafsīrs*, in so far as the Javanese works were concerned. Furthermore, the traditionalists could even claim some uniqueness in their approach to *tafsīr* by virtue of the fact that their methodology was nurtured by the Javanese environment, which allowed them to discover the deep (meaning) and surface (syntax) structure of the *Qur'ān*, as illustrated in Muṣṭafā's *tafsīr*.<sup>24</sup>

Although Chalil does not provide us with a clear definition of what he means by flat and tasteless, we are able to arrive at an understanding of this qualification by considering his criticism of the tradition of *Qur'ānic* translation. As such, Adnan's work could be considered "flat" and "tasteless", since his technique of direct translation of the *Qur'ān* was frowned upon by Chalil.<sup>25</sup> Adnan's *tafsīr*, however, is not a word by word translation, but

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<sup>22</sup>The task of identifying Javanese works on *tafsīr* that contained *yūst* elements was embarked upon by Adnan who, quoting the views of Sahl al-Tustarī, claims that the *Qur'ān* contains hidden and esoteric meanings, which can only be interpreted by *woag sing khusus* (people of distinction). Adnan, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān Suci Basa Jawi*, 7.

<sup>23</sup>Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidayatun-Rahman*, vol. 1, 33, 39 and 41.

<sup>24</sup>Muṣṭafā's *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat al-Qur'ān al-'Aziz* employs a method which originally serves as a guide to the study of Arabic and which had been developed in the *pesantren* over the course of a century or so. Following this technique, Muṣṭafā gives an annotated meaning under each word as well as an identification of its grammatical function by providing fixed signs under words, whereby each stands for the grammatical category of the word. In this way, a reader will immediately recognize if a word is a subject, a predicate, an object, a genitive or others. This method was invented to serve the needs of the *santris* (students) of the *pesantren* and was called *makna gaudul*. Thus, two dimensions were simultaneously provided by this method, i.e. both the syntactic and morphological functions of words were elucidated by the same method. Muṣṭafā, *al-Ibriz li-Ma'rifat al-Qur'ān al-'Aziz*, vol. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Al-Qur'anul Hakim," *Abadi* (October, 3; 1953).

is rather a translation of the integral meaning of each verse. The fact that Adnan called his work a *tafsir* and not a *tarjamah* suggests that he did not believe that a *tarjamah* (translation) could never accommodate the glorious meanings of the *Qur'ān*. *Tarjamah* implies a mechanical translation of words from one language into another, whereas *tafsir* takes cognizance of all the meanings that a word evokes. In this respect, *tafsir* goes beyond the act of translation and is a more suitable medium of illustrating the (approximate) meaning of the *Qur'ān*.<sup>26</sup>

No matter what title Adnan applied to his work, it could not hide the fact that his *tafsir* was essentially a translation. Indeed, translation became the preferred mode of *Qur'ān* interpretation, as we have seen in our previous survey of Javanese works. Another Javanese *tafsir* similar to that of Adnan was Muhammad Djauzie's *Tarjamah Qurān Basa Djawi*. Unlike Adnan, Djauzie called his work a *tarjamah* (translation). The only differences between the two works is that Adnan provides the meaning of individual words which he considers *gharibah* (uncommon). Apart from that Adnan's translation was almost identical to Djauzie's *Tarjamah*. So close in fact are the two translations that an analysis of the translation of both *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* and *Sūrat al-Baqarah* yields no major difference between them. Minor differences certainly exist, but these are insignificant. Not only may similarities be found in the choice of words and sentence structures, but also in the use of Javanese particles. The main difference between the two rests in the inconsistency in the use of popular and refined Javanese. Adnan's diction is less refined than Djauzie's, although such a discrepancy does not exist in the translation of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, since both use popular Javanese with the same frequency.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Adnan, *Tafsir al-Qur'an Suci Basa Jawi*, 10.

<sup>27</sup>See Adnan's interpretation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* in his *Tafsir al-Qur'an Suci Basa Jawi*, 13, and Muhammad Djauzie's in his *Tarjamah Qurān Basa Djawi*, vol. 1 (Djogdjakarta: Penjiaran Islam, n.d.), 7.

Syahid's *Tafsir Qur'an Basa Jawi* is also comparable to that of Adnan in that both are translations with explanatory footnotes attached to the verses. Syahid's footnotes appear to be more verbose, so much so that they sometimes provide remarks which apply particularly to certain verses. In *Sūrat al-Baqarab*, for instance, Syahid briefly mentions the significance of the name of the *sūrah* and relates it to the themes appearing in different verses of the *sūrah*. Moreover, Syahid sometimes links the meaning of particular verses to recent social developments, such as the paramount role of religion in the process of nation-building and the necessity of cooperation in the maintenance of peace in human society.<sup>28</sup>

These (Javanese) works did not meet Chalil's expectations, since they were mere translations and did not supply the opinions of other scholars along with the authors' own interpretation. Moreover, they did not discuss the relevant *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of the revelation of the *Qur'ānic* verses) nor the *qirā'ah* (manner of vocalization of the *Qur'ānic* texts). It seems these works were written as guides for simple believers and were not compiled for use by the learned.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, translations were generally not welcomed by reformists. A case in point is Rashid Riḍā, whose *tafsīr* became the archetype of Chalil's *tafsīr* and who considered the translation of the *Qur'ān* to be impermissible.<sup>30</sup> Even commentaries, which were considered a legitimate means of presenting the message of the *Qur'ān*, were not thought capable of rendering the *Qur'ān's* full sense. Rather, they could only reach an approximation of its ultimate meaning. Thus, the need was not to translate, but to explain (in the form of commentary) the *Qur'ān*. It was to meet the need for an "authoritative" *tafsīr* which could serve the needs of both the

<sup>28</sup>See footnotes 6, 15 and 16 in his *Tafsir Qur'an Basa Jawi*, 7, 9.

<sup>29</sup>Religious scholars have long believed that the writing of a *tafsīr* is a noble duty. This despite the fact that Indonesian traditionalist religious scholars were thought to consider the translation of the *Qur'ān* as unlawful (*haram*). Adnan, who could be classified as a traditionalist, wrote his *tafsīr* as early as the 1920s and declared that the '*ulamā*' were obliged to translate the *Qur'ān*, otherwise, religious teachings and principles would be concealed. He condemned the '*ulamā*' who did not want to share their religious knowledge with laymen by producing a *tafsīr* of the *Qur'ān*. Adnan, *Tafsir al-Qur'an Suci*, 9.

<sup>30</sup>J. J. G. Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 77-78.

learned and the common people that Chalil's work was composed. By writing such a *tafsir*, certain aspects of the *Qur'anic* teachings would be better elucidated and an enhanced picture of the *Qur'an* as a viable source of law, dogma and ideas would be presented for the edification of society.<sup>31</sup>

Chalil intended his *tafsir* for a public wider than the professional theologians among whom, he believed, superstition had become predominant and whose need for a "reformist" *tafsir* could not be answered by the other Javanese works.<sup>32</sup> Muslims continued to misuse the *Qur'an* for irrelevant practices, such as making amulets, remedying the sick, taking oaths of allegiance and the like, in spite of their belief in the *Qur'an* as the supreme guide for human life.<sup>33</sup> Apart from that, Chalil argued, they treat the *Qur'an* as a Book of recitation rather than the Book of guidance. Chalil accepted the concept of *al-ta'abbud bi-tilawah* (worship through the recitation of the *Qur'an*) and the setting up of rules and etiquette of its recitation, which starts with the chanting and ends with the heightened inner feelings of the reader. Thus, he did not deny the reward gained from its recital, but emphasized that the utmost intention of its revelation was to be learned and observed in real acts and not in verbal recitation.<sup>34</sup> The mistreatment of the *Qur'an* by Muslims had in time taken its toll and led to a relaxation in the observance of its teachings. This relaxation had to be avoided and effective measures taken to combat this negligence. Such measures included resort to *Qur'anic tafsir*, since exegesis is the most competent tool in spreading the message of the *Qur'an*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Chalil, "Al-Qur'anul Hakim."

<sup>32</sup>When occasion arose, Chalil often attacked such practices as *tawassul* (intercession), *khurafat* (superstitions) and the like. Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'an Hidajat-Rahman*, vol. 1, 164.

<sup>33</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Al-Quraan," *Abadi* (February, 12; 1960); idem, "Islam Tinggal Nama," *Abadi* (March 5; 1954).

<sup>34</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Keutamaan dan Kesunahan," *Abadi* (March, 4; 1960); idem, "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (February, 4; 1953); idem, *Al-Qur'an Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 124-130.

<sup>35</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (November, 27; 1953).

As had been the practice in the Javanese works on the *Qur'ān*, Chalil too chose to produce a verse by verse translation. However, his commentary differs from the Javanese commentaries by providing several interpretations for each of the verses. In some instances, he favors the views of some *mufasssirs* which he considered to be akin to his own. After the translation, he usually paraphrases the *Qur'ān* in his own words and when appropriate supplies a reasonable argument to uphold the validity of his theory. In paraphrasing, Chalil does not maintain the dialogue form, when this appears in the original text, nor does he adhere to the flow of narration set in the *Qur'ān*. Instead, he acts as a narrator in order to have the freedom of directing the argument in any way he likes and to provide whatever explanatory notes he feels are needed in his argument. More often than not, when explanations of the *Qur'ānic* verses are offered, the authority from which the explanation was obtained was faithfully cited. His *tafsīr* sometimes provides the *asbāb al-nuzūl* in an attempt to furnish the historical background for the particular reports of the *Qur'ān*.<sup>36</sup> Like all modernist endeavors, each *ḥadīth* is quoted very cautiously and its reliability is meticulously examined. Moreover, care is taken in supplying the commentary with necessary supporting materials, which are usually taken from prominent *mufasssirs*. Almost all of the major classical and medieval exegetical works appear in Chalil's quotations, including *Jāmi' al-Bayān li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Ṭabarī, *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurtubī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl* by al-Bayḍāwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by al-Rāzī, *al-Jalālayn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and al-Maḥallī and *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr 'an Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl* by al-Shawkānī.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the previously-mentioned books, Chalil made use of 'Abduh's *Tafsīr al-Manār*. His judgment of its superiority over the other *tafsīrs* suggests his high respect

<sup>36</sup>For his opinion on *asbāb al-nuzūl*, see "Al-Qur'anul Hakiem," *Abadi* (February, 4; 1953).

<sup>37</sup>Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahmaan*, vol. 1, 7.

and unreserved faith in 'Abduh's scholarship. He considered *Tafsir al-Marāghī* by Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī and *al-Jawāhir fī Tafsir al-Qur'ān* by Tanṭāwī Jawhārī among the most important modern commentaries, but he held that 'Abduh's *tafsir* was superior to either of them.<sup>38</sup> Chalil's citations of 'Abduh's comments on various *āyāt* are not confined to a particular subject area. Indeed, the citations cover various aspects, such as the elucidation of the meaning of letters and words, the theological and ritual explanations and the rejection of supernatural and miraculous stories. By observing Chalil's citations, we will notice that 'Abduh's objections to the supernatural and miraculous stories are among the most frequently cited.<sup>39</sup> In other words, 'Abduh's *tafsir* was held to be the most authoritative commentary by Chalil and constituted his most important source of references.<sup>40</sup>

Whenever Chalil quotes the opinion of any *mufassir*, he faithfully indicates where the quotation begins and ends by writing the name of the *mufassir* whose views are being cited. However, due to his extensive use of quotations, it is hard to judge whether their abundance affects the originality of his *tafsir* or not, particularly since he also offers his own independent opinions. This practice of quoting the views of others was, however, a common practice among the *mufassirs*. 'Abduh, for example, frequently refers to previous *tafsir* works, especially when confronted by an obscure grammatical or semantic point.<sup>41</sup> Chalil's consistency in mentioning his sources makes it easy to identify which opinions are his and which not.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 97-98, 111, 112, 132, 133, 139-140, 142, 160, 171, 182, 197, 217, 341, 363.

<sup>40</sup>'Abduh's *tafsir* was very popular in Indonesia and was highly esteemed by the reformists. Hamka, who was utterly fascinated by *al-Manār*, not only found it rich in the [conventional] religious sciences from *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, history and others, but also appreciated its awareness of contemporary social and political issues. On the contrary, the reformists held that 'Abduh's *tafsir* was not welcomed by the traditionalists. This statement may be true, since the traditionalists were not pleased with 'Abduh's treatment of the verses and his interpretation of them in the light of modern perception. A. Halim Hasan, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 1," *Pandji Masjarakat* (February 1; 1960); idem, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 2," *Pandji Masjarakat* (February 15; 1960); Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, vol. 1-2 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), 41.

<sup>41</sup>al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirūn*, vol. 3, 123.



In Chalil's view, any exegesis should encompass all aspects of the *Qur'ān*, from its legal statements, moral instructions and spiritual commands down to its social and political injunctions. Without undermining the immense contribution of earlier commentaries, Chalil declares that a shift must be made from the approach followed by the medieval scholars, an approach which sometimes made their *tafsirs* reference works for particular sciences. He argues that some *mufasssirs* devoted an exorbitant amount of attention to the secondary aspects of the *Qur'ān*, whether these involved grammatical and stylistic points or stories and legal issues. This trend succeeded in diverting all attention from the objective of the *Qur'ān* which, according to Chalil, was that of providing comprehensive guidance to mankind.<sup>42</sup> Chalil's view was typical of the reformist stance, which sought to revitalize the "lost functions" of the *Qur'ān*. 'Abduh for his part maintained that the *Qur'ān* is not merely a source for Islamic law or dogma or even an occasion for philologists to display their ingenuity, but is the Book from which Muslims ought to derive their ideas about this world and the world to come.<sup>43</sup>

Chalil's attitude towards *tafsir* was exemplified by his view of a *mufasssir's* duty, which he considered a heavy one. His aim was to impose a set of requirements that must be fulfilled by anybody writing a *tafsir* work. Chalil expected a *mufasssir* to be a scholar capable of complying with these requirements and may even have seen himself in the role of that scholar. As a consequence of the absence of such "*tafsir*", he believed that people had no choice but to resort to particular *fiqh* books known as *al-fiqh al-mu'tabar*.<sup>44</sup> By

<sup>42</sup>In his discussion on the approach of the *mufasssirs*, Chalil lists a number of *tafsirs*, some of which, namely *Tafsir al-Wasit bayna al-Wajiz al-Maqbul al-Basit* by Abū al-Hasan al-Wāhidī, *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī and *'Arā'is al-Majālis* by Abū Ishāq al-Tha'labī, discussed a few aspects of the *Qur'ān* extensively and out of proportion with their importance. Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 196-199. 27.

<sup>43</sup>Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*. 24; 'Abduh's *Mushkilāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Tafsir al-Fātiḥah*, 10; al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirūn*, vol. 3, 221; for a specific discussion which presents 'Abduh's view that the *Qur'ān* must be treated as a source of reforming the condition of the *ummah* and bringing forth a modern civilization and not as a source of particular sciences, see Yvonne Haddad, "Muhammad Abduh: Pioneer of Islamic Reform," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, (ed.) Ali Rahnema (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), 46-49.

<sup>44</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahmann*, vol. 1, 34.

relying on the *fiqh* books written by *al-'ulamā' al-muta'akhirūn* ('*ulamā'* who had lived from the fifth century of the *Hijrah* onwards), the religious life of Muslims had fallen prey to the authority of the '*ulamā'* and not to the *Qur'ān*. Not surprisingly, he laments on the scarcity, if not the non-existence, of a standard "*tafsīr*" which could enhance the "scholarly" quality of the Javanese works on *tafsīr* as discussed above. Complaints about strict adherence to the *fiqh* books had also been heard long before those of Chalil when 'Abduh criticized the '*ulamā'* for promoting the study of *fiqh* rather than that of the *Qur'ān*.<sup>45</sup>

Citing 'Abduh's opinion, Chalil states that what was codified in the *fiqh* books was but a small part of the endless instructions of the *Qur'ān*. Those who study *fiqh* will never find in it the real *fiqh* (*fiqh haqīqī*) as embodied in the *Qur'ān* and expounded in the *tafsīr*. Similarly, Chalil expresses doubt regarding the motives of the traditionalists in studying *tafsīr* for they, according to him, were not stimulated to learn by any real desire for knowledge but rather for the sake of *barakah* (blessing).<sup>46</sup> It should be noted, however, that *barakah* was not in most cases their chief motive. The traditionalists' efforts to maintain the study of *tafsīr* went beyond the mere idea of such a *barakah* and should be given credit as such. Chalil must have known that it was only in the traditionalist *pesantrens* that the teaching of *tafsīr*, in Arabic, was provided.

In Indonesia, the study of the *Qur'ān* is introduced at the start of one's educational life. The nucleus of Islamic learning begins with the practice of giving *Qur'ān*-reading lessons to children in a *langgar* or *surau* (village mosque). Pursuing further knowledge of the *Qur'ān* is later conducted through the *pesantrens*. The main goal of reading *tafsīr* in the *pesantren*, however, is not to build a fresh understanding of Islam from its primary sources. Rather, it is to supplement the already acquired Islamic sciences, notably *fiqh* and

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 45-46.

*tawhid*. As such, only the *santris* (students of the *pesantren*) who have already reached the highest level of achievement are usually "eligible" to study the primary sources. Among the most widely studied *tafsir* books are *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Tafsir al-Jamāl*, *Tafsir al-Sāwī* and *Tafsir Ibn Kathīr*. These *tafsir* books, which Chalil himself draws upon in his *Tafsir Qur'an Hidaajatul-Rahmaan*, receive no attention in the modernist educational institutions.<sup>47</sup>

Chalil calculates that out of hundreds of *tafsir* books only five or six were known to Indonesian Muslims. The suggestion is that this number was not good enough to create a "Qur'anic environment". What is interesting to note is, however, that five of the *tafsirs* he lists are those used by the traditionalists as text-books. Furthermore, he says that even among the five to six *tafsirs*, only *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* was the most widely used. In making such statements, he indirectly acknowledged that the *pesantren* was the center for *tafsir* studies in Indonesia, since it was only in the *pesantren* that *al-Jalalayn* was taught. Indeed, the *pesantren* circle determined which Arabic *tafsirs* were to be circulated the most, since it was the only educational institution where classical Arabic books made up the body of the curriculum. Even in the 1980s, when individual purchase power increased substantially and "reformist" *tafsirs*, such as *al-Manār*, *al-Marāghī* and *al-Jawāhir* were more available, *al-Jalalayn* continued to be the most widely purchased *tafsir* in the bookstores.<sup>48</sup>

It should be kept in mind that the modernists abandoned the intellectual heritage embodied in the syllabus of the traditionalist *pesantrens*, as almost none of the text-books employed in the *pesantren* milieu was used in the modernist educational education. This is

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<sup>47</sup>See the syllabus of the *Persis Pesantren* in Bangil and Bandung and compare them to those of the *Maabn' al-'Ulūm* in Surakarta and the *Pesantren Rejoso* in Jombang. While in the former none of those *tafsir* are mentioned, in the latter at least two of them, namely *al-Jalalayn* and *al-Bayḍawī* are included. Indeed, those *tafsirs* are still being taught in the *pesantrens*, although there is no written source that can be referred to support this claim. Junus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, 247, 286-287 and 298-299.

<sup>48</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'an Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 209-210; Abdul Djalal, "Tafsir Al Maraaghi dan Tafsir An Nur: Sebuah Studi Perbandingan," (Ph.D. dissertation, I.A.I.N. Yogyakarta, 1986), 531-532.

despite the fact that they did not have alternative material for teaching their students. As a result, they found themselves in a quandary, having renounced the classical works in various fields, such as *fiqh*, *taḥḥid* and *tafsīr*, because they constituted the literary references of the traditionalists.<sup>49</sup> This is not to say that reliance on the classical works is the best mechanism for dealing with current problems.<sup>50</sup> It must be borne in mind that a sound approach should recognize good elements from any scholarly tradition. Indeed, unlike the modernists, the traditionalists adopted a flexible approach based on the concept of the preserving the good that the past had to offer and adopting the best that the present prefers (*al-muḥāfaẓah 'alā al-qadīm al-ṣāliḥ wa al-'ukhdh bi-al-jadīd al-aṣḥab*).<sup>51</sup>

In elucidating his theory, Chalil mentions a number of requirements that should be observed by a *mufasssīr*. The first is that he should rely on the *sunnah* of the Prophet, which he considers to be the best tool for shedding light on the *Qur'ānic* injunctions. This was in line with his rigorous campaign to purify the *Qur'ān* of the *Isrā'īliyyāt*. He states that only through a complete mastery of the *sunnah* can the *Isrā'īliyyāt* be detected. He also regards the traditions as the best authority in explaining the reports of the *Qur'ān* and not the *Isrā'īliyyāt* as some *mufasssīrs* might have done.<sup>52</sup> It is often overlooked that the *Qur'ān* is the story book *par excellence*, since it teaches through the narration of its stories.<sup>53</sup> However, for a reformist like Chalil, de-mythologizing its stories was of paramount importance in penetrating the inner layers of the *Qur'ān* and understanding it in

<sup>49</sup>For the promotion of the classical heritage by the traditionalists and its abandonment by the modernists, see Nurcholish Madjid's comment cited in Hamid Basyaib, "Muhammadiyah dalam Perspektif Pembaharuan: Harapan Pasca Muktamar," in *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentari* (ed.) Amien Rais (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), 313.

<sup>50</sup>Nurcholish Madjid, "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah," in *Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan* (ed.) M. Dawam Rahardjo (Jakarta: LP3M, 1989), 64.

<sup>51</sup>This formula was often heard in the traditionalists' *pengajian*s (religious gatherings). However, Nurcholish Madjid does not attribute the saying to them, when he uses this formula to introduce the phrase *taqlid yang kritis dan kreatif* (critical and creative imitation). Ibid., 63; for the use of the formula by the traditionalists, see Ahmad Siddiq "Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Nahdlatul Ulama Tentang 'Tajdid'," *Asy-Sir'ah*, 1 (1988), 45.

<sup>52</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahman*, vol. 1, 29.

<sup>53</sup>A. H. Johns, "The Quranic Presentation of the Joseph Story," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān* (eds.) G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 40.

a more rational manner. This can only be done by reconstructing the *Qur'ānic* tales by means of *ḥadīth*, he argues. This is not to say that Chalil unconditionally accepted the traditions, as he had strong reservation concerning many *Isrā'īliyyāt* which he believed had penetrated into the *ḥadīth*. His critical attitude towards any tale reported in the *ḥadīth* was expressed through his scrutiny of its transmission and content.

In the story of Hārūt and Mārūt, for example, Chalil, after narrating the story at length, declares that Ibn Kathīr had mistakenly attributed it to Ibn 'Umar. Chalil makes this accusation, since such a story cannot be traced back to Ibn 'Umar or from him to the Prophet.<sup>54</sup> Commenting on chapter 2: 51 of the *Qur'ān*, Chalil mentions three false *ḥadīths* which attribute the practice of *sihr* (magic) to the Prophet Sulaymān. He also cites Riḍā's opinion, on this matter, and condemns the attribution of magical works to Sulaymān accusing the Jewish people of having intentionally spread such fabricated stories among Muslims.<sup>55</sup> Also, when mentioning the Fir'awn's order to kill all Jewish male babies, Chalil reiterates 'Abduh's criticism of al-Suyūṭī's report that the Fir'awn did so on the advice of his magicians. In this case, Chalil's rejection was not based on the weakness of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth* quoted by al-Suyūṭī, but rather on its content. Similarly, with regards to the story that Muḥammad was taken ill when Lubayd Ibn al-A'ṣam practiced black magic on him, Chalil categorically rejects the content of this *ḥadīth*, in spite of its citation by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Mājah.<sup>56</sup> His doing so is an indication of his desire to minimize the role of magicians in the *Qur'ānic* reports as well as the role of magic in general.

Chalil was, therefore, forced to restrict himself to the central narrative of the *Qur'ān* and did not delve into its details, unless a *ḥadīth* sound in both its transmission and

<sup>54</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidaajatul-Rahmaan*, vol. 1, 282.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.* 279-280.

<sup>56</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Peristiwa Nabi Muhammad s. a. w. Disihir oleh Orang Jahudi atau Munafiq," *Aliran Islam*, (July-August; 1949), 531.

content was available. His stance was akin to 'Abduh's approach towards the *āyāt muḥammāt* (ambiguous verses), which the latter refrained from commenting upon in any great detail. 'Abduh, for example, tries to avoid any discussion of the *ghaybāt* (supernatural truth), since all efforts to explain them had been futile and were a violation of the *nass*, which purposely gave no detailed remarks about them.<sup>57</sup> Although Chalil rejected an unconditional obedience to the Prophetic traditions, he was not as radical as some Indo-Pakistani modernists, who held that the explanatory and historic details of the *ḥadīth* were pure human fancies.<sup>58</sup> Chalil's repugnance for the use of the *Isrā'īlīyāt* in expounding *Qur'ānic* tales was a common feature in the modernist approach towards *tafsīr*. Chalil was fascinated by the power of reason and must have believed that any senseless statements attributed to the *Qur'ān* would only expose Islam to ridicule and contempt. He, therefore, tried to strip the text of legendary traits and primitive notions, so that the greatness of the *Qur'ān* would remain undisturbed.

Chalil's hostility towards the *Isrā'īlīyāt* did not prevent him from making use of Judeo-Christian scripture to explain certain stories reported in the *Qur'ān*. This sort of inquiry was of particular use in commenting upon those sections of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* that deal with the liberation of the Jews by Prophet Mūsā, the formation of the Jewish community and the revelation of their scripture. In comparing the *Qur'ānic* reports with those of the Old and New Testaments, Chalil most often cites verses from the latter in support of the former. Like Ridā, he also makes use of original Biblical materials in his attempt to refute some *Isrā'īlīyāt* traditions.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 3, 226.

<sup>58</sup> According to Sayyid Ahmad Khān, the *Qur'ān* itself hints at the disparity between man-made stories and the divinely communicated intelligence. Baljon, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation*, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidaajatul-Rahmann*, vol. 1, 136, 169, 170, 180, 183-84, 205, 207, 213, 219, 237, 273 and 309; Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, footnote no. 35, page 27.

His reference to the Prophetic traditions as the first source for a *mufasssīr*, as previously mentioned, did not neglect the fact that the *Qur'ān* must be the primary agent in its own interpretation. He states that the elucidation of the *Qur'ān* should be performed in the first place by the *Qur'ān* itself.<sup>60</sup> The fact that Chalil seems to have treated the two sources of *tafsīr* interchangeably was due to his belief in the organic nature of the two. He also considered the reports ascribed to the *ṣaḥābah* as the third source of *tafsīr* after the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. When dealing with these reports, he relied primarily on those of 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abbās and only rarely he depended on other *ṣaḥābah*, such as Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd or the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah.<sup>61</sup> This was another way in which he confined himself to the most authoritative reports among the *ṣaḥābah*. He was committed to Ibn 'Abbās' reports, even when they were cited in secondary sources. In such cases Chalil always verified the reliability of the citation before he used it. On the controversial issue of the description of heaven (*jannah*) and hell (*nār*), for example, Chalil favored 'Abduh's rejection of most of its details, since Ibn 'Abbās did not quote the tradition which describes these places, even though it was not only transmitted by al-Bukhārī and Muslim but was also classified as a *ḥadīth qudsī*.<sup>62</sup>

The reliability of reports from the *'ulamā' salaf* as a source for *tafsīr* was also discussed along with that of the *ṣaḥābah*. In so doing, Chalil wanted to give the *salaf* credit not only for their piety, which used to be the only justification, but also for their erudite knowledge of revelation. It seems that what Chalil meant by *'ulamā' salaf* was the *ṭabī'ūn*, the Muslim doctors who followed the immediate *ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet.<sup>63</sup> He,

<sup>60</sup>Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidājat-ur-Rahmān*, vol. 1, 34.

<sup>61</sup>Apart from his own preference for Ibn 'Abbās, Chalil also offers Ibn Kathīr's views. In the introduction to his *tafsīr*, Chalil states that Ibn Kathīr tends to advance the opinions of the *ṣaḥābah* closest to the Prophet on account of their superior knowledge of the *Qur'ān* and their lives in the *Qur'ānic* environment along with their deep piety. These criteria included all four orthodox Caliphs as well as 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abbās. In his *tafsīr*, however, Chalil prefers Ibn 'Abbās over the other *ṣaḥābah*. Ibid., 35.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 36.

thus, limited his dependence on this body to the first three generations following Muḥammad. Whenever the above mentioned sources were found insufficient for any particular verse, a *mufasssīr*, in Chalil's eyes, was to resort to his independent opinion, a process which Chalil refers to as *ra'y* or *ijtihād*.<sup>64</sup>

Although independent reasoning was long considered one of the primary tools of interpretation, a *mufasssīr* was only allowed to exert the power of his reason within strictly defined limits. For his part, Chalil provides certain criteria for what can be settled rationally and what must be accepted unconditionally. In this, he was following the principle that matters related to the *ṣaṭ ṭyāl* (unconditional obedience to religious doctrines) and *ibādah* (ritual) were not to be discussed rationally. The reason for this, according to him, is not due to any shortcoming in the use of reason, but because Muḥammad himself did not give rational explanations for his pronouncements on these matters. Beyond the *ṣaṭ ṭyāl* and *ibādah*, however, the path was clear for the exercise of responsible, rational investigation.<sup>65</sup>

Chalil points out that the requirements for undertaking the task of *tafsīr* were discussed by the early scholars. As early as the second century of the *Hijrah*, al-Shāfi'i wrote a book which laid down the requirements for a *mufasssīr*. Chalil's concern with the requirements was to show the scholarly nature of the task and to limit its practice only to the most competent scholars, due to the demanding nature of the work. It was so demanding that al-Bulqīnī asked for knowledge of fifty sciences, whereas al-Suyūṭī required eighty.<sup>66</sup> Among these requirements, Chalil highlights only a few, such as mastery of *asbāb al-nuzūl*. In this, he was not influenced by the disagreement over the *asbāb al-nuzūl* existing among the classical authorities nor the modernists' disfavor of it. Citing the opinions of Ibn Daqīq and Ibn Taymīyah, he states that the mastery of *asbāb al-*

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 28.



*nuzūl* is an indispensable tool in determining the context of the verses and their purpose.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, Chalil stresses the importance of knowing the particular causes that brought about the revelation of a certain chapter or verse in order to recognize the general applicability of the wording of the *Qur'ān*. He also believes that in order to elucidate the meaning of the *Qur'ān*, a *mufasssīr* should have a thorough knowledge of the Arabic tongue, including its grammar, style and *qirā'ah*. In addition, the *mufasssīr* must be knowledgeable in *uṣūl al-dīn* (theology), *uṣūl al-fiqh* (legal theory), history and *sunnah*.<sup>68</sup>

The thought of the early scholars was not categorically rejected by Chalil. He was very much concerned with the old modes of *Qur'ānic* interpretation, even though he often favored those of the modernists, if there was sufficient reason to do so. This approach served to exhibit the suitability of the modernist views, while at the same time confirming the continuity of thought between the medieval and modern, no matter whether they might sometimes appear contradictory. In some instances, Chalil did not hesitate to challenge the opinions of the earlier *mufasssīrs*. For example, in his commentary on chapter 2: 28, Chalil disapproves of al-Suyūṭī's opinion to the effect that the sentence *wa kuntum amwātun* (you were without life) means a *nūṭfah* (sperm). He argues that the phrase "without life" indicates state of non-existence, whereas *nūṭfah* enjoys life and is a living being.<sup>69</sup> In another place, he questions the validity of a commentary given by al-Wāḥidī, al-Jamāl and al-Ṣāwī, who tried to associate the meaning of the word *al-ra'ūd* with the angel guarding the clouds and the word *al-baq* with the same angel's lasso declaring that such an interpretation to be superficial.<sup>70</sup> As for the controversy concerning the name and creation of Ādam's wife, Chalil disagrees with the early *mufasssīrs*, among them al-Rāzī, who, according to Chalil, gave the name Ḥawwā' to her. As for the creation of "Ḥawwā'", which is reported in *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, 1, *Sūrat al-A'raf*, 189 and *Sūrat al-Zumar*, 6, Chalil argues

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>68</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 190-191.

<sup>69</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur Rahmān*, vol. 1, 124.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 99.

that some early *mufasssirs* did not catch the full meaning of these verses but only caught a glimpse of their true sense. He further states that the *mufasssirs* neglected to interpret certain verses in conjunction with *Sūrat al-Rūm* and several sound *ḥadīths*, which indeed never endorse the concept of the creation of "Ḥawwā'" from Ādam's ribs.<sup>71</sup>

Muslim scholars of the early period found an easy solution, when faced with contradictory statements or injunctions in the *Qur'ān*. They solved the discrepancies in the *Qur'ān* by declaring the contradictory statements to be out of date. Their argument was based on the verse in which the *Qur'ān* declares that whichever verse God has canceled or caused to be forgotten, He would replace it with a similar or a better one.<sup>72</sup> Since then the theory of the *nāsikh* (abrogating) and *mansūkh* (abrogated) became an established principle and its mastery was considered essential for those who deduced rulings from the *Qur'ānic naṣṣ* (text). al-Ghazālī, for instance, affirmed that a familiarity with the principle of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* was among the prerequisites for a *mujaḥid*.<sup>73</sup> This is despite the fact that scholars disagreed on matters related to the number of and criteria of those verses to which the principle of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* must be applied. Even though the modernists differed in their explanations of the contradictory verses, they were united in their distrust of the concept of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh*. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, for example, was convinced that nowhere in the *Qur'ān* does a *naskh* (abrogation) actually occur.<sup>74</sup>

Chalil approaches the issue of *naskh* by pointing out the defect of the *asbāb al-nuzūl* for the verse mentioned above and by indicating that the *ḥadīth* employed by al-

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>72</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 2: 106.

<sup>73</sup>Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" *IJMES*, 16 (1984), 6.

<sup>74</sup>In fact, a pre-modern reformist like Shāh Wālī Allāh already believed in the continuous validity of the verses and did not consider any verse as abrogated. This is in spite of the fact that some scholars maintained the view that his rejection of *naskh* was not total, but rather excepted five verses. Yet, even the remaining five could not at all be considered abrogated. Baljon, *Modern Muslim Kānā Interpretation*, 49; Ernest Hahn, "Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's 'The Controversy over Abrogation (in the Qur'ān)': An Annotated Translation," *Muslim World*, 64 (1974), 124; Detlev Khālid, "Some Aspects of Neo-Mu'tazilism," *Islamic Studies*, 8 (1969), 321.

Suyūṭī was reported by at least two unreliable transmitters, namely Muḥammad Ibn Zubayr al-Harrānī and Ḥajjāj al-Jazzārī. While the former's authority is obviously *da'if* (weak), Chalil states, the latter's account should be very cautiously verified. In this, he is supported by 'Abduh, who dismissed the validity of the *ḥadīth* altogether. Unlike Chalil, 'Abduh's objection was to the tradition's *matn* (content), which, according to 'Abduh, undermined Muḥammad's infallibility. According to the *ḥadīth*, the verse on *naskh* was revealed as a result of the Jewish attack on Muḥammad, whom they accused of abrogating one legal ruling by another. Thus, the *ḥadīth* denies the infallibility of Muḥammad, which is an important doctrine in consolidating his prophethood.<sup>75</sup> Such an argument was in spite of 'Abduh's acceptance of the theory of *naskh*, for although 'Abduh accepted the latter, he practically denied the repeal of any verses of the *Qur'ān*. Instead, he tried to harmonize the so-called contradictory verses and warned against an easy and swift acceptance of certain *Qur'ānic* verses as abrogated.

The controversy over *naskh* is discussed by Chalil at considerable length. He expresses his belief that if *naskh* were recognized as a valid device in the deduction of rulings, it would produce distorted results. Interestingly, his rejection is not forthrightly declared. Rather, he surveys a variety of sources, from which he extracts the opinions of those who were for or against it. He then detects that even among those who favored *naskh* a considerable dispute still occurred. Some of these scholars came to believe that *naskh* applied only to the ruling in question, while the wording of the verses remained unabrogated (*naskh al-ḥukm dūna al-tilāwah*). Some other scholars applied the principle of *naskh* to both the ruling and the wording. In his discussion of the issue, Chalil does not mention the method of abrogating the wording but not the ruling (*naskh al-tilāwah dūna al-ḥukm*), because he might have known that the last one was rarely applied.<sup>76</sup> He mentions, however, the disagreement on the number of abrogated verses and the two verses on the

<sup>75</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidanjatur-Rahmann*, vol. 1, 282-283.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 191-193.

basis of which the principle of *naskh* was justified. One of these was *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 106, already mentioned above, and the other *Sūrat al-Nahl*, 101, which states that when God substituted one *āyah* for another, He knew best what He had revealed.<sup>77</sup> It was the practice of Muslim scholars to reduce the number of abrogated verses which had previously reached appalling proportions. Cases in point were al-Suyūṭī, who reduced the number of the abrogated verses from many hundreds to twenty and Shāh Walī Allāh, who reduced them to five only.<sup>78</sup>

After delving into the arguments in favor of *naskh*, Chalil shows the other side of the coin. He does so by emphasizing the opinions of the opponents of *naskh*, who seemed to reverse the pro-*naskh* arguments, either by giving a different interpretation to the two verses or by claiming that there was no *ḥadīth* to support the conception of *naskh*.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the theory of *naskh* cannot be traced, as the Prophet is not reported to have provided any information on the existence of the abrogated verses in the *Qur'ān*. If any passage had been actually abrogated, he would have definitely pointed it out to his people.<sup>80</sup>

Chalil explains that according to the opponents of *naskh* the verse from *Sūrat al-Baqarah* indicates that the *Qur'ān* was sent down to Muḥammad with new rules, ordinances and decrees, which were better than those revealed to the previous Prophets, while the verse from *Sūrat al-Nahl* aims at confirming the *mu'jizah* of the *Qur'ān*. He also presents their ultimate arguments that is if *naskh* pertained to the *Qur'ān*, the *Qur'ān* was then capable of errors. This argument, according to Chalil, contradicts another verse

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., the *Qur'ān*, 16: 101.

<sup>78</sup>Khālid, "Some Aspects of Neo-Mu'tazilism," 321.

<sup>79</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahman*, vol. 1, 193

<sup>80</sup>Ahmad Hasan, *The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1970), 67.

which decisively states that no falsehood could approach it (the *Qur'ān*) from before or behind.<sup>81</sup>

In debating the issue of *naskh*, Chalil supports his argument with the opinions of Abū Muslim al-Ṣfahānī, a competent scholar whose rejection of *naskh* was cited by some prominent *mufasssirs* such as al-Rāzī. al-Ṣfahānī was said to have been the only early scholar to have rejected the principle of *naskh*.<sup>82</sup> Chalil's rejection of *naskh* was typical of the reformist attitude that the *Qur'ānic* verses were too lofty to cancel or be canceled by each other.<sup>83</sup> Reformists held that the proponents of *naskh* had depended on unreliable sources and that their division of abrogated verses into several categories, as mentioned above, was simply a product of their imagination. Furthermore, they discounted the arguments provided by the early jurists who saw in *naskh* an element of flexibility. al-Shāfi'ī, for example, explains that God used *naskh* to render the *Shari'ah* responsive to changing conditions.<sup>84</sup>

The ambiguous verses (*āyāt mutashābihāt*) also proved to be a disputed point among the *mufasssirs*. This issue has its roots in the *Qur'ānic* passage which states that God revealed to Muḥammad verses which were either perspicuous (*muḥkamāt*) and therefore of a fundamental nature, or ambiguous (*mutashābihāt*).<sup>85</sup> The classical *mufasssirs* usually regarded any verse which they found to be obscure or admitting of various interpretations as falling into the category of *āyāt mutashābihāt*. Sometimes the abrogated

<sup>81</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 41: 32.

<sup>82</sup>Chalil quotes al-Ṣfahānī's views from the latter's book, *Jāmi' al-Ta'wil*. Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidaajatur-Rahmaan*, vol. 1, 292; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad al-Subkī, *Tārīkh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sharq al-Islāmī), 60.

<sup>83</sup>Chalil's rejection of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* was representative of the stance taken by the *Persis* with which he was associated as the chair of its *Majlis 'Ulamā'*. See "Nasikh Mansūkh," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 1, 51-54.

<sup>84</sup>Ṭahā Jābir al-'Awānī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh: Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence* (Herndon, Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1990), 41.

<sup>85</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 3: 7.

verses, being authoritative neither for belief nor for moral edification, were also reckoned as falling into this category.<sup>86</sup>

Chalil approaches the question of *muhkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* by first explaining the technical meaning of each term. He defines the former as those verses whose meaning is clearly elucidated, so that no interpretation is required for it. In illustration of this, he cites a verse which states that the *Qur'ān* is the Book of verses with established meaning.<sup>87</sup> Chalil then comes to the conclusion that the *muhkamāt* verses are amenable to but one interpretation and that they cover various subjects, such as legal rulings, *'ibādāt* and *mu'āmalah*, which serve as the pillar (*sandi*) of Islam.<sup>88</sup>

In contrast to the *muhkamāt* verses, the *mutashābihāt* are amenable to more than one interpretation. Consequently, according to Chalil, the *mutashābihāt* are susceptible to misuse, as has been foretold in the verse saying: "As for those in whose heart is deviation, they follow what is *mutashābihāt* in it, desiring dissension (*al-fitnah*) and desiring the interpretation of it (*ta'wīl*)."<sup>89</sup> Chalil then paraphrases this verse saying that inappropriate interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* could lead people to irresponsible practices. It was against this misuse, he further argues, that the Prophet warned Muslims and advised them to stay away from those who employed the *mutashābihāt* as a means of creating *fitnah* (intrigue).<sup>90</sup> What he was afraid of was basically that some should interpret the *mutashābihāt* without recourse to the *muhkamāt* verses and pervert the correct signification in order to make them accord with their iniquitous intentions.

Chalil states his belief that God alone has full knowledge of the *mutashābihāt*. It is, however, important for people to try to understand them (by means of the *muhkamāt*

<sup>86</sup>Cited from al-Ṭabarī in Baljon's *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation*, 51.

<sup>87</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 48-49; the *Qur'ān*, 11: 1.

<sup>88</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 49.

<sup>89</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 3: 7.

<sup>90</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 49-50.

verses). For Chalil, therefore, those *mutashābihāt* stand in need of interpretation and only those possessing knowledge, a keen intellect, mastery of *‘ilm al-Qur’ān* (the science of the *Qur’ān*) and genuine *īmān* are capable of undertaking such an arduous task.<sup>91</sup> Chalil also mentions that among the *‘ulamā’* there were those who limited the knowledge of the *mutashābihāt* to God alone.<sup>92</sup> Not surprisingly, Chalil disapproves of this attitude and adopts instead the modernist stance, which rejected any suggestion that the *Qur’ān* was an obscure book or that contained any superfluous parts.

In the classical period of Islam, much attention was focused on the *i’jāz* (unparalleled uniqueness) of the *Qur’ān* which was attributed to its wonderful and superior eloquence. This *i’jāz* was of the utmost importance in Islamic doctrine, because it was held to prove the divine source of the *Qur’ān*. Nevertheless, it was not accepted right away and it took quite a long time for the idea to become an established dogma. In fact, it was only in the latter part of the ninth century that the word *i’jāz* became a fixed technical term, denoting the concept of the inimitability of the *Qur’ān*.<sup>93</sup>

Chalil classified *i’jāz* or *mu’jizah* into two categories. The first was that of *ḥissī* (sensory) and the other that of *ma’nawī* or *‘aqlī* (rational) miracles. The sensory miracles manifested themselves in phenomena which violated the principles of nature, as perceived by the sensory organs. This category of *mu’jizah* was created in order to impress its recipients, who were unprepared for more advanced proofs of prophethood. The other genre of miracle was called *ma’nawī* or *‘aqlī* because the people to whom the *mu’jizah* was delivered had reached an intellectual level capable of reflecting upon them rationally. Unlike the other Prophets, who mostly received the first type of *mu’jizah*, Chalil further

<sup>91</sup>His opinion concerning the capability of the possessors of knowledge to comprehend the *mutashābihāt* was partly based on the statement in the *Qur’ān*, 4: 162.

<sup>92</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur’ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 51; see also Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Quranic Hermeneutics: The Views of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur’ān* (ed.) Andrew Rippin (New York: Clarendon Press, 1988), 52.

<sup>93</sup>Issa J. Boullata, "I’jāz," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 7 (ed.) Mircea Eliade (London: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 87.

explains that both types of miracles were attributed to Muḥammad although the second were more numerous than the first.<sup>94</sup>

Like other reformists, Chalil does not spare much enthusiasm for the *ḥissī* qualities attributed to the *Qur'ān*.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, he faithfully follows the conventional approach, in which *i'jāz ḥissī* is discussed at length. He starts by paying attention to the traditional account of the Arabs' inability to match the *Qur'ān* when they were challenged to do so. He also mentions the verses which invited them to produce something like the *Qur'ān*, even if it were only ten verses or even one verse. Chalil also retold stories of disbelievers, such as al-Walid Ibn al-Mughīrah and 'Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah, who were affected by the magical power of the *Qur'ān* when it was recited by the Prophet.<sup>96</sup>

To this point, Chalil's discussion of the superb eloquence of the *Qur'ān* falls under the heading of *i'jāz ḥissī*. However, after having established the fact that the *Qur'ān* was an authentic divine revelation, he moves on to the more important task of enumerating the proofs of the *i'jāz 'aqlī*. In this context, Chalil states that the content of the *Qur'ān* was more astounding than its verbal power. The *Qur'ān*, he explains, presents a wealth of information on a multitude of subjects, such as moral issues, war, society, the cosmic system, the stars and the planets.<sup>97</sup> His inclination to de-emphasize the *i'jāz ḥissī* can be deduced, for example, from his commentary on the verse stating that God divided the Red Sea (*baḥr al-qulzūm*), saving in the process Mūsā and his people and drowning Fir'awn and his forces. In his interpretation, Chalil argues that at the moment when Mūsā and his people were crossing the Red Sea, the sea was at its lowest tide. This *ta'wīl* (logical interpretation) indicates his inclination not to call attention to an *i'jāz ḥissī* of the *Qur'ān* if there is any way to exercise a *ta'wīl*.<sup>98</sup> He was of the opinion that Muḥammad was sent to

<sup>94</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 59-60.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 60; Baljon, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation*, 37.

<sup>96</sup>Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 60-64.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 71-79.

<sup>98</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qurān Hidayatur-Rahman*, vol. 1, 171.



the whole world and for all the nations. Therefore, God purposefully bestowed on him a rational miracle (*'aqli*), an eminently human miracle acceptable to all peoples. This miracle was the *Qur'ān*.

The concept of a return to the simplicity of faith, which the modernists always spoke of, received Chalil's unconditional support when interpreting the *Qur'ānic* verses pertinent to the issue. Chalil believed that the *Qur'ān* follows the principles of simplicity and avoidance of hardship when issuing rules and ordinances. All decrees promulgated by the *Qur'ān* contains less rigid and exacting elements. In addition, the *Qur'ān* issues its objection to certain existing practices in stages, before finally prohibiting them. For an example of graduality (*al-tadarruj fi al-tashri'*), Chalil refers to the ordinance concerning the prohibition of *khams*, which was initially objected to, before being pronounced unlawful (*haram*).<sup>99</sup> Citing particular verses, Chalil says that the *Qur'ān* prohibits man from doing what is beyond his ability and relieves him of the shackles that had previously enchained him.<sup>100</sup> To ask for the details of a divine order is, therefore, condemned by the *Qur'ān*, as symbolized in the story of the Jewish people, who repeatedly asked Mūsā to consult God for a detailed description of the cow that was to be slaughtered.<sup>101</sup>

According to a *ḥadīth*, Chalil argues, further details regarding a divine order would not only produce complexity, but could also contradict the intention of the *Sharī'ah*, which was laid down to preserve the simplicity of religion.<sup>102</sup> Hence, Muḥammad always tried to keep the *Qur'ānic* orders simple by refusing to elaborate upon their specific descriptions. For example, when the verse on *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) was revealed, one of his companions

<sup>99</sup>In order to prohibit alcohol, the *Qur'ān* begins by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of alcohol and gambling. It then prohibits praying in a state of stupor and only later comes to an explicit prohibition of alcohol. Chalil, *Al-Qur'an Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 140; Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), 174-175.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 140-141.

<sup>101</sup>Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidayatur-Rahmāna*, vol. 1, 212-214.

<sup>102</sup>Chalil cites a *ḥadīth* which states that the previous peoples perished as a result of asking too many questions and disputing with their prophets. Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 283-284.

asked Muḥammad to specify the frequency of performing this duty, but the Prophet declined to answer.<sup>103</sup> It was due to this "misconduct" of his *ṣaḥābah* and their intense zeal that the *Qur'ān* then enjoined the Muslims not to be too assertive and prohibited them from raising too many questions to Muḥammad.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless, Chalil insists that this prohibition does not operate whenever there is any question of *taḳlīf* (legal obligation). Muslims were in fact encouraged to seek more knowledge about the basics of their religion. Indeed, Chalil mentions that twelve verses were revealed to Muḥammad as a result of the questions proposed by his *ṣaḥābah*.<sup>105</sup>

Basing himself on the concept of simplicity, Chalil attacks excess in performance of the *ʿibādah* and over-concern with the other religious duties. Excessive zeal over one's religious duties creates pressure on human nature and contradicts the very foundations of Islam which, according to Chalil, never intended to suppress human desire, but rather kept itself within human dimensions.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Chalil expresses his fear that exaggeration of the *ʿibādah* implies an imperfection in the *Qur'ān* in failing to provide details. In this regard, Chalil analyzes the verse that prohibits excessive questions and states that it was handed down only after all prescriptions concerning *iʿtiqād* (belief) and *ʿamal* (conduct) had been completely delivered.<sup>107</sup> According to 'Ā'ishah's account, Chalil further explains that chapter 5 of the *Qur'ān*, which contains the prohibition against excessive questions, was the final chapter revealed to Muḥammad. By that time, the *Qur'ān* had been revealed in its final format and any addition was an unnecessary accretion and, therefore, heresy.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>The verse is from the *Qur'ān*, 3: 97; Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 282-283.

<sup>104</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 5: 101.

<sup>105</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 292.

<sup>106</sup>Chalil points out the stories reported by *ḥadīths* telling of the Arab practice of refraining from intercourse, eating meat and fat. *Ibid.*, 294-298.

<sup>107</sup>Following the traditional argument on the concept of simplicity, Chalil quotes a number of *ḥadīth* which basically support the idea that Islam aims at ease not hardship and makes things easier not more difficult. *Ibid.*, 139-141.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 285.

Chalil's obsession with proving the greatness of the *Qur'ān* led him to affirm that all possible fields of human knowledge could be derived from the *Qur'ān*. According to Chalil, not only does the *Qur'ān* convey the hidden future and details of the present and the past, but it also contains everything from which modern sciences such as sociology, economy, pedagogy, politics and others might be deduced.<sup>109</sup> This is not to say, however, that his *tafsīr* is a *tafsīr 'ilmī* (scientific exegesis). Indeed, his *tafsīr* is an unfinished work and as such cannot provide conclusive evidence for such an assumption. Although Chalil does not go to any great effort to seek the support of the sciences in expounding the meanings of verses in his *tafsīr*, his strong emphasis on *i'jāz 'aqlī*, his attempts at reducing the sensational aspects of the *Qur'ānic* tales and his disbelief in the idea of excessive supernatural power all hint at a strong preference for *tafsīr 'ilmī*.

The notion of relating the *Qur'ān* to the sciences was an early phenomenon, although not as old as *Qur'ān* exegesis itself. The earliest *tafsīr 'ilmī* was attributed to Ibn Abī Faḍl al-Mursī (d. 1257) who found in the *Qur'ān* evidence of most of the arts and technology known in his time. Chalil would have learned of al-Mursī's approach from a report contained in al-Suyūṭī's *al-Iqān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* which served as one of Chalil's main references.<sup>110</sup> Also, his strong adherence to 'Abduh's school of thought had a great influence on Chalil, developing in him the rational outlook which was the most essential ingredient for practitioners of *tafsīr 'ilmī*.<sup>111</sup> A progressive man like Chalil had little difficulty in adopting such a rational outlook, especially as he needed to justify his claim of the Islam's compatibility with modernity. No wonder that Chalil had such high respect for

<sup>109</sup> Chalil, *Al-Qur'ān Dari Masa Ke Masa*, 76-77.

<sup>110</sup> Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, 37-38.

<sup>111</sup> 'Abduh himself was not among the partisans of *tafsīr 'ilmī*, although he always made the texts of the *Qur'ān* consistent with reason. Even though al-Marāghī rejected scientific exegesis, he considered it useful to employ some modern sciences as a prerequisite to contemporary *tafsīr*. Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, 43; al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 3, 269.

Ṭanṭawī's *al-Jawāhir*, a controversial "scientific" exegesis which went too far in its scientific speculations.<sup>112</sup>

That the *Qur'ān* does provide divine "scientific" information did not lead Chalil to accept unconditionally various *ḥadīths* employed by *mufasssirs* to legitimize their scientific exegesis. Often these *ḥadīths* gave information of a medical nature. Such statements from the *ḥadīths* must have attracted Chalil's attention too. However, he examines them with the intention of suppressing their popularity. He questions the fact that such notions could have been prescribed by the Prophet. For example, he examines one *ḥadīth* which states that "if a fly falls in your container [a plate, dish etc.], immerse it before you pull it out, since one of its wing contains a cure and the other a disease." Chalil admits that the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound), as it is narrated in almost all of the *al-kutub al-sittah* (six canonical collections of *ḥadīth*) except *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* and has reliable transmitters.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, its report about the cure in one of the wings was mythical rather than scientific. No authority could deny the fact that the fly is a very dangerous insect which transmits diseases.<sup>114</sup>

By casting doubt upon such reports, Chalil was simultaneously de-mystifying the position of Muḥammad. He was neither angel nor God nor demi-god. Chalil always emphasized that Muḥammad never ceased to be a human being, whose own personal opinions had no legal religious authority, as he himself once said.<sup>115</sup> To this category of non-religious and personal opinions belong the traditions that constitute what is known as

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 174-175: when the *Qur'ān* states that God designed the sky and made it in seven layers, Chalil argues that the word seven does not imply the plurality of the sky. In his argument, Chalil refers to Ṭanṭawī Jawhārī's statement. Chalil, *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidaajatul-Rahmaan*, vol. 1, 119.

<sup>113</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Benarkah Salah Satu Sajap Lalat Mengandung Obat? 1," *Abadi* (May, 5; 1960); on the procedure of verifying the reliability of the *ḥadīth* in question, see Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth* (Miṣr: Maṭba'at Kurdistān al-Islāmiyah, 1908), 289-290.

<sup>114</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Benarkah Salah Satu Sajap Lalat Mengandung Obat? 2" *Abadi* (May, 6; 1960).

<sup>115</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Memperingati Pribadi Nabi Muḥammad s. a. w." *Abadi* (November, 15; 1953).

*al-tibb al-nabawī*. A number of works in this genre, containing information about health care, medication and healing formulas based on Muḥammad's personal observations or experience, were circulated among the traditionalists. Chalil's rejection of the scientific values of such *ḥadīth* stemmed from the use of *al-tibb al-nabawī* literature by the traditionalists.<sup>116</sup> The reformists, on the other hand, considered both *ḥikmah* (occult sciences), as practiced by the traditionalists, to be nothing other than magic and therefore unacceptable. This is in spite of the fact that Ibn Qayyim, who was highly esteemed by the reformists, wrote a major work in this discipline known as *al-Tibb al-Nabawī*.<sup>117</sup>

As such, one can declare that Chalil doubted the authority of the *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* (sound *ḥadīth*) and did not accept it as legally binding when it stood in contradiction with reason. He affirms whenever reason contradicts revelation the former should win out over the latter. He also reiterates that whatever reason agrees with and commands is in conformity with the *Shari'ah* and that whatever reason cannot reject belongs to the *Shari'ah* as well.<sup>118</sup> This was 'Abduh's position too, when contradiction occurred between reason and revelation. In addition, Chalil's attitude towards the *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* was in line with 'Abduh's opinion on its unbinding nature. 'Abduh held that the authority of the *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* was *zannī* (ambiguous), for it did not go beyond the category of the *ḥadīth aḥad* (a *ḥadīth* which was reported by individuals and not by a collective audience).<sup>119</sup> It should be stated that Chalil's refusal to accept blindly the medical statements provided by any *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* did not disqualify him from being a partisan of *tafsīr 'ilmī*. Muḥammad

<sup>116</sup>There are at least two treatises of this kind, to which some traditionalists referred to for personal health care and medication. One of them is written by Ibrāhīm Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azraq and entitled *Tashīl al-Manāfi' fī al-Tibb wa al-Ḥikmah al-Mushtamil 'alā Shifā' al-Ajsām wa Kitāb al-Raḥmah* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Mulkiyah, n.d.), and the other is written by al-Suyūṭī and entitled *al-Raḥmah fī al-Tibb wa al-Ḥikmah* (Miṣr: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, n.d.).

<sup>117</sup>Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen*, 146 (1990), 262.

<sup>118</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970) 94-95.

<sup>119</sup>al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 3, 241.

Tawfīq Ṣidqī, one of the leading advocates of *tafsīr 'ilmī* and an important columnist for *al-Manār*, also questioned the intellectual value of some *ḥadīths*, which contained medical statements. He did so in his book, *Durūs Sunan al-Kā'ināt: Muḥādharāt Tibbiyah 'Imiyah Islāmīyah*. Ṣidqī, who was himself a medical doctor, did not attribute any scientific value to the *ḥadīth* of the fly in spite of his recognition of its soundness.<sup>120</sup>

Considering that Chalil's reformist thought was religious in nature, it was axiomatic that he should have attempted to elucidate the *Qur'ān*, which is the basis of the Muslim faith. Chalil's approach in his *tafsīr* may serve as a "specimen" of the reformist treatment of the *Qur'ān*. The reformists, who always regarded the *Qur'ān* as the chief vehicle for modernizing society, argued that the *Qur'ān* should be explained in the light of reason. Hence, Chalil took that dictum seriously when he tried his utmost to purify the *Qur'ān* of all irrational elements and fantastic stories. His rejection of the *tafsīrs* of the *ṣūfis* and the *ahl al-bid'ah* are indicative of his attempts to eradicate any element that could adulterate the noble meaning of the *Qur'ān*. Though he intended to clarify the *Qur'ān's* injunctions using *ḥadīth* material, he did not hesitate to reject any *ḥadīth* if its *isnād* was not reliable or its *matn* contradictory to reason.

Chalil was convinced that the *Qur'ān* was so rich and universal that its message must embrace all aspects of human life. Hence, he believed that the *Qur'ān* can even foretell future scientific discoveries. Moreover, his belief in its universality led him to ascribe to the *Qur'ān's* injunctions the attribute of simplicity. It appears that he availed himself of 'Abduh's opinions and works in the writing of his *tafsīr*. His discussion of such issues as *naskh*, *muhkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* and *i'jāz* indicate that Chalil received his inspiration from the reformist fountain. His rejection of *naskh*, his interpretation of the

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<sup>120</sup>Chalil claims that he consulted Ṣidqī's book and had received support from Ahmad Ramali, a medical doctor and the chairman of the *Panitia Pertimbangan Kesehatan dan Shar'*. Chalil, "Benarkah Salah Satu Sajap Lalat Mengandung Obat? 2"; Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, 44.

*mutashābihāt* and his emphasis on *i'jāz 'aqlī* all give evidence of the rational approach which the reformists consistently adopted in their *tafsīr*.

CHAPTER FIVE  
Moenawar Chalil and the *Sunnah*  
His Concept of Following the Prophetic *Sunnah*

The importance of the *sunnah* as a source of Islamic law was laid down in the *Qur'ān*, emphasized by the Prophet, recognized by his immediate *ṣaḥābah* and *ṭābi'ūn* and accepted by all the important orthodox Muslim jurists. The *Qur'ān* states: "Whatever the Prophet gives accept it and whatever he forbids you abstain from it."<sup>1</sup> It also says: "He does not speak out of desire. It is not (him) but the revelation revealed (to him)."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the Prophet emphasized the importance of his own *sunnah* as a guide for his followers and he was pleased with the reply of Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal, who said to him, when he was appointed as an official in Yemen, that he would follow his Prophet's *sunnah* if he failed to find guidance in the *Qur'ān*. The Prophet repeatedly instructed his followers to hold fast to his practice. On one occasion, he said to them: "So long as you hold fast to two things which I have left among you, you will not go astray; God's Book and his messenger's *sunnah*."<sup>3</sup>

Muḥammad's behavior, as illustrated in the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* mentioned above, has long served as a model for Muslims. It is almost axiomatic that God should have preserved the Prophet from going astray and that his actions should carry some intrinsic moral value. Some Muslims even considered everything that the Prophet did as part of his *sunnah*. His treatment of children, the way he broke his fast, how he cleaned his teeth and wore his beard were all worthy of emulation. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the *fuqahā'* (the jurists) had excluded a wide range of Muḥammad's personal behavior from the immediate purview of the legalistic *sunnah*, Muslims still treasured many examples set by the Prophet in his personal life and took them as models.

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<sup>1</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 49: 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 53: 3.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in John Alden Williams' *Islam* (New York: George Braziller, 1962), 84-85.



The emulation of the Prophet was a practice favored by most reformists, who believed that the ultimate strength of Muslims depended on patterning their behavior on the lessons contained in the *sunnah*. That Muslims were obliged to follow the Prophetic *sunnah* had become the chief message of their movement and was expressed in a slogan stating that following *sunnah* was the only way of ensuring the supremacy of Islam.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, questions arose with regards to just what was meant by "following the *sunnah*." Did the term "following the Prophetic *sunnah*" mean emulating the Prophet's way of life in its entirety? Or did it mean following those practices of the Prophet which had legal value only? If the emulation of his practice was limited to the substance of the *Shari'ah*, did that make them less *sunnah*-minded? If the reformists claimed to be the ardent upholders of *sunnah*, why were they so critical of it, with some even going so far as to reject it as a source of legislation? All these were questions which Chalil delved into, questions which reflect his reformist attitude towards following the Prophetic *sunnah*. In this chapter, Chalil's attitude regarding the *sunnah* will be examined in two parts. The first part will deal with his division of the *sunnah*, the emphasis he placed on one particular form of *sunnah* over the other and its role as a source of legislation. As for the second part, it will discuss his work entitled *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, which he wrote as a guide to those wishing to model themselves on the Prophet's religious practices.

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<sup>4</sup>The principle of "following the Prophetic *sunnah*" was sometimes expressed in a different phrase, namely "back to (the *Qur'ān* and) the *sunnah*." Chalil was among the strong advocates of this principle as attested by the writing of his work *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah* (Back to the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*), to which his other work *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth* was intended to form the continuation, and his establishment of a magazine *Swara Islam* with the motto "reviving the *sunnah* of the Prophet and eradicating *bid'ah*." Moenawar Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah: Himpunan Hadits<sup>2</sup> Pilihan Jang Berhubungan Dengan Fikih*, vol. 1 (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), 4; idem, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'ān dan As-Sunnah* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), v; idem (ed.) *Swara Islam*, 4 (April; 1935); 5 (May; 1935); 6 (December; 1935); for various views which espouse the necessity of following the Prophetic *sunnah* by Muslims, see Abdul Majid Mackeen's "Some Thoughts on the Meaning of 'Following the Sunnah'," *Islamic Quarterly*, 28 (1984), 241-249.

## I

Chalil divides the *sunnah* into five categories, namely (i) *sunnah qawliyah*, which embodies the utterances of the Prophet, (ii) *sunnah fi'liyah*, which embodies the actions of the Prophet, (iii) *sunnah taqririyah*, which embodies the tacit approval of the Prophet on a matter which occurred either in his presence or in his absence, but which he had come to know about, (iv) *sunnah tarkiyah*, which contains the practices which the Prophet could have fulfilled but which he renounced, and (v) *sunnah hammīyah*, which refers to the proposed schemes which the Prophet was unable to translate into reality.<sup>5</sup>

Chalil's division of *sunnah* into five categories outnumbers the more usual division into three only, namely *qawliyah*, *fi'liyah* and *taqririyah*. Nonetheless, in spite of his careful delineation of the categories only two of them receive a thorough examination. Those two are *taqririyah* and *tarkiyah*, which, he believed, had a bearing on the practice of *bid'ah*.<sup>6</sup> In his view, *bid'ah* meant breaking with the Prophet's practice and discontinuing his tradition and, therefore, *bid'ah* was the antithesis of *sunnah*. Chalil's way of contrasting the *sunnah* with the *bid'ah* is evidence of his strong desire to root out *bid'ah*. He believed that only by means of eradicating the practice of *bid'ah* that the principle of following the *sunnah* would be implemented. This puritanist outlook found a strong support in the opinions of al-Shāṭibī, especially in the latter's *al-I'tisām*, which Chalil often cites.<sup>7</sup> His fairly lengthy quotation of al-Shāṭibī's conception of *bid'ah* was aimed at fortifying his own argument against *bid'ah* with the source which had become the favorite reference for the reformists. al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tisām* was considered a systematic and well-argued book on the concept of *bid'ah*.<sup>8</sup> Rashīd Riḍā, who was himself a "warrior" against

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<sup>5</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 210.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 198, 229-235.

<sup>8</sup>Muhammad Khālid Mas'ūd, "Trends in the Interpretation of Islamic Law as Reflected in the Fatāwā Literature of Deoband School: A Study of the Attitude of the 'Ulamā' of Deoband to Certain Social Problems and Inventions," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1969), 16.

*bid'ah* and an ardent defender of *sunnah* regarded al-Shātibī as a crusader against *bid'ah*. Furthermore, Riḍā, who edited and published al-Shātibī's *al-I'tisām* in *al-Manār*, stressed the importance of the work in his biography of 'Abduh.<sup>9</sup>

Chalil holds that the *sunnah* is anything which was stipulated by the Prophet, be it an explanation of the *Qur'ānic* text or an independent ruling on a matter not elucidated in the *Qur'ān*. He also maintains that the *sunnah* can be extended to include the practice of the *ṣaḥābah*, whether such a practice was in accordance with the instructions in the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* or not. Their practice should be counted as *sunnah*, because it was acquired by means of *ijtihād*, legitimized by the four Caliphs (al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn) and approved by each of the *ṣaḥābah*. Chalil further explains that the *sunnat al-ṣaḥābah* was also validated by the explicit approval of the Prophet who declared: "Take the *sunnah* of mine and the rightly guided Caliphs."<sup>10</sup> What Chalil means by *sunnat al-ṣaḥābah* is the product of the *ṣaḥābah's* *ijtihād* which obtained the general consensus (*ijmā'*) of the community. This body of material came into being in order to supplement the content of the Prophetic *sunnah* which was in itself neither extensive in quantity nor very specific.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Chalil adopts the view that the Prophetic *sunnah* was a catch-all for the material derived either directly from Muḥammad or indirectly from his *ṣaḥābah*. *Sunnah* defined as such, Chalil points out, is akin to the conception put forth by al-Shātibī.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Rashid Riḍā was initially regarded as a scholar with no authority on *ḥadīth*. However, after the death of his mentor, 'Abduh, he made himself more familiar with Islamic subjects including *ḥadīth*, eventually becoming a master of it. He turned to be one of the most ardent defenders of *sunnah* and the fiercest opponent of the legal schools (*al-madhhabīb al-fiqhiyah*). Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1976), 30; M. Khalid Mas'ud, "Recent Studies of Shātibī's al-Muwāfaqāt," *Islamic Studies*, 14 (1975), 68.

<sup>10</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'ān dan As-Sunnah*, 198.

<sup>11</sup>This premise forms the basis of the principle followed by Mālik in accepting the decisions and practices of the *ṣaḥābah* and of his recognition of their opinion as an authoritative legal tool. M. Zubayr Siddiqi, "The Importance of Ḥadīth as a Source of Islamic Law," *Studies in Islam*, 1 (1964), 21.

<sup>12</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'ān dan As-Sunnah*, 198; see also al-Shātibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, n.d.), 34.

Chalil does not make a clear distinction between *sunnah* and *ḥadīth*, saying that both convey elements of authoritative practices, which stem from the utterances, actions and tacit approval of the Prophet.<sup>13</sup> It is very common to look at *sunnah* and *ḥadīth* as being two different terms for the same thing, since *sunnah* makes up the subject matter and character of *ḥadīth*.<sup>14</sup> Chalil's view of the identical nature of *sunnah* and *ḥadīth* coincides with that of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth* scholars).<sup>15</sup> The truth is, however, that the two represent different things, as explained in the reports related by Abū Dāwūd and Fāṭimah. According to these reports, *ḥadīth* is the narration of the behavior of the Prophet, while *sunnah* is the law deduced from this narration. In other words, *ḥadīth* is the carrier of the *sunnah* and *sunnah* is contained in the *ḥadīth*.<sup>16</sup>

In his treatment of the *sunnah*, however, Chalil emphasizes its relationship with the concept of emulation, which carries a normative and behavioral connotation. It is normative, when the *sunnah* indicates a regulation which has been spelled out (*peraturan yang tetap berlaku*). In this regard, he mentions two kinds of verses which refer to two long-established regulations; the first to the conduct of the early Muslims and the second to the law of nature.<sup>17</sup> To illustrate this he refers to *Qur'ānic* verses which employ *sunnah* in this sense, the first referring to *sunnat al-awwālīn* (the *sunnah* of those of old) and the second to *sunnat Allāh* (the *sunnah* of Allāh).<sup>18</sup> The behavioral connotation, on the other hand, applies to those practices which are considered as an exemplary model. In support of his claim, he quotes two *ḥadīths*, one of which states: "Whoever introduces a good *sunnah*

<sup>13</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 196-197.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, the definition of the two given by A. Hassan in his *Ringkasan Islam* (Kota Bahru: Pustaka Aman Press, 1971), 14.

<sup>15</sup>Alī Ḥasan 'Abd al-Qādir, *Nazrah 'Āmmah fi Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah al-Ḥadīthah, 1941), 121.

<sup>16</sup>Abū Dāwūd states: "I heard that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said: "There are five *sunnahs* in this *ḥadīth*." Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1951), 105; a statement of Fāṭimah maintained that "There were three *sunnahs* in the incidents of Barīrah, a slave girl." Mālik Ibn Anas, *al-Muwatta'*, vol. 2 (Norwich: Diwan Press, 1962), 332.

<sup>17</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 193.

<sup>18</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 8: 39; 15: 13; 18: 53; 35: 41; 17: 79; 33: 62 and 35: 42.

[will be rewarded] and whoever introduces a bad *sunnah*...." while the other states that: "Marriage is my *sunnah*." Chalil does not use the word model, but instead employees the phrase *cara yang diadakan* (a way that was set up), which could refer equally to correct or a wrong behavior.<sup>19</sup>

Chalil divides *sunnah fi'liyah* into those traditions which have legal authority and those which have none. In the first category, he includes the *sunnah* which by its nature elucidates the *Qur'ānic* injunctions. Consequently, the legal value of such a *sunnah* follows that of the elucidated verse, which is usually expressed in a *mujmal* (general) sense.<sup>20</sup> Chalil establishes the details of the juristic relation between the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* by referring to the opinions of the leading jurists, like al-Shāfi'i and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. Chalil states that in his *al-Risālah* al-Shāfi'i lists five types of authoritative *sunnah*. The first three are by their nature explanatory of the *Qur'ān* and deal with either *tafsīr* (elaboration) of the general assertions of the *Qur'ān*, *takhsīs* (specification) of its indefinite statements or *ta'yīn* (determination) of the most apparently acceptable of a number of options. The remaining two serve either to establish an independent ruling or to explain those verses which are abrogating, abrogated or contradictory. Ibn Hanbal's categorization of *sunnah fi'liyah*, which Chalil cites from Ibn Qayyim's *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, is not substantially different from that of al-Shāfi'i's, except for the fact that Ibn Hanbal often adopts different terms for the same concepts. When the terms *ta'kid* and *taqrīr* are employed by Ibn Hanbal, he means an assertion of the Prophet in confirmation of the injunctions prescribed in the *Qur'ān*. The terms *tafsīr* and *takhsīs* are used by him to refer to *sunnah* that particularizes what is general and specifies what is common. As for the establishment of independent legislation by the *sunnah*, Ibn Hanbal uses the term *tashrī'*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 193-194.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 211, 213.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 208-209; Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'adah, 1955), 288.

The *sunnah* which operates within the above-mentioned framework forms what is generally called *al-sunnah al-tashri'iyah* (law-making *sunnah*), because it either has a legal value or provides general guidance to the Muslim community. On this basis, Chalil excludes from the scope of *al-sunnah al-tashri'iyah* those reports which speak of Muḥammad's personal habits, such as the manner of his drinking, eating or standing. Chalil maintains that these aspects of his personal life are left to the discretion of Muslims either to emulate or not to emulate them. As for the features associated with his position as Prophet, all believers are prohibited from imitating them. Such acts include his continuous state of fasting and his marrying more than four wives.<sup>22</sup>

Chalil also deals with those acts which the Prophet performed with the intention of providing not only of a worthy paradigm but also of gaining God's favor (*taqarrub ilā Allāh*). Chalil rates such acts higher than the habitual manners of standing and walking, although he still considers them as acts with a symbolic value and not actually meant for emulation.<sup>23</sup> It should be mentioned that there is a range of opinions with regard to the status of the non-legalistic *sunnah*. While the Ḥanbalites considered it *wājib* to observe that type of *sunnah*, al-Shāfi'i's opinion viewed it as *nudbah* (recommended).<sup>24</sup> The Mālikīs required that Muḥammad's *sunnah* be followed even when no ethical issue was involved. The Ash'ārītes held that any action common to the Prophet and his community was binding to all Muslims.<sup>25</sup> Hence, they held that the definition of following *sunnah* goes beyond those prescriptions and acts of the Prophet that had legal implications. As such, they differed from what Chalil regarded as worthy of emulation in the Prophetic

<sup>22</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 211.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 212-213.

<sup>24</sup>al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'ārif, 1914), 248-249.

<sup>25</sup>James Edgar Royster, "The Meaning of Muḥammad for Muslims: A Phenomenological Study of Recurrent Images of the Prophet," (Ph.D. dissertation, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford Connecticut, 1970), 178.

*sunnah*, which included only those aspects of the Prophet's traditions which provide the substance of the *shari'ah*.

The *sunnah tarkiyah* comprises acts which were consciously renounced by the Prophet himself. It usually was not seen as constituting a separate category, since technically it subsists within the *sunnah taqririyah* which embraces two types of *taqrir* (decision): approvals of actions and renunciations of certain practices.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, since *sunnah tarkiyah* had the potential of giving him a strong hand in the debate on *bid'ah*, Chalil chose to classify it as an independent category. The *sunnah tarkiyah* has an organic relation with the *'ibadah* (ritual practice), but lacks any precedent in the Prophet's traditions. The introduction of any *'ibadah*, however, which is not based on the literal text of the *Qur'an* or the actual practice of the Prophet, is not permitted. This applied, in Chalil's eyes, to *sunnah tarkiyah*.<sup>27</sup> Chalil holds that the *sabab* (reason) for *sunnah tarkiyah*, which was to gain God's favor, existed during the period of *tashri'* (law-making) and, therefore, was certainly known to the Prophet. The same *sabab*, however, cannot serve as a valid ground for the introduction of the *'ibadah* by later generations, if no actual precedent was provided by the Prophet himself.<sup>28</sup>

In citing the opinions of al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Qayyim to support his opposition to the *sunnah tarkiyah*, Chalil was drawing upon two of the most popular sources of reformist thought. Ibn Qayyim was an author very highly esteemed among the puritans, notably the Wahhābīs and the Salafīs, while al-Shāṭibī, as mentioned earlier, was crowned by Riḍā as the crusader *par excellence* against *bid'ah*.<sup>29</sup> According to al-Shāṭibī, Chalil states, the

<sup>26</sup>Sulaymān Ibn 'Abd al-Qawī al-Ṭūfī, *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍah*, vol. 2 (n. p.: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1987), 266.

<sup>27</sup>The original Arabic texts of the formula are *al-asl fī al-'ibadah al-tawfiq wa al-ittibā'* and *al-asl fī al-'ibadah al-buṭlān ḥattā yaqūm dalil 'alā al-amr*. Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 265.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. 214-215.

<sup>29</sup>H. Laoust, "Ibn Qayyim al-Djawziyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (new ed.) (eds.) H.A.R. Gibb et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 822.

*sunnah tarkīyah* was a form of *ʿibādah* which the *Sharʿ* neither speaks about nor commands and, hence, its practice should be considered *bidʿah madhmūmah* (blameworthy innovation).<sup>30</sup> Ibn Qayyim's analysis reverses the definition by saying that the abandonment of practices which the Prophet had renounced was a *sunnah* in itself, since the observance of such practices would naturally constitute *bidʿah*.<sup>31</sup> Chalil further states that Ibn Qayyim also emphasized the role of the *ṣaḥābah* as a point of reference, since they alone were witnesses to the legitimate *ʿibādah*. If they, either individually or collectively, did not report that a given "*ʿibādah*" was practiced by the Prophet, then such an "*ʿibādah*" should be classed under *sunnah tarkīyah*.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that the examples of *sunnah tarkīyah* quoted by Chalil from al-Shātibī and Ibn Qayyim were those practiced by the Indonesian traditionalists and considered *bidʿah* by the reformists. Cases in point were the expression of the intention to pray (*al-talaffuz bi-al-nīyah*) which the Prophet did not pronounce when starting a prayer, and the reading of *duʿāʾ* after the *ṣubḥ* and *ʿaṣr* prayers while facing the *muʾmīn* (the prayer attendants), which the Prophet did not perform either.<sup>33</sup> The reformists rigorously attacked the practice of *al-talaffuz bi-al-nīyah* which the traditionalists maintained.<sup>34</sup> *al-Talaffuz bi-al-nīyah* was considered by the traditionalists to be a *rukʿ* (an obligatory act) in the mandatory prayers and an intentional failure to perform it would cause the prayer to be nullified (*batil*).<sup>35</sup> Other examples cited by Chalil are the practice of raising one's hands when rising from the second *rukūʿ* (a bending of the torso) of the *ṣubḥ* prayer and the tradition of reading the *qunūt* (a type of *duʿāʾ*) during this same

<sup>30</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 214-215.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 217; Ibn Qayyim, *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿin*, vol. 2, 271.

<sup>32</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 216-217; Ibn Qayyim, *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿin*, vol. 2, 271.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> M. S. "Lafazh Ushalli," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 8, 36-38; A. Hassan, "Melafazhkan Niat," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 1, 8-12; "Niat dalam 'Ibadah," *Al-Muslimun*, 5 (April, 1955), 8-9; Abbas bin Thaha, "Talaffoezh Niat," *Pembela Islam*, 6 (April, 1933), 35-39.

<sup>35</sup> Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Fatḥ al-Wahhāb bi-Sharḥ Manhaj al-Tullāb*, vol. 1 (n. p.: Dār al-Fikr, n. d.), 38.



prayer. Chalil insists that the Prophet never indulged in these customs and that the traditionalists were wrong in holding them.<sup>36</sup> Again the traditionalists held that *qunūt* was a strongly required (*sunnah mu'akkadah*) act in the *subh* prayer and that an extra prostration (*sujūd sahwī*) was required in substitution, if a person failed to make it.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, many reformist pamphleteers protested against the incorporation of *qunūt* in the *subh* prayer and considered the practice as *bid'ah*.<sup>38</sup>

Chalil also reinforces his arguments against the *sunnah tarkīyah* by relying on the opinions of Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī whose *Tuhfat al-Muhtāj li-Sharḥ al-Minhāj* constituted one of the most important text-books on *fiqh* used by the Indonesian traditionalists. Chalil refers, however, not to the *Tuhfat* which was blacklisted by the modernists and instead to al-Haytamī's *al-Fatāwā al-Hadīthiyah*.<sup>39</sup> al-Haytamī, according to Chalil, maintained that the *sunnah tarkīyah* is synonymous with *bid'ah* and that all *bid'ah* is *dalālāh* (misguided), as the *Shar'* has decreed to be so. Nonetheless, al-Haytamī also said that *bid'ah* could be either *ḥasan* (good) or *ghayr ḥasan* (bad) depending on its literal (*luḡhawīyah*) meaning.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted, however, that al-Haytamī's conception of *bid'ah* was also intended to identify a novel theological concept. He employed the term

<sup>36</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 217. Ibn Qayyim, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in*, vol. 2, 271.

<sup>37</sup>Muhammad Ibn Qāsim al-Ghazzī, *Fatḥ al-Qarīb al-Mujīb* (Indonesia: Maktabat al-'Idrūs, n. d.), 14, 16; al-Ghazzī's work is a commentary on *al-Ghāyah wa al-Taqrīb* by Abū Shujā' al-Isfahānī. They are very popular *fiqh* works in Indonesia. There is hardly a *pesantren* where at least one of the two is not studied. Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen*, 146 (1990), 246.

<sup>38</sup>M. S. "Angkat Tangan Waktu Batja Qunūt," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 8, 24-30; "Doa Qunūt dengan tidak Mengangkat Tangan," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 8, 30-32; "Mengangkat Tangan Waktu Bangkit dari Rakaat Kedua," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 5, 69-70.

<sup>39</sup>A. Halim Hasan, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 2," *Pandji Masyarakat* (February, 15; 1960), ?; Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Runag Lingkup Ijtihad Para Ulama dalam Membina Hukum Islam* (Bandung: Unisba, 1975), 16-17; They considered the *Tuhfat* incompatible with the spirit of modernity on account of its lack of analysis. This assumption eventually betrays a lack of familiarity with the book. al-Haytamī's *Tuhfat* was recognized as one of the most authoritative textbooks of the Shāfi'i school. C. Van Arendonk and J. Schacht, "Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (new ed.) (eds.) H.A.R. Gibb et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 179; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Muhammad al-Subkī et. al. *Tārīkh al-Tashrīf al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sharq al-Islāmīyah, 1930), 347.

<sup>40</sup>Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, *Kitāb al-Fatāwā al-Hadīthiyah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'āhid, 1934), 200.

*bid'ah* for this concept in order to limit membership in the *ahl al-sunnah* (the community of *sunnah*) to the adherents of the theological creed laid down by al-Ash'ari and al-Maturidi.<sup>41</sup> As such, the term *bid'ah* as defined by al-Haytami could even be applied to the reformists who, in spite of being members of *ahl al-sunnah*, rejected any affiliation to the Ash'ari or Maturidi theological schools as defined by al-Haytami above. It was for this reason that the traditionalists identified the reformists as "non-Sunnis," an identification which they manipulated to discredit the reformists in the political campaign of the 1955 general election.<sup>42</sup> Chalil's quotation of al-Haytami's opinion, thus, was not in keeping with the content of the meaning of *bid'ah* as advocated by al-Haytami.

Chalil had more success by relying on the work of Ahmad Ibn 'Abd al-Qadir al-Rumi on the *sunnah tarkiyah*, since the former explicitly attacked the traditions which prevailed among the traditionalists and which were classified as *bid'ah munkarah* (rejected *bid'ah*) by the reformists. Although al-Rumi was certainly not on an equal footing with either Ibn Qayyim or al-Shatibi, both of whose reputations were unsurpassed by any scholar in the eyes of the Indonesian reformists, nevertheless his *Majalis al-Abrar wa Masalik al-Akhyar*, a commentary on one hundred selected *hadith*, served as an important source for the reformists, including Chalil, in their polemics against the practice of *sunnah tarkiyah*.<sup>43</sup>

Chalil's approach to the *sunnah tarkiyah* was modeled on the puritan pattern, according to which its resemblance with *bid'ah* was stressed and its justification on the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> For the criteria on *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah* by the traditionalists, see Siradjuddin 'Abbas, *I'tiqad Ahlul-sunnah Wal-Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1983), 16-17; for the use of the pejorative term "non-Sunnis" by the traditionalists to identify the theological belief of the reformists and undermine them in the 1955 general election, see "I'tiqad Al-Ba-'Alwi tentang Wahhabi," *Pembela Islam*, 47 (?), 7-11; E. Abdurrahman, "Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah," *Hudjatul Islam*, 1 (August; 1956), 12-20.

<sup>43</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 219; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), 661-662; Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, for example, also refers to al-Rumi's *Majalis al-Abrar* in his refutation of the practice of *bid'ah*. He mentions that al-Rumi was a prominent Hanafite scholar. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Kriteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1967), 40.

basis of *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) examined.<sup>44</sup> Chalil holds that the *maṣlaḥah* contains the idea of producing utility and (public) interest (*kemamfaatan*) and preventing harm. What the term *maṣlaḥah* meant to the *uṣūliyyūn* (legal theorists), according to Chalil, was the preservation of the purpose of the *Sharʿ* by means of removing things that might engender harm to human interest. He explains that the purpose of the *Sharʿ* is based on five foci: religion, soul, intellect, progeny and property. What assures the preservation of these five principles is *maṣlaḥah* and whatever fails to preserve them is not *maṣlaḥah*. However, he further argues, the establishment of *maṣlaḥah* is dependent on the existence of *munāsabah* of (the text of) the Book, the *sunnah* and *ijmāʿ*, since *maṣlaḥah* has no textual evidence. What the *munāsabah* means to Chalil was the presence of an *ʿillah* (reason), on the basis of which an analogy might be sought in order to establish a *ḥukm* (judgment).<sup>45</sup>

It is due to the lack of textual evidence, Chalil says, that both *maṣāliḥ al-mursalah* or *maṣlaḥah* and *bidʿah* or *sunnah tarkīyah* appear identical and are often lumped under the same category. Indeed, the practice of *bidʿah* was often placed under the jurisdiction of *maṣlaḥah*.<sup>46</sup> Such a categorization was erroneous, since there were principles that the two did not share. Chalil further argues that while the *maṣāliḥ al-mursalah* apply to the *wasāʾil* (means) that lead to the *maqāṣid* (purposes), *bidʿah* pertains to the *maqāṣid* themselves.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, *maṣlaḥah* serves as a source of law in connection with the *muʿāmalah*, while *bidʿah* is an act attributed to the *ʿibādah*, an area in which God alone has the prerogative of determining its quantity, manner and timing.<sup>48</sup> In other words, the *maṣlaḥah* operates

<sup>44</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 257-263.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 257; for a discussion of *munāsabah*, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy: A Study of Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī's Life and Thought* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Pakistan, 1977), 155.

<sup>46</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 258-259.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>48</sup>The dichotomy between the *muʿāmalah* and *ʿibādah* was a manifestation of the different domains of authority. While the former related to worldly matters (*duyāʾ*), the latter addressed religious ones (*dīn*). Attached to this dichotomy were the *muʿāmalah* which dealt with matters that could be discerned rationally (*maʿqūl al-maʿnā*) and *ʿibādah* that did not follow any rational principles (*ghayr maʿqūl al-maʿnā*). Ibid., 261-163; see also

within the sphere of *mu'āmalah*-related matters in which the exercise of reason is permissible, since the *mu'āmalah* regulates the conduct of men. This, however, does not apply to the *'ibādah*, which governs the conduct of men with God. Hence, the *'ibādah* provides no room for such an exercise, as it falls within the exclusive right of God (*ḥuqq al-Shāri'*). Chalil's argument regarding *maṣlaḥah* and *bid'ah* served to consolidate further his argument against the *sunnah tarkīyah* or *bid'ah*. This was also the approach of certain early scholars and reformists, such as al-Ṭūfī, to whom Chalil attributes his view and who regarded *maṣlaḥah* as a fundamental principle clearly distinguishing it from *bid'ah*.<sup>49</sup> al-Shāḥibī too exerted considerable effort in clarifying the difference between *maṣlaḥah* and *bid'ah* and in making sure that they were not seen to overlap one another. He also laid down the principles behind distinguishing between the two.<sup>50</sup>

The remaining three types of *sunnah*, notably *qawliyah*, *taqrīriyah* and *hammiyah* were not discussed as thoroughly by Chalil as the other two, since his main concern was with *bid'ah* and its relation to *sunnah tarkīyah* and *fi'liyah*.<sup>51</sup> This is in spite of the fact that the term *bid'ah*, as he himself perceived it, was synonymous only with the *sunnah tarkīyah* and not *fi'liyah*. His recognition of *sunnah* as a source of religious legislation should have made him aware that the *sunnah qawliyah* deserves an equal, if not greater, attention than the *sunnah fi'liyah*. It should be noted that the *uṣūliyyūn* usually gave a detailed account of both *sunnah qawliyah* and *fi'liyah*, which in fact made up the main body of the *sunnah*. al-Shawkānī, for example, delivers a lengthy discussion on the *sunnah qawliyah* and *fi'liyah* in which he does not even bother to treat the two separately, as the

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Samir 'Alīyah, *Ilm al-Qānūn wa al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Jāmi'iyah li-al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1991), 70.

<sup>49</sup>For conformation of al-Ṭūfī's argument that Chalil cited, see Muṣṭafā Zayd, *al-Maṣlaḥah fi al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī wa Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī* (n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, 1954), 133.

<sup>50</sup>Muḥammad Rashīd Ridā, *Yusr al-Islām wa Uṣūl al-Tashrī' al-'Āmm* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Nahḍah, 1956), 70.

<sup>51</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 210.

two sometimes interact, contradict and explain one another.<sup>52</sup> It was known that the *sunnah qawliyah* was numerically superior and legally more authoritative than the *fi'liyah*. The *qawliyah* was given a superior position, because it was identical with the *ḥadīth* itself.<sup>53</sup> Hence, one can see how Chalil's preoccupation with the issue of *bid'ah* led him to neglect the *sunnah qawliyah* and how by not delving into the central concerns of the *sunnah*, he undermined his cause of reinforcing the principle of following the *sunnah*.

In dealing with the *sunnah qawliyah*, Chalil confines himself to its classification as depicted in three *ḥadīths*. One of these states: "Pray as you see how I am praying." Another reads: "When you are making an ablution start with the right parts of your body." The third *ḥadīth* relates to the act of reservation in which the Prophet says: "The best way for a Muslim is that he should not be engaged in matters that he is not entitled to [be engaged in]."<sup>54</sup> Even in giving his examples, Chalil fails to be completely accurate. While the last two *ḥadīths* correctly relate to the *sunnah qawliyah*, the first is mistakenly classified as such, since it refers to the Prophet's actions during prayers and should, therefore, be considered as *fi'li* rather than *qawli*.<sup>55</sup> al-Āmidī quotes this *ḥadīth* as an example of a *fi'l* (act) rather than a *qawl* (saying) explaining (*bayān*) a *Qur'ānic* verse. This is not to deny that the act was reported through a clear statement (*ṣarīḥ maqālīh*) by Muḥammad, as al-Āmidī further states.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, al-Shawkānī shares al-Āmidī's opinion and uses the *ḥadīth* in the same capacity in explaining a *Qur'ānic* verse that does not provide a detailed prescription of prayers.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* (Miṣr: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥaiabī, 1937), 35-41.

<sup>53</sup> Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, *Fiqh al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1954), 12.

<sup>54</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 221.

<sup>55</sup> Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣābūnī, *Muḥāḍarāt fī al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyah* (n.p.: n.p., 1972), 74.

<sup>56</sup> al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, 247-248.

<sup>57</sup> al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 36.

The *sunnah taqrīriyyah* receives much less of Chalil's attention than the *naḥiyyah*. The former also served as a source of legislation, though it did not originate from the deed or utterance of the Prophet. Chalil provides three examples of *sunnah taqrīriyyah*, one of them being the story of the Prophet keeping silent when he saw Khālid Ibn al-Walid eating a *dabb* (lizard), although he himself disliked eating such creatures.<sup>58</sup> The second example is that of the Prophet's decision to let Muslim women leave their houses, walk in the streets, attend religious functions in the mosque and listen to the *khutbah* (sermon). The third example pertains to the authority he bestowed upon Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh to pass judgment on the leaders of the Jewish tribe, *Qurayẓah*.<sup>59</sup> Chalil provides these examples so as to make the definition of *sunnah taqrīriyyah* more lucid. Nonetheless, he merely views the *sunnah taqrīriyyah* within the limits of its definition, citing only a few examples and refraining from any elaborate discussion on *taqrīr*. Had he done so he would have rendered the meaning of following the *sunnah* clearer and would have incorporated the legal value of *taqrīr* in it.

Moreover, the *sunnah taqrīriyyah* had produced a number of controversies over the nature of its legal force. For example, when the Prophet issued a *taqrīr* with the intention of relieving a particular companion of certain hardship (*intiḳā' al-ḥaraj*), scholars differ over whether such an act conveyed a universal application or not. If the companions claimed his act to be authoritative, since it was performed in the blessed time of the Prophet, should its authority then be automatically accepted or not? Apart from that, disagreement still occurred among the scholars with regards to the authoritative nature of the *ṣaḥābah's* legal judgments, when the latter were issued after the death of the Prophet. These are only some of the aspects of *taqrīr* that should have been dealt with by Chalil, so that the premise of following the *sunnah* would have had more substance to it.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup>In spite of the *taqrīr* (decision) of the Prophet, not all four *madhabs* agreed since the Hanafites held that eating a *dabb* was *ḥarām* (unlawful). Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Bulugh al-Marām min Adillat Ahkām* (Beirut: Dar al-Rā'id al-'Arabī, 1987), 301.

<sup>59</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 221.

<sup>60</sup>al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 41.

As mentioned earlier, Chalil chose to incorporate the *sunnat al-ṣaḥābah* into the body of the *sunnah*, thus indicating his indifference as to whether the former incorporated practices that occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet or after his death. In fact, he refrains from casting any doubt on the validity of their legal decisions, even on matters related to *ibādah*. He provides a number of examples of their decisions, such as the *ṭarāwīḥ* prayer which 'Umar (the second Caliph) enforced to be more publicly practiced and the addition of one more *ṣalāh* to the Friday prayer by 'Uthmān (the third Caliph).<sup>61</sup> As for the *ḥadīth* which declares that whatever Muslims (*al-muslimūn*) consider good is also good in the eyes of God, Chalil points out that the word *al-muslimūn* in the *ḥadīth* refers exclusively to the *ṣaḥābah*.<sup>62</sup> This indicates his acceptance of their *ijmā'* (the consensus of the *ṣaḥābah*) as the only valid consensus and his undeterred faith in their legal authority.<sup>63</sup> Thus, it seems that he was determined to bestow on them the position of legal authority in line with the concept of *sunnah*, which in his view embraced their practice as well.

It should be mentioned, however, that Chalil's discussion of the *ṣaḥābah's* role in legislation, as in the cases of 'Umar and 'Uthmān or others not mentioned here, does not occur in the course of his treatment of *sunnah taqrīrīyah* or *sunnat al-ṣaḥābah*, but is rather subsumed under his argument regarding *bid'ah*. The examples of the *ṭarāwīḥ* prayer and the *ṣalāh* mentioned above were raised by Chalil in refutation of the statement that 'Umar and 'Uthmān had introduced two innovated *ibādah* (*ibādah mubtada'ah*), thereby adding elements not known during the time of Muḥammad. Moreover, in his interpretation of the word *al-muslimūn*, Chalil was trying to restrict the meaning to the *ṣaḥābah* in order to make them the sole rightful possessors of religious authority. This, he thought, would

<sup>61</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 274-275.

<sup>62</sup>The original text of this *ḥadīth* is "*mā ra'ahu al-muslimūn ḥasanan fahuwa 'inda Allāh ḥasanan*." Ibid., 268, 273.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 309-312.

put an end the practice of *bid'ah*, which was sometimes legitimized by claiming that it was overwhelmingly accepted by "*al-muslimūn*" (i.e. Muslims in general).

Chalil's discussion of *sunnah* also covers the *sunnah hammīyah* which, like the *sunnah tarkīyah*, was not often brought to the fore by the *uṣūliyyūn* due to its lack of legal power. As the *sunnah hammīyah* consists of actions proposed but never carried out by the Prophet, it has little, if any, religious significance. Chalil rejects the legal authority of the *sunnah hammīyah* on the basis of the opinion of some '*ulamā'*' who declared that following the *sunnah* means following real acts, so that the manner of their execution might be clearly seen. Chalil also mentions the opinion of some '*ulamā'*' who not only accepted it, but also considered it obligatory. However, he does not indicate the names of these '*ulamā'*' nor that of the *madhhab* which regards the *sunnah hammīyah* to have legal significance.<sup>64</sup> The latter opinion appears to belong to the Shāfi'ites who counted the *sunnah hammīyah* as one of the four types of *sunnah*, although in their scale of preference, it came last in order following the *sunnah qawliyah*, *fi'liyah* and *taqrīriyah*. Chalil's rejection was in line with the position of al-Shawkānī who described the *sunnah hammīyah* as matters that simply came to Muḥammad's mind and which, therefore, have no religious effect.<sup>65</sup>

Both Chalil and al-Shawkānī discuss the *sunnah hammīyah* despite the paucity of cases that exist to illustrate it. Chalil, for instance, provides one example only, in which the Prophet was said to have been planning to fast on the ninth day of the month of al-Muḥarram known as *Tāsū'ā'* (the ninth). This plan, however, did not materialize due to his death in Rabi' al-Awwal of the same year.<sup>66</sup> al-Shawkānī furnishes two examples only, one of which was that the Prophet was planning to punish those who did not perform their

<sup>64</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura." *Abadi* (September 25; 1953).

<sup>65</sup>al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 41.

<sup>66</sup>Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."



prayer by burning their houses (*fa'uharrig 'alayhim buyūtahum*).<sup>67</sup> Their mention of the *sunnah hammīyah* departed from the spirit of following the *sunnah* which also meant following the *sunnah* in its designated place where it signified what was executed by the Prophet. This meaning had occupied Chalil and al-Shawkānī whose puritanist frame of thought strove towards stripping the *sunnah* of anything which had no direct link to its legal implications. Hence, they restricted the term *sunnah* and prevented it from tempering with its correct significance and would halt all inappropriate practices from being attributed to it.<sup>68</sup>

Chalil's call for following the *sunnah* takes a new direction when he challenges those who rejected it as the second source of Islamic law. He states that those who were satisfied with the *Qur'ān* as the only basis of their religious life were deviating from the right path and were not following the ordinances of the *Qur'ān*. This is so because the *Qur'ān* has clearly ordered Muslims to obey the Prophet. He then cites 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar's statement that whoever opposed (*khālaf*) *sunnah* would become an infidel (*faqad kafara*).<sup>69</sup> It should be remarked that objections to or ignorance of the value of *sunnah* as a main component of law-making (*tashrī'*), second only to the *Qur'ān*, have been heard since the period of the *ṣaḥābah*. The legal authority of *sunnah* was "officially" questioned as early as in the second century of the *Hijrah*. It was reported that al-Shāfi'ī engaged in debate (*munāẓarah*) with such rejectionists. Indeed, the Khawārij in al-Shāfi'ī's time raised a serious objection to the employment of *ḥadīths* on the grounds of their tendency to contradict each other.<sup>70</sup> Among the Mu'tazilites there were those who argued that both the

<sup>67</sup>al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 44.

<sup>68</sup>al-Shawkānī's puritan views are best represented in one of his works, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd fī Adillat al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd* (Miṣr: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, n. d.).

<sup>69</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 224.

<sup>70</sup>The argument is entitled "Ḥikāyat Qawl al-Ṭā'ifah al-Latī Raddat al-Akhbār. Kullahā," (An Account of the Argument with the People Who Rejected the Whole [corpus] of Prophetic Traditions." Cited in Khādim Ḥusayn Ilāhī Bakhsh, *al-Qur'āniyyūn wa Shubḥatuhum ḥawl al-Sunnah* (n.p.: Maktabat al-Ṣiddiq, 1989), 93; Ahmad Hasan, "Al-Shāfi'ī's Role in the Development of Islamic Jurisprudence," *Islamic Studies*, 5 (1966), 245.

*ḥadīth mutawātir* (a *ḥadīth* reported by a collective audience) and the *ḥadīth aḥad* (a *ḥadīth* reported by individuals) were equally susceptible to containing false reports.<sup>71</sup> This is despite the fact that many Mu'tazilites accepted *ḥadīth mutawātir* for a number of reasons, which differed considerably from one Mu'tazilite scholar to the other.<sup>72</sup>

Many reformists showed a critical attitude towards *ḥadīth*. Even while calling for following the *sunnah*, they were suspicious of the validity of its components and strictly scrutinized the reliability of the *isnād* or *matn* of each *ḥadīth*. Some of them were very much under the influence of the school of 'Abduh, including Chalil, who used reason as a tool in measuring the acceptability of *ḥadīth*. Others went to even greater extreme in rejecting *ḥadīth* totally, as in the case of Aḥmad Parvez who established an organization (*jam'iyyah*) called *Ahl al-Qur'ān* (people of the *Qur'ān*), an organization which, by its name, indicates the exclusive acceptance of the *Qur'ān* and not the *sunnah* as a legal source.<sup>73</sup>

It is worth juxtaposing Chalil's condemnation of the *sunnah*-rejectionists with the position of Muḥammad Tawfiq Ṣidqī, a member of the reformist *salafiyyah* group, the very group which might have been expected to uphold the *sunnah* but instead rejected it in its entirety. In one of his writings, Rashīd Riḍā admits that Ṣidqī, who was one of his colleagues and a contributor to his journal *al-Manār*, doubted the authority of the *sunnah* as a source of religion (*laysat min uṣūl al-dīn*). Indeed, Ṣidqī wrote an article, "al-Islām huwa al-Qur'ān Waḥdah" (Islam is the *Qur'ān* alone), in which he articulates several reasons for his objection to the *sunnah* as a source of *uṣūl al-dīn* (the basis of religion). He states therein that *ḥadīth* suffers from falsehood (*kidhb*) and fabrication (*waḍ'*), and

<sup>71</sup>Muḥammad Khudārī, *Tārīkh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1983), 185; al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, 160; Aḥmad Hasan, "Early Modes of Ijtihād: Ra'y, Qiyās and Istiḥsān," *Islamic Studies*, 6 (1967), 55.

<sup>72</sup>Bakhsh, *al-Qur'āniyyūn*, 90-91.

<sup>73</sup>Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'zamī, *Dirāsāt fī al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf wa Tārīkh Tadwīnih* (Riyadh: Maṭābi' al-Riyāḍ, 1976), 28, 32.

even if it did not, its binding authority is at best *ẓanni* (ambiguous) and therefore has no value before God. Moreover, he criticizes the authenticity of *ḥadīth* by equating it with the scriptures of the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (the Peoples of the Book), since neither were recorded during the lifetimes of those who produced them, namely the Prophets.<sup>74</sup>

Chalil was well aware that it was among the reformists that the rejection of the *sunnah* had taken root and not among the traditionalists, whom he and his reformist counterparts criticized for relying too much on their *fiqh*-books and for undermining the importance of the *sunnah*, as will be seen later. The fact that he does not refer to the extreme case of Tawfiq Ṣidqī is perhaps understandable, given the fact that it would not have helped his cause. It was certainly not because he was ignorant of Ṣidqī's position. After all, Ṣidqī's book *Durūs Sunan al-Kā'ināt: Muḥāḍarāt Tibbiyah 'Ilmiyah Islāmiyah*, which questions the legal value of *ḥadīth* literature, served as Chalil's primary reference in his refutation of the scientific statements of the *ḥadīth*, as previously explained. It should also be noted that Chalil was among the very few Indonesians to have had access to *al-Manār*, that is while he lived and studied in the Middle East early in his career. In the debate over the *ḥadīth* of the fly, Chalil states that he had read an article written by Muḥammad Sa'id al-Suyūṭī and published in *al-Manār* countering Ṣidqī's opinion, which refused the validity of such a *ḥadīth*.<sup>75</sup> Hence, Chalil must have known Ṣidqī's stance concerning the *ḥadīth* and must have intentionally left it out. One reason for leaving Ṣidqī out might have been that Chalil deemed him to be a mediocre reformist, whose academic credentials were authoritative only when dealing with medical issues, since the latter was a medical doctor and not a religious scholar. Furthermore, Ṣidqī was overshadowed by Riḍā,

<sup>74</sup>Bakhsh, *al-Qur'ān al-Faṣīḥ*, 154-155; In the case of *ḥadīth*, the Prophet prohibited the *ṣaḥābah* from writing down his sayings and instead ordered them to write down the *Qur'ān*. (*lā takṭub 'annī fa man kataba ghayr al-Qur'ān faḥṣabuh*). Mūsā, *Fiqh al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*, 30.

<sup>75</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 87.

on whom Chalil placed greater faith and who assumed the respected position of "true" defender of *sunnah* in his eyes.<sup>76</sup>

## II

Chalil's call for following the *sunnah* did not halt at the level of discussing its division and significance, but extended to using it as the primary source of his *fiqh*. His work in this field, entitled *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, which was also called *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, represents a conscious effort on his part to understand Islam in its pristine purity without the fetters of sectarian adherence and unqualified allegiance to a juristic school.<sup>77</sup> It calls for treating the opinions of the founders of the *madhabs* in a light that neither emphasizes their differences nor overlooks them. In keeping with this non-sectarian inclination, Chalil was attracted to comparative *fiqh* books that went beyond the boundaries of particular *madhabs*.<sup>78</sup> Hence, he availed himself of Ibn Qayyim's *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, Ibn Qudāmah's *al-Mughnī*, Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Muḥallā*, al-Nawawī's *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab* and others.<sup>79</sup>

Chalil was certainly aware that *fiqh* must derive its rulings from the *Qur'ān*. However, the *Qur'ān* usually gives its provisions in very general language, leaving Muslim scholars with no choice but to turn to the *sunnah* in order to provide details. In addition, his belief that the *Qur'ān* should not be exploited for information on any particular science meant that he had to rely almost exclusively on the *sunnah* in constructing his *fiqh*. This is understandable, because nearly all of the detailed regulations on *ibādah* were brought to light by means of the *sunnah*.<sup>80</sup> This does not suggest that Chalil disregarded the *Qur'ān*, because he believed that the *Qur'ān* served as the blueprint

<sup>76</sup>For the comment on Riḍā's role in defending *sunnah*, see footnote no. 9 above.

<sup>77</sup>Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 4; idem, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'ān dan As-Sunnah*, v.

<sup>78</sup>The concept of unification constituted one of the predominant factors behind the reformist work on *fiqh al-sunnah*. See Sayyid Sabiq's *Fiqh us-Sunnah: Purification and Prayer*, vol. 1 (1989: American Trust Publication, 1989), xv-xvi.

<sup>79</sup>Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 10.

<sup>80</sup>Mūsā, *Fiqh al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*, 44.

from which the *sunnah* was generated.<sup>81</sup> It should be noted that some '*ulamā*' preferred the term *fiqh al-Qur'ān* to *fiqh al-sunnah*, although in essence the role of the *sunnah* along with the opinions of the *fuqahā*' was greatly instrumental in revealing the provisions of the *Qur'ān*.<sup>82</sup>

Historically, books of *fiqh* were compiled on the basis of the Prophetic *sunnah* along with the *āthar* (sayings) of the *ṣaḥābah*. The best example of this genre of writing is Mālik's *al-Muwatta'* and to this genre also belong Sufyān al-Thawri's *al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr* and al-Shāfi'i's *Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth*.<sup>83</sup> In these works, *ḥadīths* are compiled and arranged in a thematic order within chapters devoted to various topics of *fiqh*. Thus, the *sunnah* made up the core element of the science of *fiqh* since its earliest development.<sup>84</sup> The concept of *fiqh al-sunnah* became more apparent in the works of later scholars. Among the earliest of these, one may count *Umdat al-Aḥkām fi Kalām Khayr al-Anām* by Taqy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Jamā'ilī (541-600 H.). *al-Umdah* is a compilation of more than five hundred *ahādīth al-aḥkām* (*ḥadīths* which deal solely with legal issues) which were declared as *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and were widely circulated among *ḥadīth* scholars.<sup>85</sup> *al-Umdah* was commented upon by Ibn Daqīq al-'Id in his *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām: Sharḥ Umdat al-Aḥkām* and both are listed by Chalil among the references that he consulted.<sup>86</sup> Chalil

<sup>81</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 68-72.

<sup>82</sup>Sa'id Ibn Hibat Allāh al-Rawandī, *Fiqh al-Qur'ān* (Qum: al-Maṭba'ah al-Ahliyah, 1397 H.).

<sup>83</sup>See al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī 'alā al-Muwatta' li-al-Imām Mālik*, vol. 1-4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1980); al-Shāfi'i's *Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1986).

<sup>84</sup>Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth min Funūn Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1987), 70; 'Umar Sulaymān al-Ashqar, *Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Fallāḥ, 1982), 96, 114.

<sup>85</sup>See the commentary in the preface provided by Taqy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Jamā'ilī in his *Umdat al-Aḥkām min Kalām Khayr al-Anām* (Damascus: Dār al-Ma'mūn li-al-Turāth, 1988), 5.

<sup>86</sup>In the preface of *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām*, it is stated that the text is a prototype of *fiqh al-Sunnah*. See Ibn Daqīq al-'Id, *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām: Sharḥ Umdat al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1 (Miṣr: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1923), 4.

considered these two texts to be *fiqh* books which clearly derived their rulings from *ḥadīth*.<sup>87</sup>

Speaking of *fiqh al-sunnah* in the Indonesian context, one pioneering work, namely *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* by Majd al-Dīn al-Harrānī (590-652 H., the grandfather of Ibn Taymiyah), merits our attention. *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* may be classified as a typical large collection on *fiqh al-sunnah*, in contrast to *al-'Umdah* described above, which belongs to a smaller category of work exclusively intended for beginners.<sup>88</sup> The Indonesian modernists held *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* in great respect and it too served as one of Chalil's sources along with its commentary *Nayl al-Awṭār* by al-Shawkānī. *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* contains five thousand and twenty nine *ḥadīths*, classified in accordance with the established chapter divisions of *fiqh* texts.<sup>89</sup> The image of Majd al-Dīn as one the Taymiyah family (Āl Taymiyah) and al-Shawkānī as the defender of *sunnah* might have influenced the popularity of the text in modernist circles. Smaller in size but more widespread in its use is *Bulūgh al-Marām*, which is a compilation of one thousand five hundred and ninety six *ḥadīths*, modeled after *Nayl al-Awṭār*. *Bulūgh al-Marām*, which was written by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī (733-852 H.), served as an important text-book in the traditionalist schools and was translated into Javanese by Bishrī Mustafā, a prolific traditionalist *ʿālim*.<sup>90</sup>

Our discussion would not be complete without mentioning the *fiqh al-sunnah* texts written by Indonesian reformists. One such reformist was A. Hassan who inaugurated this new "hybrid" of *fiqh* texts in the Indonesian context with the composition of his *Al-Boerhan* written as early as 1929.<sup>91</sup> Later, Hassan expanded his *fiqh al-sunnah* by

<sup>87</sup>Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 10; al-Ashqar, *Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, 225.

<sup>88</sup>Ibn Daqīq al-'Id, *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām: Sharḥ 'Umdat al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, 3, 5.

<sup>89</sup>Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 9; al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār min Aḥādīth Sayyid al-Akḥbār: Sharḥ Muntaqā al-Akḥbār*, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, n.d.).

<sup>90</sup>Van Bruinessen "Kitab Kuning," 255.

<sup>91</sup>A. Hassan, *Al-Boerhan Kitāb Fiqh*, vol. 1, 2 (Bandoeng: Persatoan Islam, 1929).

composing treatises on the pillars of Islam, such as *Risalah Zakaat* and *Risalatul Hadj*.<sup>92</sup> Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy provided another substantial contribution with his *Al-Ahkam*, which covered various *fiqhī* subjects ranging from *ʿibādah* (ritual practice), *muʿāmalah* (transaction) and *ahwāl shakhsīyah* (personal status) to *ʿuqūbah* (penal code) and *jīnāyah* (criminal law).<sup>93</sup>

In comparison with the works of Hassan and Ash-Shiddieqy, Chalil's *Fiqh al-Sunnah* is more comprehensive due to its extensive coverage of a specific domain of *fiqh*. The first volume of his *Fiqh al-Sunnah* consists of eleven sections occupying seven hundred and twenty pages. This volume is exclusively devoted to all aspects of *al-pahārah* (ritual purity) and describes in minute details the water, the different levels of its inherent purity, the types of impurities (*najāsah*), the manner of purifying bodies and removing impurities from them, the acts of ablution (*wuḍūʿ*), the complete ablution (*ghusl*), issues involving menstruation (*ḥayḍ*) and post-childbirth bleeding (*nifās*), dry ablution (*ṭayammum*) and others.<sup>94</sup>

In the introduction, Chalil states that since no comprehensive *fiqh* book was available in Indonesian, he felt obliged to produce a reference-work for the educated members of Muslim society, who spared no enthusiasm in studying Islamic law. Chalil never expected, as he explicitly states, that his work would be comparable with al-Nawawī's *al-Majmūʿ* or Ibn Qudāmah's *al-Mughnī*. Nonetheless, the fact that he intended to produce a multi-volume *fiqh al-sunnah* indicates his ambition to aim at the standards set by al-Nawawī and Ibn Qudāmah. He also mentions that he had no fear of running out of

<sup>92</sup>A. Hassan, *Risalah Zakaat* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, 1955); A. Hassan, *Risalatul Hadj* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1955).

<sup>93</sup>Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Al-Ahkam: Pedoman Muslimin*, 4 vols. (Medan: Islamiyah, 1953).

<sup>94</sup>Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 707-720.

material in producing a multi-volume work, since the *ahādīth al-ahkām*, which were to serve as the reservoir for his project, offer a wealth of inexhaustible material.<sup>95</sup>

The pattern that Chalil follows in his *Fiqh al-Sunnah* consists essentially of an analysis of several *ḥadīths* illustrating one particular legal provision. In his analysis, Chalil starts by reporting the last narrator in each case, so as to show the sources of his *ḥadīth*. The *ḥadīths* themselves were usually obtained from the *kutub al-ḥadīth al-mu'tabarāh* (the authoritative *ḥadīth* books), which include the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the four *Sunans* of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, the three *Musands* of Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Dārimī and al-Shāfi'ī and Mālik's *al-Muwatta'* among others. If a *ḥadīth* is reported in a number of sources, Chalil examines the consistency of its *lafz* (words) in order to explore the possible deficiency of its *matn* (content). If the examination shows any deficiency, he dismisses the ruling of the *ḥadīth* in question.

The second step in this approach was to classify each *ḥadīth* within a designated category, either *ḍa'īf*, *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* or *ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>96</sup> This was largely a routine measure, because most of the *ḥadīths* selected had already been classified by previous *fuqahā'*. In most cases, Chalil simply mentions the remarks of his predecessors. Nonetheless, whenever he finds a suspect report, he cross-examines it by referring to a different source.<sup>97</sup> The sources are not always in agreement with regards to the status of individual *ḥadīth*, i.e. a given *ḥadīth* can be simultaneously classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍa'īf* by different *fuqahā'*.<sup>98</sup> Whenever he finds the latter to be the case, he conducts a further examination to

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>96</sup>For the definitions of *ḍa'īf*, *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ* and others which might be mentioned in one way or another in this chapter, see Ṣubḥī al-Ṣūlī, *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth wa Muṣṭalāḥuh* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1988).

<sup>97</sup>See, for example, Chalil's remark on a *ḥadīth* related to 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Zayd al-Aslam, whom he blames for issuing fabricated *ḥadīths*. Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 37.

<sup>98</sup>In analyzing a *ḥadīth* which specifies the quality of water free from impurity, Chalil mentions that *ḥadīth* scholars, like Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, regarded it as *ḍa'īf* due to its *idtirāb*, whereas others, such as al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Khuzaymah, regarded it *ṣaḥīḥ*. Ibid., 29.



see if the same narrator, whose unreliability caused the weakness of the *ḥadīth*, is mentioned in the chain of transmission of another *ḥadīth* or not.<sup>99</sup>

Chalil's strict examination of the authority of the transmitters was in line with his overall attitude towards the role of the *sunnaḥ* in establishing legal norms. The importance task carried with it the responsibility of investigating the authority of those transmitting the *ḥadīth*, as practiced by the early scholars.<sup>100</sup> As a result of his research into this field, he finds fault with some '*ulamā'*', accusing them of having circulated certain *ḥadīths* without examining the authority of their transmitters. A case in point is al-Ghazālī, who, in his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, quotes many *ḥadīths* without referring to their narrators or their sources as evidence of their reliability. Chalil declares it to be understandable that numerous *ḥadīth* scholars of al-Ghazālī's time blamed him for removing the most important part of the body of the *ḥadīth*.<sup>101</sup> This even inspired Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī, according to Chalil, to compose *al-Mughnī fī Ḥaml al-Asfār*, in which he examines the authority of the *ḥadīths* that al-Ghazālī quotes in his *Iḥyā'* in order to determine their reliability.<sup>102</sup>

Following the classification of *ḥadīths* came the deduction of legal rulings from them, a process which constitutes the core of his book. This consisted of loosely translating the meaning of the *ḥadīth* and adding to it his own explanatory notes. More often than not, Chalil makes a remark called a *tambahan* (addition) or an *isidrak* (correction) which sheds more light on a particular issue. In his remark, Chalil often uses a *ḥadīth* to elucidate the ambiguous words mentioned in earlier *ḥadīths*, to annul the rulings derived from inauthentic *ḥadīths* or to settle controversies on debatable issues. Some typical cases,

<sup>99</sup>Chalil expresses the opinion that Rashīd Ibn Sa'd was an unreliable narrator. The latter had reported two *ḥadīths* which evaluated the purity of water when mixed with substances that caused its smell, taste and color to change. Chalil then closely scrutinizes the narration of these two different *ḥadīths* in an effort to render an equitable judgment for a *ḥadīth* that had a defective narrator. Ibid., 29, 33.

<sup>100</sup>Chalil, "Memperingati Pribadi Nabi Muhammad s. a. w."; idem, "Djangan Mempermudah Urusan Hadits," *Abadi* (July, 16; 1954).

<sup>101</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Hati-Hati Memakai Hadits: Hadits Palsu Mentjerai Beraikan Ummat," *Abadi* (September, 16; 1960).

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

which Chalil deals with, include the meaning of the word *bidā'ah* (the name of a well), a rejection of the opinion that water exposed to the sun (*mā' mushammas*) contains disease, and opinions concerning the purity of used water (*mā' musta'mal*), as well as the now familiar controversy over the disease and the cure on the fly's wings.<sup>103</sup>

After classifying each *ḥadīth* and deducing its ruling, Chalil advances the opinion of various *fuqahā'* on each provision. He uses this section as a forum to exhibit the tradition of debate among the *fuqahā'*. He presents the different views of all ranks of *fuqahā'* from the *ṣaḥābah*, the *tābi'ūn*, the founders of the four *madhhab*s and their contemporaries as well as later scholars.<sup>104</sup> In this way, Chalil introduces comparative studies to the science of *fiqh* and endorses the principle of *talfiq* (moving from one *madhhab* to another), by calling for the consultation of the opinions of different *madhhab*s before coming to a decision.

The principle of *talfiq* was one of the features that the reformists introduced in an attempt to free themselves from partisanship to particular schools and to reduce the fanaticism attached to them. This certainly posed a challenge to the traditionalists, who were clearly opposed to the principle of *talfiq*. Chalil, however, does not engage in the practice of *tarjīh* (favoring one ruling on the account of its stronger and sounder argument), because he is convinced of the validity of each ruling. When he is not convinced, he usually adds a remark describing its weakness.

Chalil's choice in undertaking to write a *fiqh al-sunnah* text can also be viewed as a manifestation of his intellectual objection to conventional *fiqh*. He criticized works of this nature which did not provide textual evidence in their rulings and which were taught by the

<sup>103</sup> Chalil, *Mukhtār al-Aḥādīth*, 30, 51, 54, 82, 85 and 92.

<sup>104</sup> Among the *fuqahā'* that Chalil refers to are Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Sa'id Ibn al-Musayyab, 'Aṭā' Ibn Abi Rabāḥ, Mālik Ibn Anas, al-Shāfi'i, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, al-Awzā'i, Dāwūd al-Zāhiri, al-Layth, al-Nawawī, al-Ṣan'ānī, al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Shawkānī. See the section "the opinion of the *fuqahā'*" provided in each subject discussed. Ibid.

traditionalists in their *pesantren*.<sup>105</sup> His criticism was typical of the reformist belief that conventional *fiqh* was one of the factors behind the traditionalists' self-sufficiency and their consequent neglect of the study of the *sunnah*. The traditionalists even accorded these *fiqh* books a respect greater than that which they felt for works of *ḥadīth*.<sup>106</sup> This, in turn, hindered the preservation of the authentic teachings of the Prophet. In order to combat this trend, the restoration of the *sunnah* as the focus of study was required. In an attempt to further this process, reformists created a forum to reawaken interest in the study of *ḥadīth*, viz. the *Lajnah Ahli-Ahli Ḥadīth Indonesia* in which Chalil assumed the position of secretary. While continuing his own *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, Chalil joined with others in writing *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawī*, another way of expressing *fiqh al-sunnah*.<sup>107</sup> Chalil's and other reformists' criticism of conventional *fiqh* merits discussion on two points: the first is the manner in which the traditionalist *pesantrens* treated the *ḥadīth* literature and the second the question of whether conventional *fiqh* substantially was distinguishable from *fiqh al-sunnah*.

On investigation, it would seem that the traditionalists never lost sight of the importance of *ḥadīth*. They taught the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and other smaller collections of *ḥadīth* in their *pesantrens*. These smaller collections alone were accorded the same amount of time as *fiqh* and *ʿilm al-ṣalāt* (Arabic-related sciences). Moreover, they reached a wider audience than the *Ṣaḥīḥs*, as they were taught to the less advanced students, who made up the greater part of the *pesantren's* enrollment. The collections in this

<sup>105</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Mana Pentjinta Nabi Muhammad s.a.w.," *Abadi* (February 5; 1954).

<sup>106</sup>A. Farichin Chumaidy, "The Jam'iyah Nahdlatul 'Ulama': Its Rise and Early Development, 1926-1945," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1976), 117.

<sup>107</sup>Imam Ghazaly and Moenawar Chalil, *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawī: Fiqh Berdasar Atas Pimpinan Nabi s. a. w.* vols. 1-18 (Solo: Al-Ma'murijah: n. d.).

category were *Bulūgh al-Marām*, *Riyāḍ al-Sālihin*, *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, *al-Arbaʿin al-Nawawīyah*, *al-Adhkār* and *Uṣfūriyah*.<sup>108</sup>

The teaching of the smaller texts was primarily intended to emphasize the virtues exemplified in the Prophet's behavior. al-Bantani's *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, for example, which encompasses forty chapters (*al-abwāb*), discusses the promotion of virtuous deeds (*faḍl al-aʿmāl*), primarily in the areas of charity and social etiquette.<sup>109</sup> This is also the case with al-Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-Sālihin* which, due to its larger collection, covers a greater variety of subjects, such as the virtues of greeting, the etiquette of asking for permission, the proper way to shake hands, the manners of eating, dressing saluting, etc.<sup>110</sup> The Prophetic *sunnah* was, therefore, observed by the traditionalists in a holistic way, incorporating the behavioral norms advanced in the Prophetic traditions. The question of the authenticity of those *ḥadīths* which suggested meritorious deeds was raised by Chalil.<sup>111</sup> However, the issue was not seen by the traditionalists as being of paramount importance as their authenticity would not lower their value as tools for the edification of the young.<sup>112</sup>

Although the smaller *ḥadīth* collection tended to concentrate on virtuous deeds, they did not neglect the most important aspect of the *sunnah*, i.e. its role as a guide to Muslim religious life. It was to bring out this aspect that al-Nawawī wrote his *Matn al-Arbaʿin*, a work which contains forty selected *ḥadīths*, as the title of the text indicates. In his introductory statement, al-Nawawī points out that the other collections of forty *ḥadīths*

<sup>108</sup>Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 255-256; idem, "Pesantren dan Kitab Kuning: Pemeliharaan dan Kesenambungan Tradisi Pesantren," *Ulumul Qurʾān*, 4 (1992), 84, footnote 2.

<sup>109</sup>Muhammad Ibn ʿUmar al-Nawawī al-Bantani, *Tanqīh al-Qawl al-Ḥathīth fī Sharḥ Lubāb al-Ḥadīth* (Indonesia: Dār Ihyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, n.d.).

<sup>110</sup>al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Sālihin min Kalām Sayyid al-Mursalin* (Cairo: Dār Ihyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, n.d.).

<sup>111</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemmat Islam?" *Pembela Islam*, no. 56; see also Hassan's rejection of the use of *ḥadīth daʿīf* for virtuous deeds. A. Hassan, "Memakai Hadits Dīʿif," *Sual-Jawab*, no. 3, 20-21.

<sup>112</sup>As can be seen from the chapters of *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, they were all described by the word *faḍīlah*. al-Bantani, *Tanqīh al-Qawl fī Sharḥ Lubāb al-Ḥadīth*, 64.

tend to focus on one particular subject only, such as *furū'* (branches), *jihād* (holy war), *zuhd* (asceticism), *ādāb* (ethics) and *khutab* (sermons). His work, however, was designed to cover all those subjects, with each *ḥadīth* in the collection constituting an important religious norm (*qā'idah 'azimah min qawā'id al-dīn*).<sup>113</sup> al-Nawawī's *al-Arba'in* is made up exclusively of sound *ḥadīths*, almost all of them derived from al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Because the main purpose of the text is to edify beginners, al-Nawawī intentionally leaves out the chains of narrators, so that elementary learners of *ḥadīth* need only to deal with the body (*matn*) of the *ḥadīth*.<sup>114</sup> al-Nawawī's *al-Arba'in* was one of the most widely used texts in the traditionalists' schools and served as the basic *ḥadīth*-text for instruction at the elementary level.<sup>115</sup>

The practical nature of al-Nawawī's *al-Arba'in* is also reflected in another of his *ḥadīth* collections, namely *al-Adhkār al-Muntakhabah min Kalām Sayyid al-Abrār*. al-Nawawī himself states that *al-Adhkār* was composed to serve as a practical guide for devout worshippers (*al-muta'abbidīn*), whose aim was to bring their religious practices in line with the Prophetic *sunnah*. Unlike *al-Arba'in*, *al-Adhkār* provides a brief account of the category of each *ḥadīth* and describes which of them is *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *ḍa'īf* or *munkar*. Like *al-Arba'in*, *al-Adhkār* gives priority to the *matn* of the *ḥadīth* rather than its *isnād*, which, al-Nawawī thought, was more the concern of the *muḥaddithūn* (*ḥadīth* scholars).<sup>116</sup> The fact that *al-Adhkār* not only includes *ḥadīths* on *ādāb* and *riyādāt al-nufūs* (spiritual exercises), but also on *ilm al-ḥadīth* (the science of *ḥadīth*), *fiqh* and

<sup>113</sup> al-Nawawī, *Matn al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Algiers: al-Madrasah al-'Āliyah li-al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyah, 1950), 10.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> It should be mentioned that the *pesantren* often had an affiliated school where *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyah* formed a part of its curriculum but not that of the curriculum of the *pesantren* itself.

<sup>116</sup> al-Nawawī, *al-Adhkār al-Muntakhabah min Kalām Sayyid al-Abrār* (Damascus: al-Maktabah al-Amawiyah, 1978), 4.

*muhimmāt al-qawā'id* (important norms) might have led the traditionalists to use it for the instruction of students at the intermediate level in their *pesantren*.<sup>117</sup>

Even though the subject of *ḥadīth* was, as we have seen, made obligatory in the *pesantrens*, the fact that the students did not seem to consider it as one of their major courses cannot be entirely denied. However, this assumption is correct only in so far as it applies to the study of the *Ṣaḥīḥs*, because they were offered on a seasonal basis, mostly in Ramaḍān, or in alternate years and in certain *pesantrens* only. Despite this irregularity, attendance at the courses on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* never fell off, for they were of special interest to the advanced students, who had completed the principle sciences and were deemed "eligible" to study the *Ṣaḥīḥs*. They often had to leave their home *pesantren* for another *pesantren*, where instruction in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was offered during Ramaḍān. This process meant a month's stay away from the student's home *pesantren* and was known as *mbajak* (a Javanese word which literally means to plow or to commute) within the *pesantren* milieu in Java. It should be mentioned that the principle sciences, which included *ʿilm al-ʿālāt*, *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, constituted prerequisites to be completed by the students, before embarking on the study of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* (the *Ṣaḥīḥ*). It was due to this reason that the last two sciences were offered to the more advanced students only.<sup>118</sup>

In evaluating the place of *ḥadīth* studies in the *pesantren* curriculum, one must not forget the role played by the abridgment of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, namely *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī al-Musammā al-Taḥrīd al-Ṣaḥīḥ li-Aḥādīth al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by Zubaydī. Due to its relatively small format, the *Mukhtaṣar* received more regular teaching hours than the

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>The name "principle sciences" has been coined by the present writer to distinguish them from the other two sciences, namely *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*, studied in the *pesantren*. The word "principle" simply means here a foundation on which the study of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* is built. For the names of the text related to *ʿilm al-ʿālāt*, *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* offered in the *pesantren*, see Van Bruinessen's article and for the prerequisite sciences that should be mastered by the student of *ḥadīth*, see the preface of *Bulūgh al-Marām*. Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 240-244, 244-250 and 250-251; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Bulūgh al-Marām*, 3.

*Ṣaḥīḥ* did and still broached the subjects covered in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>119</sup> The science of *ḥadīth* (*muṣṭalāḥ al-ḥadīth*) was not neglected either, for it was the only means by which the knowledge of distinguishing the false from the sound *ḥadīth* was acquired. The most widely used text on this subject in the traditionalist institutions was *Minḥath al-Mughīth* by Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan Mas'ūdī.<sup>120</sup>

The fact that the previously-mentioned Arabic *ḥadīth*-texts were taught primarily in the *pesantren* and not in the modernist schools undermined the hopes of Chalil and his fellow reformists that the study of *sunnah*, particularly through the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, could ever gain ground in the *pesantrens*. The study of Arabic *ḥadīth*-texts in the *pesantrens* was made possible because of the fact that the students in those institutions received an intensive training in the Arabic-related sciences and thus had a greater access to texts still only available in Arabic. What all this goes to show is that while the *pesantrens* may have given extra weight to the study of *fiqh*, they were nevertheless far from apathetic about the study of *ḥadīth*. Moreover, the unequal distribution of *ḥadīth*-*fiqh* subjects may have been attributable partly to the greater availability of practical manuals in the area of *fiqh* and partly to the fact that conventional *fiqh* offers a more direct approach to issues of daily concern. Indeed, the conventional *fiqh*-texts provide rulings and suggestions for application that are of immediate use. This is in contrast to *fiqh al-sunnah*, which demands time and effort and constant examination of the authorities of every *ḥadīth* before any legal rulings can be deduced. A case in point is Chalil's own work on the subject.

Furthermore, even though most works of conventional *fiqh* do not provide any textual evidence, they still ultimately depend on the *sunnah* for their substance. A sound knowledge of the *sunnah* constitutes one of the prerequisites to be met by a *faqīh* (singular of *fuqahā'*) engaged in the production of a legal text. al-Ghazālī, for example,

<sup>119</sup>Zayn al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Zubaydī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī al-Musammā al-Tajrīd al-Ṣarīḥ li-Aḥādīth al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1986).

<sup>120</sup>Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 240.

declares that a *faqīh* should have a number of books on the *sunnah* on hand, such as Abū Dāwūd's and al-Nasā'ī's *Sunans*, while other scholars oblige a *faqīh* to know the *al-Kutub al-Sittah*. Still others expect from a *faqīh* a good command of the *ahādīth al-ahkām* contained in the *al-Kutub al-Sittah* and others.<sup>121</sup>

Indeed, the *fuqahā'* were the associates of the *muḥaddithūn* (*ḥadīth* scholars) and were regarded as the protectors (*ḥurrās*) of *sunnah* against any potentially corrupting elements.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, a *faqīh* had often to be a *muḥaddith* (singular of *muḥaddithūn*) at the same time, since any lack of knowledge of traditions was bound to undermine the authority of his legal scholarship. Hence, the conventional *fiqh* which excludes textual sources and delves directly into the opinions of individual *fuqahā'* and their own *madhabs* is acceptable in itself, since those opinions were indirectly generated from a mastery of *sunnah*, which was mandatory for every *faqīh*. This genre of *fiqh* was an early phenomenon "institutionalized" by the Ḥanafite *fuqahā'*, who were among the precursors in the field of *fiqh* literature and deserve credit for their role in its formulation as an independent science. Hence, there is no reason to consider *fiqh al-sunnah* to have sounder textual basis than conventional *fiqh*, since they only differ in the presentation of material and not in their use of the sources themselves.

Indeed, the generalization that conventional *fiqh* lacks textual evidence is not entirely correct. The best example of a conventional *fiqh*-text which quotes *ḥadīths* in its arguments is *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb* by Zakariyā al-Anṣārī. The *Tuḥfat* frequently came under attack by the reformists in their polemics against traditionalist *fiqh*.<sup>123</sup> It should be noted that the nature of the provision of *ḥadīth* texts in the traditionalist *fiqh*-books is not to extract rulings from any given *ḥadīth*, as in the case of Chalil's *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, but rather

<sup>121</sup>al-Ashqar, *Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, 224.

<sup>122</sup>Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah bayna Ahl al-Fiqh wa Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1990), 19.

<sup>123</sup>Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Syarīat Islam Mendjawab Tantangan Zaman* (Djogdjakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalidjaga, 1961), 43; A. Halim Hasan, "Tafsir Al-Manar dan Pengaruhnya, 2," ?



to support already-established rulings which were not specifically stipulated or which were subject to debates among the jurists.

Examples of the methodology of conventional *fiqh* with respect to *ḥadīth* can be seen in the following two cases from the *Tuḥfah*. In the first example, a *ḥadīth* is cited justifying the practice of recommended ablution (*wuḍū' masnūn*) for a person with a major impurity (*janābah*), a practice different from obligatory ablution (*wuḍū' wājib*) in that in the recommended version the feet are washed after bathing (*ghusl*) rather than after wiping one's ears. The second example pertains to the manner of wiping one's head (*mash al-ra's*) during ablution. There were a variety of opinions on the latter issue. In order to settle these differences, a *ḥadīth* favoring the Shāfi'ite position is selected and it forms the basis for the legal ruling that only a part of the head (*ba'd al-ra's*) need be wiped. Indeed, according to the Shāfi'ites, it was sufficient to wipe part of the head, while the Mālikites demanded that it be most of the head and the Ḥanafites a quarter only.<sup>124</sup> The last example is presented here not only to illustrate how *ḥadīth* were employed in conventional *fiqh*, but also to show an early attempt at comparative *fiqh* in so early and so simple a text as *Tuḥfah*.

The use of *ḥadīth*, however, is not consistent throughout the *Tuḥfah*, partly because certain topics were not seen as needing clarification through the use of *ḥadīth*. It is also worth mentioning that a brief examination of the authority of the cited *ḥadīths* is also given in the *Tuḥfah*, so as to categorize them and establish the reliability of their transmitters. A closer look at this process of examination reveals that the selection of the quoted *ḥadīths* is restricted to those obtained from the *al-aḥādīth al-mu'tabarah* (authoritative *ḥadīths*). In such cases, the names of the reporters are mentioned, such as Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nasā'ī, Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī and, when

<sup>124</sup>Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb bi-Sharḥ Tahrīr Tanqīḥ al-Lubāb* (Indonesia: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kurub al-'Arabiyah, n.d.), 4-5.

necessary, the names of the first narrators as well, like 'Ā'ishah, Jābir and Ibn 'Abbās. In addition, the classification of a *ḥadīth*, i.e. whether it should be deemed as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* or *ṣaḥīḥ-ḥasan*, is also mentioned, as this has a bearing on the nature of its *isnād*.<sup>125</sup>

The traditionalists were not unfamiliar with the major *fiqh* books in which the text of the *Qur'ān* and the *sunnah* serve the basis for the deduction of rulings, as in the case of *fiqh al-sunnah*. In his *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, al-Nawawī, for example, explains the textual evidence furnished from the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* by the Shāfi'ite *faqīh* al-Fīrūzbādī, author of the *Muḥadḍḥab*, a work much favored by the traditionalists. He describes which of the *ḥadīths* employed by al-Fīrūzbādī are *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) *ḍa'īf* (weak), *maqḅūl* (acceptable) or *marḍūḍ* (rejected). He also mentions the sources from which al-Fīrūzbādī quotes the *ḥadīths*. Moreover, when any cited *ḥadīth* is *ḍa'īf* he explains the causes of its weakness and provides a sound *ḥadīth* as its replacement.<sup>126</sup>

Although al-Nawawī's *al-Majmū'* was not included in the *fiqh* syllabus taught in the *pesantren*, it was considered one of the primary sources to which the traditionalist '*ulama'*' referred in their *baḥṡ al-masā'il*, a periodic meeting held to discuss contemporary issues in light of the *fuqahā's* opinions. al-Nawawī's works were supreme in the eyes of the traditionalists. This can be confirmed from the fact that whenever there was a dispute among the Shāfi'ite scholars on a legal question, al-Nawawī's opinion was the first to be considered, even before that of al-Rāfi'ī or any other scholar of that *madhhab*.<sup>127</sup>

While the *Tuhfat* served as one of the most important text-books for the students of the *pesantren*, *al-Majmū'* was the work most frequently referred to by their teachers, the

<sup>125</sup>See, for instance, the first part of "Kitāb al-Ṭahārah" in *ibid.*, 3-38.

<sup>126</sup>al-Nawawī wrote the first nine volumes of *al-Majmū'* (the last chapter is *bāb al-ribā*, the chapter on usury), while the remaining three were done by Taqy al-Dīn al-Subkī. al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, 12 vols. (Medina: Ṭab'at al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, n.d.); Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 249.

<sup>127</sup>Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Aḥkām al-Fuqahā'*, vol. 1 (Semarang: Toha Putra, 1963), 7; Abū Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Shaṭā al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Tālibīn*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 267-268.

traditionalist *'ulamā'*. But this does not mean that al-Anṣārī's *Tuḥfat* and al-Nawawī's *al-Majmū'* were the only works which used *ḥadīth* as the basis of their rulings. *Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj li-Sharḥ al-Minhāj* by al-Haytamī, which always grounds itself on the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*, was employed in the *pesantrens* as an intermediate-level text, while al-Shāfi'ī's *al-Umm*, which cites plenty of *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* passages, supplemented *al-Majmū'*.<sup>128</sup>

Chalil's campaign against the excessive reliance on conventional *fiqh* by the traditionalists was typical of the reformist attitude, which stereotyped the traditionalists as being self-sufficient in depending on their *fiqh*-books and, therefore, indifferent to the study of *ḥadīth* literature. Chalil, like his reformist counterparts, failed to perceive that the *pesantren* is an established Islamic educational institution, where all religious sciences must be taught alongside the *ḥadīth*. He also failed to remember that the traditionalists were orthodox Muslims, whose commitment towards the *sunnah* as a source of legislation was second only to the *Qur'ān*. This is despite the fact that the traditionalists' approach to the study of *fiqh vis-à-vis ḥadīth* was unlike that of the reformists. Hence, the intention of bringing the *sunnah* to the fore as a way of implementing the concept of following the *sunnah* cannot be linked to the conventional *fiqh* nor to the study of *ḥadīth* by the traditionalists, because it will confirm the above-mentioned stereotype.

It should be noted, however, that *fiqh al-sunnah* made its contribution to the exposition of the *sunnah*, particularly among those whose illiteracy in Arabic left them no choice but to use the Indonesian text-books. In addition, the traditionalists began to realize the importance of this genre of *fiqh*, as can be seen in their decision to incorporate *Butūgh al-Mawān* into the syllabus of their schools. More importantly, *fiqh al-sunnah* influenced the traditionalists into adopting a more flexible attitude towards legal schools other than

<sup>128</sup>For the use of *Qur'ānic* and *ḥadīth*-texts in *Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj*, see Siradjuddin Abbas' comment on this issue and for the verification of the extensive use of the texts in *al-Umm*, see al-Shāfi'ī's *al-Umm*; Siradjuddin Abbas, *Kumpulan Soal Jawab Keagamaan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1987), 149-151; al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, vols. 1-2 (Cairo: Tab'at Būlāq, 1321 H.).

their own (the Shāfi'ite *madhhab*). Indeed, it was under the influence of the reformists that they began to use non-Shāfi'ite *fiqh*-texts, notably Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*.<sup>129</sup>

The reformists' call to follow the Prophetic *sunnah* prompted Chalil to redouble his efforts in order to persuade believers that it was their duty to obey the Prophet and to respect his authority. On the whole, he laid stress on emulating Muḥammad's conduct as Prophet and not on imitating every detail of his personal behavior. Following the *sunnah*, therefore, meant practicing it in matters of *'ibādah* and not necessarily in one's daily life and habits. This limited scope of Chalil's discussion was a reflection of his puritan outlook. This may be seen in his choice to concentrate on removing unsuitable practices from the *sunnah*, rather than on promoting wider use of the latter in supporting legal rulings. Hence, he concentrated on the question of *sunnah tarkīyah* at the expense of other types, namely *sunnah qawliyah* and *taqrīriyah*. His discussion of the *sunnah hammīyah* too was a reflection of his inclination to exclude any practice other than those actually engaged in by the Prophet. In addition, Chalil was also clearly aware of the critical attitude towards the *sunnah* which had emerged as part of the rational approach towards the Prophetic traditions undertaken by reformists. Chalil's commitment to promote the reformist slogan of following the *sunnah* went beyond the level of words and thought. It was to his credit that he championed the cause of *fiqh al-sunnah* and informed the Muslim community about it, both in his capacity as the secretary of the *Lajnah Ahli-Ahli Hadīth Indonesia* and as an individual. This genre of *fiqh* expressed the reformist call for the abandonment of a strict reliance on any particular juristic rite and a return to the model performance of religious observances, as exemplified in Muḥammad's original practice.

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<sup>129</sup>Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 244.

CHAPTER SIX  
Moenawar Chalil and Legal Issues:  
His Views on *Ijtihād*, *Ijmā'*, *Taqlīd*,  
*Ittibā'* and *Madhhab*

Muslim reformists affirmed that the *Shari'ah* was not given to man ready-made, to be passively received and applied. Rather, it was to be actively constructed by means of *ijtihād* so as to make it compatible with the progress of time. This view was unanimously upheld by reformists who insisted that the gate of *ijtihād* had to be reopened and that *taqlīd* should be abandoned. Studies show that in fact *ijtihād* never ceased to operate as a means through which the *fuqahā'* (jurists) were able to adapt the law in response to contemporary challenges.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this fact was little understood in Chalil's time, when it was generally assumed that the gate of *ijtihād* was still closed. Therefore, in declaring that they had "reopened" the gate and "abandoned" *taqlīd* in order to inject new life into the *Shari'ah*, the reformists were taking a truly radical step in the eyes of their contemporaries.

Chalil followed in the path of those reformists, calling for a revival of Islam by means of *ijtihād* and the abandonment of *taqlīd*. His concept of *ijtihād* will be discussed by examining its nature and implementation in order to determine whether he was able to use it to effect changes in the *Shari'ah* in keeping with the newly emerging realities. *Ijtihād* was often linked to the principle of *ijmā'* (consensus) by reformists, who considered the two as a means to promote Islam and its adaptability to change. Hence, Chalil's concept of *ijmā'* will also be discussed in light of the reformist view, since he linked the concept of *ijmā'* to the notion of a legislative body. Likewise, Chalil's reluctance to accept any *ijmā'* other than that which had been reached by the *ṣaḥābah* will be discussed. He followed the

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<sup>1</sup>For a survey of the proponents and opponents of the closure of the gate of *ijtihād*, see Shaista P. Ali-Karamali and Fiona Dunne in their "The Ijtihad Controversy," *Arab Law Quarterly*, 9 (1994), 238-257; for a comprehensive discussion establishing that *ijtihād* was never ceased to be practiced, see Wael B. Hallaq's "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?," *IJMES*, 16 (1984), 3-41.

reformist principle which rejected adherence to the consensus of the past simply as such, unless there were reliable texts to support it.

While the first and the second parts of this chapter discuss Chalil's concept of *ijtihād* and *ijmā'*, the third part will present his opinion on the antithesis of *ijtihād*, namely *taqlīd*. In discussing the subject of *taqlīd*, Chalil rigid intolerance for its practice will be explored *vis-à-vis* the stance of its proponents. This exploration is aimed at examining the validity of his total rejection of *taqlīd* as well as the arguments advanced by its proponents in support of its legal soundness. Chalil's call for the practice of *istinbā'* and the rejection of *madhhab*s will also be discussed in this part. This discussion will shed more light on his adherence to reformist principles, which considered *istinbā'* and the abandonment of *madhhab* as essential to restoring dignity to reason which had for a long time been subordinated to the authority of established practice.

## I

Chalil defines *ijtihād* as the use of all one's capabilities in the derivation of rulings from the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* by means of *istinbā'* (deduction). In his opinion, a *mujtahid* is a jurist (*faqīh*) who exerts every effort in inquiring into the law by way of deduction based on the two prime sources of Islam, the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*.<sup>2</sup> In assessing the religious basis for the promotion of *ijtihād*, Chalil cites a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ saying: "A judge (*ḥākim*) who by his own opinion exerts effort (*ijtihād*) receives a double reward if his decision is correct and just one reward if his decision is wrong." For Chalil, the eminence of the duty of *ijtihād* was further accentuated by the fact that the aforementioned *ḥadīth* is reported in all six canonical collections of *ḥadīth*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), 371.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 372-373.

Every task has certain prerequisites and the first prerequisite of *ijtihād*, according to Chalil, is a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and all its linguistic principles. Such knowledge enables the *mujtahid* to fully comprehend the meaning embodied in the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. Hence, a *mujtahid* must be able to distinguish the *mujmal* (general) from the *muhkam* (perspicuous) verses, the *'amm* (indefinite) from the *khāṣṣ* (definite) and the Meccan verses from the Medinan ones. He also has to master the science of *muṣṭalāḥ al-ḥadīth* in order to identify the relevant *ḥadīth* and its category. Though he is not required to memorize *ḥadīth*, a *mujtahid* must still be capable of distinguishing which are *nāsikh* (abrogating) and *mansūkh* (abrogated). Lastly, Chalil requires a functional knowledge of the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (legal theory) in the deduction-making process.<sup>4</sup>

Although the requirements of *ijtihād* encompass various branches of the Islamic sciences, Chalil holds that *ijtihād* is more viable to perform now than ever before, because most Prophetic traditions and the answers to many religious questions have been discussed, collected and even commented upon.<sup>5</sup> Along the same lines, al-Shawkānī also refuted the proposition that contemporary jurists could no longer attain the high qualifications that had enabled the ancient jurists to undertake the laborious duty of *ijtihād*. He explains that *ijtihād* had now become easier than in the past due to the progress made in the *Qur'ānic* sciences and the publication of numerous compilations of the juridical sciences.<sup>6</sup> The belief in the viability of *ijtihād* confirms the reformist doctrine that only by means of *ijtihād* can the *Shari'ah's* intrinsic potential for change be realized.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 373-374.

<sup>5</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Memperloas Dan Mempersehat Dalam Memahami Hukum-Hukum Islam," in *Bocah Kongres Muslimin Indonesia* (October 20-25, 1949), 53.

<sup>6</sup>Ilik A-Mansurnoor, "Shawkānī and the Closed Door of *Ijtihād*: Did Shawkānī Possess the Key to the Reopening of the Closed Door of *Ijtihād*?" *Hamdard Islamicus*, 11 (1988), 63; in his *al-Muwālaqāt*, al-Shāṭibī also expresses the need for the continuity of *ijtihād* saying: "*Ijtihād* cannot cease except at the end of the world when man's subjection to the Law will cease." al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwālaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Shari'ah*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, n.d.), 89.

In addition to the arguments that *ijtihād* had become easier due to the progress in the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth* and juridical sciences, the reformists sought other justifications for its increased implementation. They maintained, for example, that its exercise should face no hindrance, since the *Qur'ān* has stipulated legal provisions in a restricted number of verses. It is generally assumed that the *Qur'ān* contains very few legal injunctions. In fact, the number of verses which can be regarded as embodying religious legislation is no more than five hundred and may be as low as three hundred, while of that number, the vast majority pertain to *al-aḥwāl al-shakhsīyah* (personal status).<sup>7</sup> In addition, they also made it easier to meet the qualifications for *ijtihād* by relaxing the restrictions on membership in the *Majlis Tarjīh* of the *Muhammadiyah*. These qualifications broadly stated that any individual possessing the ability to conduct the task of *tarjīh* could become a member of the *Majlis*. While the word "ability" reflected the flexible nature of the requirement, it also opened the door for many interpretations, one of which was the mere ability to read and comprehend the *Kitab Kuning* at the level of *Subul al-Salām*.<sup>8</sup>

The reformists also tended not to define the areas of *ijtihād*, because a nonspecific form of *ijtihād* was more suited to the heterogeneous nature of contemporary legal problems. Chalil in this case does not specify if the requirements proposed for a *mujtahid* were to be met by those who embarked on *ijtihād* in all areas or only in a particular area. More importantly, he does not define *ijtihād* in the sense of *ijtihād muṭlaq* (independent *ijtihād*), but rather sees it as any exercise of reason and choice in the derivation of legal

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<sup>7</sup>W. M. Ballantyne, "The Second Coulson Memorial Lecture: Back to the Sharia!", *Arab Law Quarterly*, 3 (1988), 324; this is not to deny that other scholars argued against the notion that the *Qur'ān* contains only a very tiny fraction of legal injunction. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "The Contribution of the Qur'ān and the Prophet to the Development of Islamic Fiqh," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3 (1992), 145.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Fatchurrahman Djamil, "Ijtihad Muhammadiyah Dalam Masalah-Masalah Fikih Kontemporer: Studi Tentang Penerapan Teori *Maqāsid al-Sarī'ah*," (Ph.D. dissertation, I.A.I.N. Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 1993-1994), 107; *Subul al-Salām*, a commentary of *Bulūgh al-Marām*, is written by al-Ṣan'ānī. See Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'il al-Ṣan'ānī, *Subul al-Salām: Sharḥ Bulūgh al-Marām*, 4 vols. (Miṣr: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyah al-Kubrā, 1950).



decisions.<sup>9</sup> Thus, he "simplified" the definition of *ijtihād* so as to place its exercise within the reach of its proponents. It was due to the use of *ijtihād* according to this simplified definition that the divergence of opinion between the reformists and the traditionalists on whether *ijtihād* still existed or not was rooted. Unlike the "general" nature of the reformist perception of *ijtihād*, the definition of the traditionalists took *ijtihād* to indicate the act of deriving a fresh system of law independent of the previously established schools. The latter approach technically amounted to *ijtihād mutlaq* or *mustaqill* (both denote the meaning of an independent *ijtihād*).<sup>10</sup>

Since Chalil's concept of rejuvenating *ijtihād* implied that the traditionalists were the partisans of *taqlid* and were not supporters of *ijtihād*, a brief survey of their perception of *ijtihād* would be appropriate. This will make it clear whether the traditionalists denied the existence of *ijtihād* or not and whether *ijtihād* as they defined it was different from that of the reformists. Like the reformists, the traditionalists maintained that *ijtihād* was a legitimate practice in the quest for solutions to religious problems.<sup>11</sup> Mahfudz Shiddiq, the chairman of the Central Executive Board of the *Nahdat al-'Ulamā'*, stated that an obligation to perform *ijtihād* was incumbent upon all Muslim scholars. He held that those who possess the means to exercise *ijtihād* are legally required to pursue it, whether on the level

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<sup>9</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 373; see also Syeikh Ahmad as-Surkati al-Anshari, *Tiga Persoalan* (Jakarta: Pimpinan Pusat Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah, 1988), 32.

<sup>10</sup>For the traditionalists' view that *ijtihād* implies the concept of *ijtihād mutlaq*, see 'Abd al-Rahmān Bā 'Alawī, *Bughyat al-Mustashidin* (Semarang: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Usaha Keluarga, n. d.), 6; for the use of Bā 'Alawī's *Bughyah* as an important reference by the traditionalists, see A. Malik Madani, "Ijtihad Dalam Kemantapan Hidup Bermadzhab (Dari Halqah-Halqah di Pesantren sampai dengan Munas Alim Ulama NU di Bandar Lampung)," *Al-Jami'ah*, 51 (1993), 23; Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Ahkām al-'Iqāhā'*, vol. 1 (Semarang: Toha Putra, n.d.), 26, 30, 39, 49, 58, 60, 63, 66.

<sup>11</sup>Cited from Shiddiq's statement in Howard M. Federspiel's *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1970), 50.

of the *mujtahid mustaqill* or at the lower levels which he classified as akin to the ranks of the *muqallidūn* (plural form of *muqallid*), which means the practitioners of *taqlid*.<sup>12</sup>

It should be mentioned that those who occupied ranks other than that of *mujtahid mustaqill* were called *muqallidūn* by Shiddiq, since they were, to various degrees, dependent upon the *mujtahid mustaqill* as the sole architect of the jurisprudence upon which a particular school of law was based.<sup>13</sup> Since *taqlid* is the antithesis only of *ijtihād mustaqill*, Shiddiq logically, therefore, surmised that *ijtihād muqayyad* (limited *ijtihād*), which denotes any exercise of reason and choice in deriving legal decisions as defined by the reformists, could still be in force at the present time. It should be noted that the traditionalists regarded the existence of the *mujtahid mustaqill* to have come to an end shortly after the third century of the *Hijrah*.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the traditionalists' affirmation that no one could possibly assume the position of a *mujtahid mustaqill* is not tantamount to affirming that the gate of *ijtihād* had been irrevocably closed.<sup>15</sup>

The scope of *ijtihād*, according to Chalil, pertains exclusively to matters related to the *mu'āmalāt* (human relationships) and not to the *'ibādāt* (worship) or the *'aqā'id* (beliefs). Nonetheless, Chalil does not elucidate the scope of the *mu'āmalāt* or its divisions, which would have helped in assessing the objectives of *ijtihād* and in determining the leeway allowed to *ijtihād* in arbitrating over mundane affairs. It seems that by associating *ijtihād* with *mu'āmalāt*, Chalil simply wants to affirm that Islam is the legitimate regulator of all aspects of mundane affairs and is compatible with the newly

<sup>12</sup>See Shiddiq's note on the translation of Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī's article "Syari'at Islam adalah Sumber Keadilan," in his *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid* (Soerabaja: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, 1959), 16.

<sup>13</sup>See Shiddiq's classification of *mujtahid* and *muqallid* in *ibid.*, 54-58.

<sup>14</sup>Bā 'Alawī, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidin*, 6.

<sup>15</sup>Scholars used different terms to indicate the meaning of *mujtahid muṭlaq*, *mustaqill*, *munasib* or *muqayyad*. Hallaq provides clear distinctions between the terms employed by al-Ghazālī, Majd al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Ṣalāh and al-Nawawī. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed," 17, 25; the terms *muṭlaq* and *mustaqill* used by the traditionalists referred to the same entity, notably a *mujtahid* who formulated the principles and doctrines of *ijtihād* on the basis of which a legal school was founded and which served as a guide for the later endeavors of *ijtihād*.

emerging realities.<sup>16</sup> This affirmation may be deduced from the fact that Chalil leaves untouched numerous aspects of *mu'āmalāt*, as prescribed by the reformists, ranging from personal status and commercial affairs to criminal matters and others.<sup>17</sup> Instead, he exercises his *ijtihād* upon matters pertaining to *takhyayul* (legend), *bid'ah* (religious innovation) and *khurāfah* (superstition), which undeniably belong to the realm of belief (*ʿaqidah*) and worship (*ibādah*), rather than to that of *mu'āmalah*.

This concern with purification of the faith (*ʿaqidah*) can be found throughout Chalil's writings, in which he shows an uncompromising attitude towards popular religious beliefs. Purification constituted an essential component of his mission to challenge various traditions which, he believed, had corrupted the purity of Islamic teachings and contaminated their noble message. He raised his voice against belief in the *kāhin* (soothsayer), *takhyayul* and *khurāfah*, and against certain aspects of the religious celebrations of *Mawlid al-nabī* (the Prophet's birth day), *ʿĀshūrā* (the tenth day of the month of al-Muḥarram), *Laylat al-qadr* (the night of Ramaḍān) and the month of Ṣafar.<sup>18</sup> This call for purification also dominated the works of other *Persis* scholars with whom Chalil was associated in his capacity as the chairman of that organization's *Majlis Ulama'*. A look at the topics discussed in the periodical *Sual-Djawab*, which was a compilation of the *fatwās* (legal opinions) of the *Persis'* scholars, shows that a large proportion of the topics dealt with are typical purification issues.<sup>19</sup> The *Majlis Tarjih* of the *Muhammadiyah*, of which Chalil was among the longest standing members and in which

<sup>16</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Islam dan Economie* (Djogjakarta: Penjiaran Islam, n.d.), 14-15; Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 318.

<sup>17</sup>For the legal sense of *mu'āmalāt* as defined by reformists, see Yudian Wahyudi's "Hasbi's Theory of *Ijtihād* in the Context of Indonesian *Fiqh*," (M. A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1993), 51-52.

<sup>18</sup>For his articles pertaining to the issues in question, see footnote no. 95 of chapter two.

<sup>19</sup>As a sample, see the table-content of the *Sual-Djawab*, no. 1 and 4, in which almost half of their content questions well established practices. *Sual-Djawab*, no. 1 (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, n.d.); *Sual-Djawab*, no. 4 (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, n.d.).

he maintained his involvement until his death, also showed a marked fascination with the reformulation of theological and *'ibādah*-related subjects.<sup>20</sup>

While a concern for theological purification was adequately expressed in their works attacking popular religious practices, the reformulation of *'ibādah* matters which was attempted in their *fiqh al-sunnah* did not really provide a clear alternative to the conventional *fiqh*-texts which they considered to be obsolete and lacking in analysis. If there was any finding in the *fiqh al-sunnah* different from these found in the conventional *fiqh*-texts, the difference stemmed not from the fact that the latter were lacking textual bases, but rather from the nature of the texts which recognized no fixed interpretation. The reformists' attempt to introduce a new "hybrid" *fiqh*-text in the form of *fiqh al-sunnah*, to which Chalil made a considerable contribution as explained earlier, failed to reinvigorate legal thought. Rather, it offered only a new set of variant opinions on *'ibādah*-related matters.<sup>21</sup> Criticism was, therefore, hurled back at the reformists whose propositions of *ijtihād* were originally intended to implement their concept of *tajdīd* (reformation), but who confined their attempts to the reformulation of theological and *'ibādah*-related subjects.

It should also be pointed out that the introduction of a new *fiqh*-text, whether in the form of Chalil's *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, in that of *Kitab Kumpulan Keputusan Majlis Tarjih* (the book of collected legal opinions of the *Majlis Tarjih*) of the *Muhammadiyah* or in the *Sual-Djawab* of the *Persis*, resulted ironically in time in the development a new form of

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<sup>20</sup>The subjects which the *Majlis Tarjih* dealt with in its conventions were collected in the form of books (*kitab*) ranging from *Kitab Iman* (faith) (1929), *Kitab Taharah* (religious purity) (1933), *Kitab Salat* (prayers) (1929), *Kitab Jama'ah and Jum'ah* (congregational and Friday prayers) (1956), *Kitab Zakat* (almsgiving) (1950), *Kitab Shiyum* (fasting) (1939), *Kitab Hajj* (pilgrimage) (1953), *Kitab Janazah* (funeral procession) (1936) and *Kitab Waqaf* (endowment) (1953). Ahmad Azhar Basyir, *Refleksi atas Persoalan Kelslaman: Seputar Filsafat, Hukum dan Ekonomi* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), 262; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (n.p.: Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 1976).

<sup>21</sup>Abdurrrachman Wachid, "Menjadikan Hukum Islam Sebagai Penunjang Pembangunan," in *Agama dan Tantangan Zaman: Pilihan Artikel Prisma, 1975-1984* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), 71.

*taqlid*, which the reformists themselves had declared to be a symptom of the stagnation and which they were striving to eradicate by means of *ijtihad*. The reliance of the *Muhammadiyah's* followers on the *Kitab*, for example, became too depressingly similar to the practice of the traditionalists who unconditionally accepted the opinions of the *fuqahā'* prescribed in the conventional *fiqh*-texts. Distrust of the *Muhammadiyah's* pledge to combat *taqlid* was, therefore, heard as its followers blindly accepted the *Kitab* without much reservation.<sup>22</sup> This attachment to a set of reformist legal decisions helped foster the emergence of a "new *madhhab*" which was reinforced by the central and regional boards of leadership of the *Muhammadiyah* in order to make the religious practices of its followers accord with the decisions reached through their *ijtihad*.<sup>23</sup>

It should be mentioned that the works of the reformists on purification, which were noted for their polemical character, featured articles on *khilāfiyah* (debatable) questions and advocated the revision of established religious practices, such as *al-talaffuz bi-al-niyah* (pronouncing the intention of prayer), *qunūt* (prayer recited specifically in the *Ṣubḥ* prayer), *talqin* (an instruction given to the deceased at the graveside at the close of the burial service) and their like. This polemical character in return provoked a counter-attack from the traditionalists who mounted fierce resistance in defense of established practice.<sup>24</sup>

In implementing the principle of *ijtihad*, Chalil could not claim to have conducted the judicial revision by which a revitalization of Islam might be achieved. His *ijtihad*

<sup>22</sup>"Muktamar Memberantas TBC Muhammadiyah," *Aula* (November, 1990), 11-15.

<sup>23</sup>Arbiyah Lubis, *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dan Muhammad Abduh* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1993), 101.

<sup>24</sup>It seems that the works of traditionalist scholars which primarily discussed issues categorically belonging to the *khilāfiyah* portray the traditionalists' response and support of the religious practices which the reformists had attacked. Siradjuddin Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, 4 vols. (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1992); idem, *I'tiqad Ahlul-Sunnah Wal-Jamā'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1993); idem, *Kumpulan Soal Jawab Keagamaan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1987); to the genre of traditionalist works which counterattack in defense of their religious practices belong 'Alī Ma'sūm's *Hujjat Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Pekalongan: Ibn Mashhadī, n.d.), and Mahfudh Shiddiq's *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*.

activities, which were characteristic of those advocated by the *Muhammadiyah* and the *Persis*, still addressed themselves to marginal areas, namely *'aqidah* and *'ibadah* matters, which were certainly not the domain from which any legal awakening could be set in motion. True *ijtihad*, which the reformists claimed would infuse in Islam the ethical activism necessary for progress, was nowhere to be seen.<sup>25</sup> His *ijtihad* found resonance only in the purification of *'aqidah* and *'ibadah*, leaving aside mundane affairs or *mu'amalah* matters which were in fact an aspect of the *Shari'ah* in "dire need" of legal reformulation. This is true despite the fact that he upheld the viability of *ijtihad* and its unrestricted nature, a "flexible device" promoted by reformists to facilitate the implementation of its practice. Chalil's dual position as the head of the *Majlis Ulama'* of the *Persis* and as member of the *Majlis Tarjih Pusu* of the *Muhammadiyah* gave him the perfect opportunity to implement *ijtihad* as espoused by the Indonesian reformists, since the two organizations constituted the main bodies with which the reformists were affiliated. It is due to the restricted nature of their *ijtihad* that the Indonesian reformists did not deserve to be considered as the heirs of 'Abduh just as the Wahhabis could not claim to be the successors of Ibn Taymiyah.<sup>26</sup>

## II

Chalil starts his discussion of *ijma'* (consensus) by appraising the *Qur'anic* verses with which the classical scholars always began their discussion of the subject. He refers in the first place to the verse which states: "Thus, we have appointed you a middle nation (*ummatan wasathan*) that you may be witnesses against mankind."<sup>27</sup> According to Chalil, the advocates of consensus interpreted this verse to mean that since the Muslim *ummat*

<sup>25</sup>Nurcholish Madjid came to the opinion that the concept of *tajdid* (*pembaharuan*) of the *Muhammadiyah* was *fiqhi* oriented, since the *Muhammadiyah* still kept itself busy with what Madjid considered to be trivial issues (*soal-soal sepele*), such as *wudu'* (ablution), *salah* (prayer), *salat al-tarawih* (prayer conducted in the night of Ramadan). Cited in Hamid Basyaib, "Harapan Pasca Muktamar," in *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentari* (ed.) M. Rusli Karim (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), 312.

<sup>26</sup>For this equation, see Madjid's opinion in *ibid*

<sup>27</sup>The *Qur'an*, 2: 143.

was distinguished as a middle nation, whatever decree the *ummah* unanimously agreed upon became an authoritative rule demanding obligatory obedience from all Muslims. In support of this concept of the "middle nation," he quotes two verses mentioned by the advocates of consensus in which God praises the followers of Muḥammad as the best of mankind saying: "You are the best community that has been raised up for mankind. You enjoin the good and forbid the evil,"<sup>28</sup> and "Those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth and dispense justice therewith."<sup>29</sup> Another argument advanced by partisans of consensus was derived from the verse "Hold fast to His bond and do not scatter," which they interpreted to mean, Chalil comments, that God's command to unify the Muslim ranks also implied an order to reach an agreement which all Muslims have to observe faithfully.<sup>30</sup>

Chalil argues that the aforementioned texts were not correctly interpreted by the proponents of consensus and as a result the argument for the authority of consensus was inconclusive.<sup>31</sup> In his opinion, the phrase "the middle nation" simply means the chosen people who witnessed the delivery of the divine message by the early Prophets to their peoples. It means also that Muḥammad had witnessed what his *ummah* had done. Chalil must have been well aware of the ambiguity of the phrase "the middle nation," the interpretation of which had baffled *mufasssirs* and had led them to differ considerably from one another.<sup>32</sup> According to Chalil, the second and third verses simply mean that Muslims are the best of mankind, because they are the ones committed to leading others to

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 31: 15.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 7: 181.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 3: 103.

<sup>31</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 316.

<sup>32</sup>Abduh, for example, interprets "middle nation" to mean striking a balance between one's religious duties and the material gains and exigencies of one's life. He makes no reference to consensus and instead states that equilibrium is emphasized in the word *ummatan wasaṭan* which carries criticism against both the practice of *ghuluw* (excess), manifested in the habit of asceticism advocated by the Christians, the Ṣābi'ūn and the Wathāniyūn as well as the pursuit of material comfort espoused by the Jews in Muḥammad's time. Muḥammad 'Abduh, "al-Ummah al-Wasaṭ," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh* (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālidah Sa'id (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 47-48.

meritorious deeds, following the commands of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. As for the verse which enjoins Muslims to adhere fast to God's bond and to unify their ranks, Chalil affirms that it is a reference to the *Qur'ān* rather than to consensus.<sup>33</sup>

Chalil seems to have thought that the advocates of consensus had made a leap which was not firmly supported by the texts and which they would never have thought of unless the doctrine of consensus had already been present in their minds. He also suggests that the various definitions of consensus offered inconclusive arguments for the principle of consensus on account of the undefined phrases and words that they contain. Examples of these definitions are as follows: "Agreement of all the people of binding and loosening (*ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*) in a certain period of time about a certain incident." "Agreement of all the scholars (*mujtahidin*) of the community after the death (of the Prophet) in a certain period of time on a particular case." "Agreement of all the scholars of the community in a period of time on a religious point (*hukm shar'i*)." It is difficult to define the precise meaning of some of these words and phrases (italicized in the above), he says, since nobody is able to determine the standard of eligibility for members of *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd* or for the *mujtahid*. He further comments that the criterion of *Shar'* was not tangible, since it might embrace both *ibādāt* and *mu'āmalāt* or either of the two.<sup>34</sup>

Chalil's overriding concern with the definition of consensus may have stemmed from his perception of its weak textual basis, rather than from the "problem" of its definition which had, indeed, been raised by some early scholars but which usually revolved around the question of whether it is the scholars or the *ummah* who are the repositories of consensus.<sup>35</sup> Given the fact that the definitions specified its repositories,

<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in interpreting the word "God's bond" 'Abduh goes to the *Qur'ān* itself and not to the consensus. George F. Hourani, "The Basis of Authority of Consensus in Sunnite Islam," *Studia Islamica*, 21 (1964), 41.

<sup>34</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 300-304.

<sup>35</sup> Ahmad Hasan, "The Classical Definition of Ijmā': The Nature of Consensus," *Islamic Studies*, 14 (1975), 261; Danial Latifi, "Change and the Muslim Law," in *Islamic Law in Modern India*, (ed.) Tahir Mahmood (Bombay: N.M. Tripathi Private, 1972), 112.



namely the *mujtahids* or the *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*, it made it even easier for Chalil to accept this aspect of consensus rather than deny it, since their knowledge of the *Shari'ah* made them the only people competent to perform the task of consensus. His opposition to the principle of consensus was in line with the thought of many reformists who rejected adherence to the consensus of the past merely as such, since there were no solidly reliable texts to support its validity.<sup>36</sup> Reformists argued that consensus required a validity tantamount to that of the *Qur'ān* and the solidly reliable *hadith*, because it would function as one of the infallible sources of law on the basis of which new legal questions would be solved.

Chalil's rejection of consensus was not absolute since he accepted the consensus of the *sahābah*, the authoritativeness (*hujjiyah*) of which was never disputed by any scholar.<sup>37</sup> The *sahābah* were deemed to belong to a different category, since they were the most understanding (*alfaqah*), virtuous and knowledgeable. This was so because they had witnessed the revelation of the *Qur'ān*, knew how to interpret it and understood the objectives of the Prophet as a law-giver. Yet, Chalil dismisses the validity of the consensus of the Rāshidūn (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī), the Shaykhān (Abū Bakr and 'Umar) and the consensus of the local communities of Medina and Kufah.<sup>38</sup> In this, he followed the reasoning of the *Persis* which accepted the consensus of the *sahābah* as a body but not as individuals.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Chalil's objection was representative of the stand taken by the *Persis* which equally disqualified the authority of consensus on account of its lack of textual evidence and the ambiguity of its definition. Besides, the *Persis* also argued that the consensus reached by scholars in a particular time would be void in another time as values evolved and opinions changed. "Dari Hal Ijma'," *Pembela Islam*, no. 56, 29-33.

<sup>37</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 312; on the authoritativeness of the consensus of the *sahābah* see, for example, al-Shawkānī's *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937), 81.

<sup>38</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 312; those who argued against the consensus of the Rāshidūn and the Shaykhān held that they were the people to be emulated (*ahl li-al-iqtidā' oihim*), but that their sayings did not establish an authoritative argument (*lā 'alā anna qawlahum ḥujjah*). al-Shawkānī's *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 83.

<sup>39</sup>A. Hassan, *Al-Boerhan Kitab Fiqh*, vols. 1-2 (Bandung: Persatoean Islam, 1929), 12-13.

Since Chalil's rejection of consensus was a reflection of his quest for textual proofs, it should come as no surprise that his approval of the consensus of the *ṣaḥābah* was supported with textual evidence.<sup>40</sup> Further proof derived from the fact that the *ṣaḥābah* formed a relatively small group located primarily in Medina, which made it easier for them to gather to arbitrate and judge cases. Once Islam spread and the *ṣaḥābah* migrated to distant places, true consensus must have been difficult to achieve, given the theory that consensus should be overwhelmingly reached by all scholars for cases which have no textual basis for their solution.<sup>41</sup>

Chalil found an endorsement in the work of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal who refuted the existence of consensus (after the era of the *ṣaḥābah*) and accused anyone who held otherwise of committing *kidhb* (telling lies).<sup>42</sup> The restriction of consensus to the era of the *ṣaḥābah*, however, did not completely undermine the value of opinions reached by the *ṭābi'ūn* (the generation following the *ṣaḥābah*) since Ibn Ḥanbal, according to Chalil, regarded them as optional opinions (*mukhayaṣṣar*). Abū Ḥanīfah, however, had a different point of view with respect to the consensus of the *ṭābi'ūn*. While he had no objection at all (*salimnā*) to the consensus of the *ṣaḥābah*, he disputed (*zāḥamnā*) that of the *ṭābi'ūn*.<sup>43</sup> Abū Ḥanīfah's opinion was perhaps cited by Chalil in order to justify his original thesis on the restriction of consensus to the time of the *ṣaḥābah*. Chalil also takes cognizance of the opinions of Dāwūd al-Zāhirī and Ibn Ḥazm who were noted for their objection to any consensus other than that of the *ṣaḥābah*.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup>For the textual evidence to support the conclusive validity of the consensus of *ṣaḥābah*, see Chalil's comment on a *ḥadīth* cited in footnote no. 62 of chapter five.

<sup>41</sup>Chalil's view was based on al-Isfahānī's rejection of any *ijmā'* after the *ṣaḥābah* for the reason mentioned above. al-Isfahānī's view was also quoted by A. Hassan in his argument against any consensus other than that of the *ṣaḥābah*. Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 311; Hassan, *Al-Boerhan Kitab Fiqh*, vols. 1-2, 12-13.

<sup>42</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 310; idem, *Biography Empat Serangkai Imam Madzhab* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1955), 216.

<sup>43</sup>Chalil did not mention the name of Abū Ḥanīfah who was indeed the possessor of that opinion. For a confirmation, see al-Shawkānī's *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 82.

<sup>44</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 312, 321; Norman Anderson, "Islamic Law Today: The Background To Islamic Fundamentalism," *Arab Law Quarterly*, 2 (1987), 341; Hourani, "The Basis of Authority of Consensus in Sunnite Islam," 22.

Chalil discusses the division of consensus into *ijmā' bayānī* and *sukūti*. He reveals that *ijmā' bayānī* is achieved when all *mujtahids* set forth their views orally or in writing and express their approval of the opinion of a contemporary *mujtahid*. *Ijmā' sukūti*, he further explains, was achieved when all *mujtahids* kept silent, although not out of fear or shyness, on an opinion put forward by one *mujtahid* of their time. While Chalil classifies the former as *qat'ī* (certain) and the latter as *ẓannī* (ambiguous), he does not explain the legal effects of certainty or ambiguity. Such a lack of explanation might have been due to his assumption that consensus occupies a subordinate legal position and hence does not merit further attention. For him, the true religion of Islam is found only in the *Qur'ān* and the Prophetic *sunnah* and anything beyond those two is not part of Islam. Even the consensus of the *ṣaḥābah*, he claims, does not constitute an independent source on a par with the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. Rather, it has merit only when it is in accordance with Revelation.<sup>45</sup> Chalil's restriction of valid consensus to that of the *ṣaḥābah* was a reflection of the general trend among the reformists, who tried to adapt contemporary Islam to new conditions by modifying the basic ideas of original Islam. Seeing, however, that it was impossible to justify the medieval doctrine of the authority of all past consensus, the reformists lost no time in declaring such a principle to be alien to original Islam.<sup>46</sup>

Chalil maintained that the consensus of the scholars on novel cases was different from that of the *ṣaḥābah* which, due to its infallibility, constituted one of the sources of law. The former type of consensus was derived by Chalil from the concept of *ūlī al-amr* (the authorities) which was expounded in a *Qur'ānic* verse.<sup>47</sup> He interprets the term *ūlī al-amr* to mean a collective body of erudite scholars (*'ulamā'*) who undertake the task of

<sup>45</sup>That the consensus of the *ṣaḥābah* depended entirely on whether it was consistent with the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah* and, therefore, did not stand on an equal footing with the two primary sources, is stated by A. Hassan. It may be assumed that Chalil shared this opinion with Hassan, since he was the chair of the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* of the *Persis* in which Hassan was its top figure. A. Hassan, *Ringkasan Islam* (Kota Bahru: Pustaka Aman Press, 1971), 29-30.

<sup>46</sup>Hourani, "The Basis of Authority of Consensus in Sunnite Islam," 38.

<sup>47</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 14: 59

revealing the concealed side of things (*mengeluarkan yang tersembunyi*) and who possess the intellectual capacity to reach sound decisions. As the *Qur'ān* had laid down the concept of *ūlī al-amr*, he concludes that the concept itself must have evolved since the Prophet's time.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, his perception of the practice of consultation bears a strong resemblance to the loose concept of *shūrā* enacted by the *Qur'ān* and practiced by the Prophet.

According to Chalil, the *ūlī al-amr* as a consultative body represents the inner structure of Muslim society and is charged with a mandate not only to protect the interests of the religion, but also to handle the secular affairs of the society as well. This concept developed as a necessary social mechanism, when solutions to newly arising problems were not found in the texts. Citing the reports of al-Dārimī and al-Bayhaqī related to Maymūn Ibn Mahrān, Chalil demonstrates that Abū Bakr (the first Caliph) used to summon the leaders and the learned of the community for consultation. Deliberations with these two particular segments of the community were also pursued by 'Umar (the second Caliph) for cases in which no conclusive texts were available in the *Qur'ān* or the Prophetic traditions. Chalil also notes that the practice of consultation by Abū Bakr and 'Umar was the final step that these leaders resorted to, when all efforts to find those who might have witnessed the practice of the Prophet in connection with the case in question had been unsuccessful.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, however, to those who claimed that the consensus of the *ūlī al-amr* was incapable of error, Chalil denies its infallibility.<sup>50</sup> In this, he was opposed to 'Abduh, who believes that their consensus derived its infallible quality from God's order to accept it. 'Abduh refers to those who were eligible to participate in consensus-making as *ahl al-hall*

<sup>48</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Adakah Ulii Amri di Indonesia* (Solo: Siti Samsijah, n.d.), 24-26.

<sup>49</sup>Chalil, *Biography Empat Serangkai*, 215. idem, *Ulii Amri*, 68-69.

<sup>50</sup>See, for instance, al-Rāzī's interpretation of the *Qur'ān*, 4: 59. al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 9 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 144.

*wa al-'aḡd* (the people of binding and loosening).<sup>51</sup> This term is also utilized by Chalil in reference to the people who on account of their scholarship were designated as the consensus makers. However, he does not equate the infallibility of their consensus with that of the contemporaries of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, both of whom, according to 'Abduh, had a similar quality of infallibility.<sup>52</sup>

*Ijtihād* was often associated with the principle of consensus, since both were seen as constituting means of promoting the dynamics of Islam and of proving its ability to adapt to change. While *ijtihād* was a vehicle through which the reformists' concept of validating the *Shari'ah* was accomplished, consensus served as a useful tool in implementing the reforms recognized by Islamic law. It is on the basis of this last consideration that Chalil draws a link between the idea of consensus and the legislative body. He says that it is important for Muslim nations to transform the concept of a people's assembly, introduced by non-Muslims, into an institution in which the *ahl al-hall wa al-'aḡd* would conduct the process of consensus.<sup>53</sup>

Viewing the concept of *ahl al-hall wa al-'aḡd* from the perspective of a modern institution, he divides it into two types. The first he calls *al-tashri'ah al-tanfidiyah* which he defines as a legislative body through which the *Shari'ah* could be feasibly implemented. The second is an institution called *al-tashri'ah al-tanzimiyah* charged with the dissemination of rulings that could regulate and protect the interests of the society.<sup>54</sup> The idea of institutionalizing the concept of consensus in the form of a legislative body was not new and had in fact been advocated by earlier reformists. Rashīd Riḍā, for instance, whose opinion on the *ulī al-amr* is frequently cited by Chalil, called for the formation of a

<sup>51</sup> Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 5 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah li-al-Kitāb, 1973), 147.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.; Moenawar Chalil's "Kedudukan Imam didalam Islam," *Suara Partai Masjumi*, 7-8 (?), 27.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Chalil, *Ulil Amri*, 84-85.

legislative body bent on the implementation of the principle of *maṣlaḥah*. Riḍā also held that such a body would serve as a forum in which the *ahl al-ḥall wa al-ʿaqd* would find the mechanism to execute the principle of consensus. He even considered the possibility of gathering all the *mujtahids* from all the Muslim countries in one place.<sup>55</sup> ʿAbduh also attempted to institutionalize consensus, when he proposed the combination of the *ahl al-ḥall wa al-ʿaqd*, the *ūlī al-amr* and the *mujtahids* into a single body, in which the sovereign powers of the community would lie and whose executive would be the caliph.<sup>56</sup>

That Chalil thought of connecting consensus with the notion of a legislative body where the *ʿulamāʾ* would act as the sole representatives of the whole *ummah*, held little relevance for Indonesian Muslims. Ideologically, Islam constituted only one of the contending political powers, as the Muslims were politically overshadowed by the secularists and non-Muslims. Moreover, the Muslims failed to create a council that integrated the *ʿulamāʾ* irrespective of their religious and political affiliations. The founding of a single council, which embraced the whole corps of *ʿulamāʾ*, was the cornerstone of Chalil's concept of consensus, since they constituted the sole lawmakers. This endeavor never materialized, however, as the *ʿulamāʾ* themselves suffered from an internal rift stemming from the religious antagonism that plagued Muslims during Chalil's lifetime. At the time, the *ʿulamāʾ* had established organizations, but they resembled the modernist and traditionalist factions by differing among themselves. Five councils of *ʿulamāʾ* were simultaneously in existence, each of which was obliged to express the religious outlook and the political orientation of its parent organization.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup>Rashid Riḍā, *al-Khilāfah aw al-Imāmah al-ʿUẓmā* (Miṣr: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1928), 80, 102.

<sup>56</sup>Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Riḍā* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 197.

<sup>57</sup>For the names of the councils of *ʿulamāʾ* and their main organizations, see a footnote no. 46 of chapter two above.

In such conditions, it was impossible for the *'ulamā'* to achieve a consensus, let alone to arrive at a common understanding of their contemporary problems. Rather, both the modernists and the traditionalists sought ways of justifying their particular positions and of portraying themselves as true believers. This was particularly true of the modernists, since their mission involved rescuing the "heretics" (the traditionalists) from degenerating into polytheism (*shirk*). They saw themselves as "messiahs" who alone upheld pure monotheism in the face of the traditionalists' practices of *bid'ah* (religious innovation), *takhayyul* (superstition) and *khurāfāt* (myths).<sup>58</sup> The expectation that they would deliver the true faith from those who were distorting it was a common belief among the reformists including Chalil. The latter's task and that of his fellow reformists involved the restoration of true Islam to its pristine purity and bringing to an end the authority of religious leaders. The messiahs in this context were certainly not the harbingers of the Last Day but humble figures guiding the *ummah* to the right path.

Concomitant with this mission of purification was Chalil's aggressive practice of conducting *tabligh* (religious propaganda) and advocating his puritanical perspective. These are illustrated in his polemical style of writing. Chalil even linked the concept of consensus to *bid'ah* and highlights its possible misuse at the hands of the traditionalists, whom he accused of having a tendency to agree on certain forms of worship (*'ibādah*) for which no precedent was introduced by the Prophet.<sup>59</sup> This assumption overstated the menace of *bid'ah*, an issue which bore hardly any connection to the concept of consensus. He also accused those who bore title *kiyai* (from the traditionalist group) of having only a peripheral knowledge of the Islamic sciences. Chalil recommended caution in weighing the opinions of the traditionalists for their distorted beliefs could have a detrimental effect upon the purity of *Imān* (faith). This assertion, however, was not supported by empirical

<sup>58</sup>Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, "Bid'ah Lebih Berbahaya dari Ma'shiat." *Hudjdjatul Islam*, 1 (August 1956), 26-29.

<sup>59</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 321.

evidence and could be said to have emerged out of sectarian antagonism rather than out of real observation of the reliability of the *kiyais'* scholarship.<sup>60</sup> Chalil's adoption of this antagonistic approach was stimulated by religious zeal, wherein saying the truth for the sake of the establishment of the pristine purity of Islam was portrayed as a noble duty.<sup>61</sup>

Chalil also drew attention to those '*ulamā'*' whom he considered to be undeserving of the status of heirs to the Prophets (*warathat al-anbiyā'*), not only by reason of their lack of scientific competence but also for their moral standards. His statement was aimed at the traditionalist '*ulamā'*' in particular who, because they regularly accepted posts in the colonial government, were the focus of reformist criticism.<sup>62</sup> During Chalil's time, the modernists used to confront the traditionalists whom they not only labeled as being ignorant of religious matters, but also as unwilling to change their outlook due to vested political, social and economic interests. They accused the traditionalist '*ulamā'*' who held positions of responsibility in the Dutch colonial administrative structure and in the rural villages of fearing the loss of these positions and their status if they altered their religious views.<sup>63</sup>

The propagation of reformist ideas, which for all their earnestness was far from being persuasive, illustrated the internal rift within the body of Indonesian '*ulamā'*'. Hence, Chalil's proposition to submit the problems of the *ummah* to a consultative body of the '*ulamā'*' was doomed to failure. There was no single, integrated '*ulamā'*' council beyond that whose formation in 1975 had been "engineered" by the state and which was known as

<sup>60</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Djangan Menjerahkan Sesuatu Urusan Kpd. Jg. Bukan Ahlinja," *Abadi* (April 20; 1960); idem, "Tunggulah Saat Keruntuhanja," *Abadi* (April 29; 1960).

<sup>61</sup>Moenawar Chalil "Katakanlah Kebenaran Sekalipun Pahit," *Abadi* (August 20; 1954); idem, "Kewadajiban Menjampaikan Kebenaran Sekalipun Pahit," *Abadi* (June 17; 1960); idem, "Penolak dan Perintang Kebenaran," *Abadi* (June 4; 1959); idem, "Segenap Kaum Muslimin Wadajib Menuatut Kebenaran," *Abadi* (February 19; 1960).

<sup>62</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Siapa Jang Salah? Pertanggungan Djawab Para Ulama dan Zu'ama Islam," *Abadi* (April 10; 1953); Idem, "Ulama dan 'Ulama: Imam Al-Ghazali Mengutuk 'Ulama Penggila Kedudukan Disamping Baginda Radja," *Pandji Masjarakat* (January 1; 1960), 9-11.

<sup>63</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 48.



the *Majlis 'Ulamā' Indonesia* (the Council of Indonesian *'Ulamā'*).<sup>64</sup> Even if had there been one, the interests of defending the religious views of one particular group (modernist *vis-à-vis* traditionalist) would remain. A case in point was their failure to agree on a single method of determining the first day of Ramaḍān. This controversy, where Chalil sided again with the cause of the modernists, never faded away and continues to be an issue in the present day, as we shall see.

### III

For the modernists, *taqlid* was not only a deviation from the right path but it was also the prime cause of stagnation. It not only led Muslims astray concerning the correct performance of religious duties but it had also contributed to their loss of political power.<sup>65</sup> The adoption of an uncompromising attitude towards *taqlid* may have been motivated by Chalil's enthusiasm for reviving the exercise of *ijtihād*, which he assumed had become defunct as a result of blind acceptance of the conclusions of the earlier jurists. In his writings, Chalil criticizes the *'ulamā'* whose dependence on the opinions of these jurists had led to their narrow mindedness and the stagnation of the Indonesian Muslims.<sup>66</sup>

*Taqlid* was considered a grave sin by Chalil, not only in matters of *'aqidah* but also in questions of *'ibadah*.<sup>67</sup> He defines *taqlid* as acceptance of the opinions of others with no provision of proof (*hujjah*) from the *Qur'ān* and the Prophetic *sunnah*. In his argument, he cites the definitions of four scholars, despite the fact that some of them held beliefs which contradicted his own on the principle of *taqlid*.<sup>68</sup> al-Ghazālī, whose view of *taqlid* is one of those cited by Chalil, expresses views on the subject that were

<sup>64</sup>For the establishment of the Indonesian Council of *'Ulamā'*, its role and "interconnection" with the political will of the state, see M. Atho Mudzhar *Farwas of the Council of Indonesian Ulama: A Study of Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia: 1975-1988* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993).

<sup>65</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 46.

<sup>66</sup>Chalil, "Memperloas Dan Mempersehat Dalam Memahami Hukum-Hukum Islam," 55.

<sup>67</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Sedikit Pendjelasan Ttg. Arti Taqlid," *Abadi* (January 22, 1954).

<sup>68</sup>He cites the definitions provided by Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Maliki, al-Ghazālī, al-Shawkānī and al-Ṣan'ānī. Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 341.

unacceptable to the latter, such as the belief that the practice of *taqlid* by the *'awāmm* (lay Muslims) was inevitable, since any attempt by them to undertake *ijtihād* would disrupt the life of the entire community. This is obvious, al-Ghazālī comments, since a thorough study of the sciences required for the activity of *ijtihād* would disrupt their cultivation (*ḥarth*) of the land, their trade (*ḥirf*) and their handicrafts (*ṣanā'ī'*). It would also destroy their family life and their progeny (*nasl*).<sup>69</sup> This opinion did not enjoy the support of al-Shawkānī, whose definition is also cited by Chalil, on the grounds that it denied the possibility of *ittibā'* (following the opinion of others upon the knowledge of its proofs) by the *'awāmm*.<sup>70</sup> Chalil supports the view of al-Shawkānī who rejected *taqlid* even by the *'awāmm*, whom he considered as perfectly capable of practicing *ittibā'*.

In discussing the definitions of *taqlid*, Chalil lays emphasis on the phrases *lā ḥujjah*, *bilā ḥujjah*, *lā taqūmu bihī al-ḥujjah* and *min ghayr al-ḥujjah*.<sup>71</sup> all of which indicate a lack of textual basis and the accompanying assertion that any religious duties (*'ibādāt*) not grounded on revealed texts were unacceptable. This emphasis implies that even if the *'ibādāt* is similar to one based on a text, but cannot boast of a text referring specifically to it, it is invalid. In extreme cases, such an *'ibādāt* should be regarded as heresy (*bid'ah*), the definition of which includes all the *'ibādāt* not derived from texts but rather from the interpretations of jurists of the *madhhab*.<sup>72</sup> That the text was the paramount element in Chalil's concept of *'ibādāt* is a reflection of the puritan doctrine that in performing a religious duty one should not be dependent on the authority of others but rather on the direct stipulation of the text.

<sup>69</sup> al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Būlāq, 1324 H.), 389.

<sup>70</sup> al-Shawkānī, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd min Adillat al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlid* (Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, n.d.), 15.

<sup>71</sup> Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 341.

<sup>72</sup> A-Mansurnoor, "Shawkānī and the Closed Door of *Ijtihād*: Did Shawkānī Possess the Key to the Reopening of the Closed Door of *Ijtihād*?" 60.

According to Chalil's definition, *taqlid* is identical with blind imitation and connotes a state of complete passivity.<sup>73</sup> As such, the definition deprives a person of the conscious act involved in carrying out one's role as a *muqallid* (a practitioner of *taqlid*). This aspect was not considered by Chalil or any of the other Indonesian reformists, for none of them acknowledge in their writings that such a mental characteristic exists in the act of *taqlid*.<sup>74</sup> The matter is mentioned, instead, by Mahfudz Shiddiq when dealing with the obligations of those who are incapable of conducting *ijtihād* themselves. Shiddiq quotes from *al-Maqṣad al-Saḍīd* in which it is said:

It is obligatory for him [who is incapable of conducting *ijtihād*] to exert his utmost efforts (*an yabdhula wus'ah*) in an attempt to find the best Imām who undoubtedly belongs to the category of the people of vision (*ahl al-naẓar*), absolute *ijtihād* (*al-ijtihād al-muṭlaq*), trustworthiness (*al-'adālah*) and a perfect keenness of mind (*al-yaqẓah al-tāmmah*).<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, *taqlid* should not be seen as consisting of totally blind imitation as its practice entails introspection and a conscious exercise of one's faculties. It involves knowing the limitations of one's ability to derive guidelines for one's conduct from the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. It also demands an effort to seek the opinions of others and to adopt the most suitable among them.<sup>76</sup> The exercise of conscience by a *muqallid* was discussed by the *uṣūliyyūn* (legal theorists) in conjunction with the requirements of the jurist from whom a *muqallid* adopted any legal opinion. This discussion served the dual purpose of settling the eligibility to practice *taqlid* and of anticipating the possible invalidity of a *fatwā*, nullified as a result of a shortcoming on the jurist's part. This shortcoming may stem from either imperfect or incomplete knowledge of the sciences required for *ijtihād* or doubts surrounding the scholar's moral integrity. The latter quality, in particular, is of

<sup>73</sup>Chalil, "Sedikit Pendjelasan Ttg. Arti Taqlid."

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.; this is a typical definition set by Indonesian reformist scholars. See, Hassan, *Ringkasan Islam*, 42; As-Surkati, *Tiga Persoalan*, 24-35.

<sup>75</sup>Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*, 72-73.

<sup>76</sup>Bernard Weiss, "Interpretation of Islamic Law: The Theory of Ijtihad," *American Journal of Comparative Law*, 26 (1978), 207.

utmost importance in ensuring the sanctity of his duty as the interpreter of the divine message.<sup>77</sup>

The traditionalist view, as stated in Shiddiq's quotation, is thus the stance of the *uṣūliyyūn* who laid down formidable prerequisites for the office of *iftā'* (issuing a *fatwā*). al-Ghazālī, for example, imposes strict qualifications for any jurist wishing to assume the duty of *iftā'*. He does so in the course of discussing the duties of the *muqallid* in seeking a *fatwā* (legal opinion) from a *muftī* (person issuing *fatwās*).<sup>78</sup> So important were these prerequisites that one of the duties of a ruler was to screen the credentials of would-be *muftīs* so as to distinguish the qualified from the unqualified and to impose sanctions on the latter if they chose not to terminate their practices of *iftā'*.<sup>79</sup> The selection of *muftīs* was made such a thorough and elaborate affair, because any incompetence on their part could lead the *muqallid* astray. Not surprisingly, the struggle for survival of the legal schools was colored by frequent attempts made by the different Imāms to call into question the thought of their peers. A case in point was Ibn Jarīr's attempt at impugning Ibn Ḥanbal's qualifications as a jurist consult.<sup>80</sup>

Chalil maintains that neither the evidence in the *Qur'ān* nor that in the *sunnah* endorsing the practice of *taqlid* can be considered as sound proofs and that by extension

<sup>77</sup>Ibn Ṣalāḥ assigns one particular section in his book on the manners of the *muftī* and *mustaftī* (*adab al-muftī wa al-mustaftī*) in which he discusses at length the requirements, characters, legal basis and ranks of *muftīs*. Ibn Qayyim and al-Nawawī also devote substantial discussion to the subject of the *muftī* with the points not much different from those raised by Ibn Ṣalāḥ. Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Fatāwā wa Masā'il Ibn Ṣalāḥ fī al-Tafsīr wa al-Ḥadīth wa al-Uṣūl wa al-Fiqh*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 5-132; Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, 1955), 175-199; al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhaddhab*, vol. 1 (n.p.: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, n.d.), 40-65; discussion on the *muqallid*-jurist relation was based on Muḥammad's statement that "Indeed this 'ilm is religion so behold from whom you take your religion." The word 'ilm means knowledge which also refers to the conduct of pleasing God and bringing human beings closer to him. The word was also interpreted by the successors of al-Shāfi'i to mean *fiqh*. Wael B. Hallaq, "On the Origins of the Controversy about the Existence of Mujtahids and the Gate of Ijtihad," *Studia Islamica*, 63 (1986), 131.

<sup>78</sup>al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, 390.

<sup>79</sup>al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhaddhab*, vol. 1, 41.

<sup>80</sup>George Makdisi, "The Significance of the Sunni Schools of Law in Islamic Religious History," *JMES*, 10 (1979), 6.

arguments put forth by the traditionalists in support of the acceptability of *taqlid* were unsound.<sup>81</sup> He also made frequent recourse to the opinions of the early scholars which he interpreted as a clear cut argument against *taqlid*. It seems that his reasoning was similar to al-Shawkānī's who was noted for his extreme denunciation of the practice of *taqlid*.<sup>82</sup> The similarity also appears in the structure of Chalil's arguments which employ a number of devices featured in al-Shawkānī's approach, the most important among which is postulating the hypothetical presence of an opponent to whom he addresses his thoughts. The fact that Chalil closes the section "On the refutation of the arguments in favor of the obligation of the *taqlid* of the 'ulamā'" with a full citation of al-Shawkānī's opinion on the matter confirms his enthusiasm for al-Shawkānī's extreme position.<sup>83</sup>

Chalil's arguments also follow al-Shawkānī in appealing to certain *Qur'ānic* verses which he saw as validating his rejection of *taqlid*.<sup>84</sup> For instance, basing himself on *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 31, he compares the acceptance by non-Muslims of the opinions of their religious leaders to the *taqlid* of Muslims with respect to the views of the *fuqahā*.<sup>85</sup> In interpreting this same verse, al-Shawkānī draws an analogy between the *muqallidūn* and the non-Muslims who are described in the *Qur'ān* as having blindly accepted the values and traditions of their forefathers.<sup>86</sup> The comparison between the *muqallidūn* and the non-Muslims was frequently employed by the reformists as a deterrent against the traditionalists' practice of *taqlid*.<sup>87</sup> 'Abduh, who allowed no excuse for the practice of

<sup>81</sup>Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 368.

<sup>82</sup>Shābān Muḥammad Ismā'il, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī wa Manhajuh fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Doha: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1989), 120-130.

<sup>83</sup>See the section "Bantahan Terhadap Alasan Jang Mengharuskan Bertaqlid Kepada 'Ulama," in Chalil's *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 360-369.

<sup>84</sup>See Chalil's use of the *Qur'ānic* verses and his citation of the opinions of the founders of *madhabs* which he interprets as a rejection of *taqlid* on the basis of the same verses and opinions listed by al-Shawkānī. Ibid., 345-346, 350, 35, 353, 354; idem, *Biography Empat Serangkai Imam Madzhab*, 156, 213, 214; idem, "Sedikit Pendjelasan Ttg. Arti Taqlid.," al-Shawkānī, *al-Qawl al-Mufid*, 21, 22, 24, 25; idem, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, 267.

<sup>85</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 346.

<sup>86</sup>al-Shawkānī, *al-Qawl al-Mufid*, 71-72.

<sup>87</sup>Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 2, 252-253.

*taqlid*, considered the prohibition against *taqlid* equivalent to that against *shirk* (polytheism) on the basis of *Sūrat al-A'raf*, 33, in which the *Qur'ān* condemns both associating God with others and having insubstantial knowledge of God.<sup>88</sup>

Even though the verse which Chalil employed in equating the *muqallidūn* with the non-Muslims was specifically addressed to non-believers,<sup>89</sup> he might have deemed it applicable to the Muslims in consideration of the fact that the *Qur'ān* incorporates *ibrāh* (admonition), which every Muslim should take into account.<sup>90</sup> Recourse to the concept of *ibrāh* was made by Chalil and his reformist counterparts in order to demonstrate the severe consequences of *taqlid* or, in an extreme sense, to accuse the traditionalists of having abandoned the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*.<sup>91</sup>

Chalil's interpretation of *Sūrat al-Nahl*, 43, was also identical to that of al-Shawkānī. Like the latter, he regards the verse *fas'alū ahl al-dhikr* as an admonition to the *'awāmm* to ask the scholars for rulings that incorporate textual evidence, thus implying an order to exercise *ittibā'* and not *taqlid*.<sup>92</sup> Unlike his interpretation of *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 31, however, Chalil's use of *Sūrat al-Nahl*, 43 "contradicts" both the occasion of its revelation and its wording. According to al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī and others, the aforementioned verse was revealed on an occasion when the polytheists refused to acknowledge that Muḥammad was a human being (*bashar*), to which the *Qur'ān* replied by commanding them to consult their learned scholars for facts. Nor does the wording support Chalil's premise for *ittibā'*.

<sup>88</sup>Muḥammad 'Abduh, "al-Ittibā' wa al-Taqlid," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh*, (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālidah Sa'id (Beirut: Dār 'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 71.

<sup>89</sup>Ismā'il, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 126.

<sup>90</sup>In legal theory, this procedure of equation was known as the use of the general wording of the verse and not its specific occasion (*al-'ibārah bi-'umūm al-lafdh lā bi-khuṣūs al-sabab*). For the opinion that the *Qur'ānic* verses contained admonition regardless of their *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the occasions of revelation), see Chalil, "Tudjuan Pokok Dari Poligami Adalah Menolong Anak<sup>2</sup> Jatim dan Kaum Wanita," *Abadi* (October 15, 1954) and 'Abduh, "al-Ittibā' wa al-Taqlid," 68.

<sup>91</sup>This equation, however, was based on contradictory premises since the prominent heads of the *madhhab (a'immat al-madhāhib)* whose rulings were the outcome of their efforts in keeping with the authenticity of the textual sources was contradictory with the *Qur'ānic* concept of the inauthenticity (*tahfīl*) of the non-Muslim scriptures.

<sup>92</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'ān dan As-Sunnah*, 345-346, 360.

since the *mukhāṭab* (interlocutor) of the *ṣiḡhat al-amr* (formula of order) in the verse asks the non-learned people (*ghayr ahl al-dhikr*) to practice *taqlīd* and not *ittibāʿ*. This is particularly the case, since the need for textual evidence or *ittibāʿ* is not mentioned in the verse.<sup>93</sup>

Chalil also examines the authority of the proofs which he believed to be the basis of the traditionalists' endorsement of *taqlīd*. He criticizes their improper use of a *ḥadīth* to support *taqlīd*. The *ḥadīth* states that "Those who do not know are to ask, since the only cure of the disease of inability (*shifāʾ al-ʿayy*) is inquiry." This *ḥadīth*, he argues, orders Muslims to ask for the rationale (*keterangan*) behind a *fatwā* and not to adopt *taqlīd*, since this order was issued by the Prophet condemning the giving of a *fatwā* based on one's own interpretation (*dengan pikiran sendiri*).<sup>94</sup> The same *ḥadīth* was among the most widely used tools employed in defense of *taqlīd* because its wording spoke of its legitimacy. Yet, Chalil was courageous enough not to accept it at face value and to look beneath its surface meaning.<sup>95</sup> Chalil also accuses the traditionalists of resorting to a weak argument when they quote the saying "whoever imitates (*qallada*) an *ʿālim* (a religious scholar), he will meet God safely." He accuses them of having attributed the saying to the Prophet, when in fact a thorough investigation on his part revealed that none of the *al-kutub al-sittah* (six canonical collections of *ḥadīth*) attributes such a saying to the Prophet.<sup>96</sup>

Chalil even rejects the consensus of the *ʿulamāʾ* with regard to the permissibility of the *ʿawāmm*'s resorting to *taqlīd*. He relies in this on the opinion of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr whom he reports as having said: "There is no dispute among the scholars, whenever they may be on the invalidity of *taqlīd*." Not only does he regard Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr's view as a

<sup>93</sup>Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Shirāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 406; Ismāʿīl, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 126.

<sup>94</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 361-362.

<sup>95</sup>Abd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Imām Aḥmad: Dirāsah Usūliyah Muqārinah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadīth, 1977), 677-678.

<sup>96</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 362-363.

solid foundation for the rejection of *naqlid*, but he also explicitly disqualifies the possibility of such a consensus, especially if it had been reached after the fifth century of the *Hijrah*. He argues that there must have existed by that time a number of scholars who rejected the validity of *naqlid*.<sup>97</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Barr was one of three scholars who lived in the 5th century *Hijrah*/ 11th century A. D. and held the practice of *naqlid* to be invalid. Chalil, however, did not realize that Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's prohibition was addressed to the exponents of the *Shari'ah* and not to the *'awāmm*.<sup>98</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Barr could not have adopted such an extreme notion, since he had explicitly imposed on the *'awāmm* the obligation of *naqlid* in support of the opinion of the *jumhūr al-'ulamā'*.<sup>99</sup>

Hence, Chalil's rejection of the consensus of the *jumhūr* was not close to the position of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, but rather to that of al-Shawkānī who unequivocally rejected such a consensus on the part of the *jumhūr*. The latter's position was indeed not shared by other scholars and was consequently regarded as an idiosyncrasy on his part.<sup>100</sup> Such a stance must have seemed inconceivable, particularly since some scholars even extended its adoption to those *mujtahids* who are unable to conduct *ijtihād* on certain matters, although the extension was neither unanimous nor *rajiḥ* (favorable). According to Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, Ibn 'Abbās allowed the abandonment of the practice of *ijtihād* [by a *mujtahid*] if the latter feared that the activity of *ijtihād* would disturb his *'ibādah* or if he did not have enough time to exercise it.<sup>101</sup> Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Baghdādī went so far as to consider anyone (including a *mujtahid*) who is unable to exercise an *ijtihād* in particular cases as a member of the *'awāmm*, the consequence of which was the latter's obligation to

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. 363.

<sup>98</sup>Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's opinion represented the conviction of a lawyer with regards to religious matters. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?," 12.

<sup>99</sup>Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Faḍlih*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-'Āṣimah, 1968), 140.

<sup>100</sup>al-Turkī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Imām Aḥmad*, 676; Ismā'il, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 125.

<sup>101</sup>Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī, *al-Luma' fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Surabaya: Shirkat Bungkul Indah, n.d.), 69.



practice *taqlid*.<sup>102</sup> Although the majority of scholars provided no unified opinion with regard to the legal position of *taqlid*, those who unconditionally rejected its practice were few and belonged to the Zāhirites, the Mu'tazilites of Baghdad and a particular faction (*jama'ah*) within the Imāmites. They obliged every *mukallaf* (someone who is legally capable of observing the precepts of religion) to exercise his own *ijtihād* and to conduct his religious duties in consonance with the dictates of his own reason.<sup>103</sup>

Chalil's ideological rejection of *taqlid* had nothing in common with the three aforementioned groups except for their shared extremeness. Nonetheless, his distrust of the legitimacy of the *'awāmm's taqlid* was tantamount to a denial of the reality of their faith, the acquisition of which happens through inherited practices. In the acquisition of their faith, *taqlid* becomes a prerequisite for the attainment and fulfillment of their religious duties. This premise is illustrated in the following statement:

When the layman [*'awāmm*] makes his choice, his action is referred to as *taqlid*, "investing with authority." His choice "clothes" the juristconsult's opinion with authority. It is the right of the layman to practice *taqlid*; and, applied to him, the term is commendatory. On the other hand, *taqlid* is applied to the juristconsult only exceptionally; in his case it is a term of disapprobation, drawing upon him the censure of his colleagues.<sup>104</sup>

In other words, the practice of *taqlid* for the *'awāmm* was a manifestation of their freedom to seek the opinions of others, whereas inquiries into juridical truth were the privilege of jurists. While nobody had the right to prevent the former from following the opinion of the jurist of their choice, the latter too were under no constraint to arrive at a predestined opinion.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the rejection of *taqlid* was in contradiction with the

<sup>102</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Dīn al-Baḡhdādī al-Ḥanbalī, *Qawā'id al-Uṣūl wa Ma'āqid al-Fuṣūl* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, n.d.), 44.

<sup>103</sup>al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, n.d.), 306; Ignaz Goldziher, *The Zāhiris: Their Doctrines and their History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 30.

<sup>104</sup>George Makdisi, "Freedom in Islamic Jurisprudence: Ijtihād, Taqlid and Academic Freedom," in *la notion de liberté au moyen âge: Islam, Byzance, Occident*, (eds.) George Makdisi et. al. (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1985), 82.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid. 82-83.

procedures of the judicial system in which lawyers, who were experts in the *Shari'ah*, practiced a kind of *taqlid* when they resorted to the standard law books which were compiled as manuals for their judicial practices. It has been stated that:

Among the major practices imposed by consensus on lawyers was that of *taqlid*, consultation of the standard law books of one's own school, with a corresponding abstinence of *ijtihad*, the use of one's own judgment in discovering the law. The underlying assumption was that the standard decisions of the schools in detail were themselves now authorized by consensus and could not be overridden."<sup>106</sup>

Chalil's rejection of the *'awāmm's taqlid* even went beyond the stance of the early reformist thinkers, whose chief aim was to discredit the practice of *taqlid* which they considered the antithesis of *ijtihad*, the exercise of which they wanted to promote. Ibn Taymiyah, who is renowned for his campaign against the excesses of *taqlid*, disagreed with the imposition of *ijtihad* upon the *'awāmm* even on matters of *furū'* (trivial) issues. He argued that those who held otherwise could resort only to a weak proof.<sup>107</sup> Following in the footsteps of his mentor, Ibn Qayyim imposed the duty of *ijtihad* on legal experts only (*wa hādha fi'l ahl al-ilm fahuwa wājib*), allowing for the destitute (*al-muqṭar*) to adopt *taqlid*.<sup>108</sup> Another important Hanbalite scholar, Ibn Qudāmah, not only called for the obligatory practice of *taqlid* by the *'awāmm*, but also demanded its exercise by others.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, Shāh Walī Allāh maintained that *taqlid al-madhhab* had become indispensable for a number of reasons, the chief of which was the prevention of admiration for one's own opinion (*wa a'jaba kulla dhī ra'y ra'yuh*).<sup>110</sup>

Chalil, however, was convinced that all four Imāms had rejected *taqlid* and discouraged any blind acceptance of their legal opinions. In his biography of those Imāms,

<sup>106</sup>Hourani, "The Basis of Authority of Consensus in Sunnite Islam," 24.

<sup>107</sup>Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū'at Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Ahmad Ibn Taymiyah*, vol. 20 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Kurdistān al-Islāmiyah, 1326 H.), 203.

<sup>108</sup>Ibn Qayyim, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in*, vol. 2, 241.

<sup>109</sup>Ibn Qudāmah, *Rawḍat al-Nāzir wa Jannat al-Munāzir* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987), 344.

<sup>110</sup>Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Inṣāf fi Bayān Asbāb al-Ikhtilāf* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1978), 59.

he devoted a complete section to each and highlighted their unanimous call for independent inquiry as well as their admonitions against all unquestioning acceptance of their teachings.<sup>111</sup> Such a stance was typical of the dialectical arguments put forth by the reformists who argued that even the Imāms, so venerated by the traditionalists, had admitted that their interpretations were not final and that inquiry into the texts from which the decisions were derived was encouraged.<sup>112</sup>

Interestingly, Chalil did not mention that these same Imāms had also claimed that in extracting their legal rulings they had put the utmost effort into making their opinions as conformable as humanly possible with the textual sources.<sup>113</sup> al-Shāfi'i, for example, had reportedly stated that if any of the cases (*kull mas'alah*) he had settled were found erroneous, they could be swiftly revised during his lifetime or even after his death (*fi hayātī wa ba'da mawtī*) so as to make them conform to the Prophetic tradition.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, logically speaking, adopting the legal rulings that these Imāms had furnished could not be considered as mere acceptance of their personal opinions, since a conscious effort had been made on their part to eliminate any personal bias in their rulings. Moreover, the reputation of the Imāms spoke not only of their scientific prowess (*'ilm*), but also of their piety (*wara'*) and merit (*faḍl*), three ingredients which qualified them for positions of authority on legal matters.

Chalil expresses his disagreement with what he perceived to be the traditionalists' rejection of the opinions of the *ṣaḥābah* and their preference for the opinions of the founders of the *madhhabs*. Their preference for the latter, they said, was based on the fact

<sup>111</sup> Chalil, *Biography Empat Seroangkai*, 44-46, 155-156, 213-214; idem, *Riwayat Imam Maliki* (Soerabaya: Drukkerij Peneleh, n.d.), 36-42.

<sup>112</sup> al-Shawkānī, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd*, 54-62; 'Abduh, "al-Ittibā' wa al-Taqlid," 69-70; Hassan, *Ringkasan Islam*, 37; As-Surkati, *Tiga Personal*, 30.

<sup>113</sup> al-Sha'rānī claims that the teachings of the founders of the four *madhhabs* were carefully derived from the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. He illustrates the suppression of the personal bias which could have occurred in the extracted rulings saying that the *madhhab* was like a piece of cloth which was knitted from *Qur'ānic* and *sunnah* materials. al-Sha'rānī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 1 (n.p.: al-Maṭba'ah al-Husayniyah, 1329 H.), 52.

<sup>114</sup> Cited in Ismā'īl, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 120.

that the *ṣaḥābah's* opinions were neither compiled (*dibukukan*) nor systematized (*dikokohkan*). Therefore, Chalil continues, the traditionalists were insisting that the opinions of the *ṣaḥābah* could not be said to provide a solid precedent.<sup>115</sup> Chalil does not mention any sources or names to account for this preference on the part of the founders of the *madhhabs*. His evidence is in the form of a *fatwā* which was written in Arabic by the 'ulamā'. He then emphasizes certain points in this *fatwā* describing dissidents from the four *madhhab* as a misled (*sesat*) and misleading (*menyesatkan*) group of individuals verging on the state of infidelity. No further exploration is conducted by Chalil in order to reveal the occasion or the purpose that led to the issuance of such a *fatwā*.<sup>116</sup>

The traditionalists' sources were mostly Shāfi'ite authorities, such as al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Haytamī, al-Rāfi'i, al-Nawawī and al-Suyūṭī to name only a few.<sup>117</sup> Chalil seems to refer to some of those authorities whose opinions with regard to the case in question were quoted by Shiddiq.<sup>118</sup> An investigation of their thought reveals that some of the Shāfi'ite jurists prohibited the 'awāmm from adopting opinions other than those of the four *madhhabs*, whose unquestionable trustworthiness could not possibly mislead them. al-Juwaynī, availing himself of the consensus of the authoritative 'ulamā' (*ijmā' al-muḥaqqiqīn*), even prohibited the 'awāmm's adoption of the opinions of the great *ṣaḥābah*, because he reasoned that they were not well versed in the art of *ijtihād* or the methods of investigation, debate and doctrinal inquiry.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>115</sup>Chalil, "Sedikit Pendjelasan Ttg. Taqlid."

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>For more information on the works of these and other scholars used in the *pesantrens*, see Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen*, 146 (1990), 226-265; Siradjuddin Abbas lists the important texts used by the *ahl al-sunnah* circle. He uses the term *ahl al-sunnah* to denote the adherents of the Shāfi'ite *madhhab*, and not the traditionalists because he seems to regard the latter as a pejorative term. Siradjuddin Abbas, *I'tiqad Ahlul-sunnah Wal-Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1983), 361-363.

<sup>118</sup>Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*, 86-89; see also Abū Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Shaṭā al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Tālibīn*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 25.

<sup>119</sup>al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1980.), 146; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isnawī, *Nihāyat al-Sūl fī Sharḥ Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, vol. 3 (Miṣr: Maṭba'at al-Tawfīq al-Adabīyah, n.d.), 191.

Giving a different reason, Ibn Ṣalāḥ declared that the *ṣaḥābah's* teachings bear the stamp of embryonic reasoning. They are rather rudimentary and abstract in nature (*fatāwā mujarradah*) and have not been extensively developed nor sufficiently particularized. Hence, the adoption of such *fatāwā* might contradict the aim for which they might have originally been intended. This was in contrast to the situation of the four *madhabs*, he further explained, where all expounded teachings had been codified, the general specified and the common particularized.<sup>120</sup> Reservations as to the *ṣaḥābah's* opinions were expressed not only by Shāfi'ite scholars, but also by those of other legal schools who took precautions against them.<sup>121</sup> However, prohibiting the *ʿawām* from following any opinion other than those derived from the four *madhabs* as advocated by al-Juwaynī and Ibn Ṣalāḥ was an extreme proposition.<sup>122</sup>

The traditionalists also introduced the alternative views of Taqy al-Dīn al-Subkī, al-Zarkashī and Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, all of whom proposed more flexible opinions. al-Zarkashī, in support of al-Subkī, maintained that the *ʿulamāʾ* had allowed the emulation of opinions other than those expounded by the four *madhabs* when the textual proof (*dalīl*) and method (*ṭarīq*) of derivation of such rulings were known. Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, who made a specific reference to the *ṣaḥābah*, declared that the emulation of their deeds was unconditionally allowed, if the ruling accepted were proved to have been laid down by them. With special reference to al-Zarkashī's thought, the traditionalists confirmed the authority of his opinion concerning the *taqlīd* of the *ṣaḥābah* and endorsed it, particularly

<sup>120</sup>Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Idjtihad dan Taqlid*, 86; Bā ʿAlawī, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidīn*, 8; A. Aziz Masyhuri, *Masail Diniyah Hasil Mukhtar & Muass Ulama Nahdlatul Ulama* (n.p: n.d.), 40.

<sup>121</sup>See the opinion of Ibn Ḥālib, a Malikite scholar, on this question. Ibn Ḥālib, *Muntahā al-Wuṣūl wa al-ʿAmal fī ʿIlm al-Uṣūl wa al-Jadal* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1985), 206.

<sup>122</sup>Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, *al-Ijtihād fī al-Islām* (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Fannī li-al-Nashr, 1959), 25.

in the absence of any injunction promoting loyalty to a single *madhhab*. This, however, did not fit well with the Ḥanafites, who believed otherwise.<sup>123</sup>

Chalil's attack on *taqlid* was cast in a general formula, the thrust of which was that the traditionalists had applied *taqlid* unconditionally. He did not specify which aspects of 'aqidah and 'ibadah practices should fall within the domain of the traditionalists' exercise of *taqlid*.<sup>124</sup> In fact, *taqlid* as defined by the traditionalists was allowed only in matters beyond those affecting Īmān, the pillars of Islam, basic knowledge of *mu'āmalāt* (social relations), 'uqūbāt (penalty) and *muḥarramāt* (forbidden acts), in short subjects which could be easily acquired by the 'awāmm. According to the traditionalist conception of *taqlid*, there are cases in which *taqlid* is legally prohibited and about which every Muslim is forced to inquire. This prohibition was stipulated in order to make Muslims gain first-hand knowledge of those aspects of religion which touch upon their daily lives, such as the obligation and manner of prayers, fasting and almsgiving, as well as injunctions against *zinā* (adultery), murder and *ribā* (usury) which belong to the field of 'ibādāt, 'uqūbāt and *mu'āmalāt*.<sup>125</sup> The criteria of *taqlid*, as proposed by the traditionalists, were those established and espoused by the early scholars.<sup>126</sup>

Because Chalil saw the concept of the traditionalist *taqlid* as embracing the whole fabric of religious practices, he distorted it to such an extent that he lost sight of its nature as a mechanism developed by the *fuqahā'* enabling the 'awāmm to execute their religious duties. It was in this light that the traditionalists regarded their practice of *taqlid*. A close observation of Shiddiq's criteria of *taqlid*, for example, indicates that he had accommodated

<sup>123</sup>Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Idjtihad dan Taqlid*, 86; see also the Arabic text in *Aḥkām al-Fuqahā'* which more or less shows tolerance to opinions other than those of the four *madhabs*. *Aḥkām al-Fuqahā'*, vol. 2, 27-28.

<sup>124</sup>Chalil, "Sedikit Penjelasan Ttg. Arti Taqlid."

<sup>125</sup>For a discussion of Īmān from the traditionalist perspective, see chapter two above, and for the rest, see Shiddiq's *Disekitar Soal Idjtihad dan Taqlid*, 62-63, 75.

<sup>126</sup>Ibn Ḥājjib, *Muntahā al-Wuṣūl fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl wa al-Jadal*, 219; al-Shirāzī, *al-Lum'a fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 68.

the interpretation of the early *fuqahā*.<sup>127</sup> The traditionalists did not define *taqlid* as an unquestioning obedience to the opinions of others foregoing the need for proofs. Nor did knowing the proofs underlying particular rulings, according to them, mean that one was not a *muqallid*, since these rulings still formed part of tradition existing within a particular school of legal thought.<sup>128</sup>

Chalil held that Islam ordered people to practice *ittibā'* and not *taqlid*. While the learned were unfailingly obliged to undertake *ijtihad*, the *'awāmm* were equally commanded to engage in *ittibā'*.<sup>129</sup> In support of his thesis, he cites two different *Qur'ānic* texts in which two derivations of the word *ittibā'*, namely *ittabi'ū* and *fattabi'ūni*, are used.<sup>130</sup> The verses, however, have nothing to do with the concept of *ittibā'* which technically means the act of following the opinions of others after knowing their proofs (*adillah*) and before coming to the conclusion that such opinions are the correct ones. In Chalil's definition, *ittibā'* is specifically to follow the explanations and examples of the Prophet and his *ṣaḥābah* that had been handed down to future generations through the textual proofs of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*.<sup>131</sup> In this definition, Chalil emphasizes the importance of the Prophet and the *ṣaḥābah* as the only ones entitled to give opinions. However, in another definition he affirms that the giver of legal opinions could be anyone else so long as this person was able to support his position with a *dalil* (proof) which would then allow the questioner to be a *muttabi'* (practitioner of *ittibā'*).<sup>132</sup>

Chalil's concept of *ittibā'* appears to have stressed the act of asking for textual proofs with no obligation on the part of the *muttabi'* to investigate the authority of the proofs, their reliability or their authenticity. As such, his definition *ittibā'* expected a

<sup>127</sup> al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā*, vol. 2, 389; al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām*, vol. 4, 306; Ismā'il, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 114.

<sup>128</sup> Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*, 77-78.

<sup>129</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 378.

<sup>130</sup> the *Qur'ān*, 3: 1 and 7: 2.

<sup>131</sup> Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 376.

<sup>132</sup> See definitions number 1 and 2 in *ibid*.

passive acceptance of the opinions of others on the part of the *muttabi*.<sup>133</sup> The latter's passivity can be confirmed from the fact that the *Persis* had entrusted the responsibility of ensuring the correctness of any legal opinion to its giver and not to the *muttabi*.<sup>134</sup> Such a stand was contrary to that of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, to whom Chalil referred in his discussion of *ittibā'*. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr defined *ittibā'* as following the opinion of a scholar while at the same time understanding the clarity of his argument and the soundness of his method (*'alā mā bāna min faḍl qawlih wa siḥbat madhhabih*).<sup>135</sup>

Even if Chalil's concept of *ittibā'* was in accordance with that of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, it was still incompatible with the intellectual state of the *'awāmm*, who were not capable of discovering the reasons behind the proofs. As the *'awāmm* did not understand whether the textual proofs brought to their notice were right or wrong, the concept of *ittibā'*, as proposed by Chalil, would never have "freed" them from the "shackles" of *taqlīd* as he theoretically expected. Hence, a conflict emerges between the theoretical concept of *ittibā'* and its implementation by the practitioners. While the concept aimed at purging the practice of blind obedience or *taqlīd*, the *muttabi'ūn* (plural form of *muttabi'*) still shared the *muqallidūn*'s ignorance concerning the ideas behind the proofs.

It was to avert this confusion that some scholars defined *ittibā'* and *taqlīd* as two sides of the same coin.<sup>136</sup> For them, *ittibā'* and *taqlīd* were so similar that they could not detect even any linguistic difference between them (*wa lam yuthbat ayyu farq lughawī*).<sup>137</sup> Indeed, they declared that the word *ittibā'* in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 166-167, conveys the

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 378.

<sup>134</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 51.

<sup>135</sup>See footnote no. 1 in Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 376; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's opinion was cited in al-Shawkānī's *al-Qawl al-Mufīd*, 34; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's definition was in line with that of al-Suyūṭī who limited the undertaking of *ittibā'* to those who had the ability to determine if the judgment by scholars were correct or not. E. M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 64.

<sup>136</sup>Muḥammad al-Dasūqī, *al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd fī al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyah* (Doha: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1987), 204.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 203-204.



meaning of unquestioning obedience which is exactly similar to the technical meaning of *al-taqlid al-a'mā* or blind imitation of the opinion of others.<sup>138</sup> As far as the *'awāmm* were concerned, nothing was left for them but to follow the rulings available at their disposal without inquiring about or resorting to proofs. In *al-Musawwadah*, Ibn Taymiyah mentions that the *'awāmm* are not allowed (*lā yabaghī*) to search for the textual evidence from which a *fatwā* was deduced.<sup>139</sup> In fact, this was the method of the *ṣahābah*, the *tābi'ūn* and the founders of the *Sunnī* schools of law (*a'immat al-madhhab*), since they never provided any textual evidence when giving their *fatwās*.<sup>140</sup>

Chalil's rejection of *taqlid* was entirely consistent with the anti-*madhhab* doctrine of the reformists, who tended to view the *madhhab* as a source of *taqlid* rather than the product of *ijtihād*. Some of the more extreme reformists even considered following any *madhhab* as an unlawful practice (*ḥarām*).<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the *madhhab* was blamed by the reformists for having facilitated the fragmentation of the *ummah* into sectarian factions.<sup>142</sup> The only remedy for this in their eyes was a complete abandonment of the *madhhab* and a return to the original sources of Islam, namely the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*, and this by reviving the "practice of *ijtihād*". The reformists failed to understand that a return to the primary sources by any means would not reconcile divided opinions, but would rather create new variations of legal opinion, as previously shown. These new legal opinions would certainly be challenged by the traditionalists whose purpose would be to defend the validity of the established schools and to convince the modernists by discrediting their thesis.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.; the *Qur'ān*, I: 166-167.

<sup>139</sup>Al Taymiyah, *al-Musawwadah fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Madani, 1983.), 495.

<sup>140</sup>Cited in Ismā'il, *al-Imām al-Shawkānī*, 129.

<sup>141</sup>See Abdulkadir Hassan's view on *madhhab* in his *U-ṣhūl Fiqih* (Surabaya: Ampel Gading, n.d.), 120.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>143</sup>See footnote 24 of this chapter above, which lists the books written by the traditionalist scholars in defense of the validity of the established schools and in an attempt to convince the modernists of this fact by discrediting their thesis.

Chalil seems to have believed that the concept of *madhhab* had no legal basis. He said that even the word (*perkataan*) *madhhab* itself was never heard by the *ṣaḥābah*.<sup>144</sup> In response to the traditionalists' insistence on the importance of *madhhab*, A. Hassan also claimed that the word *madhhab* occurs neither in the *Qur'ān* nor in *ḥadīth*.<sup>145</sup> While the two scholars were correct in saying that the word does not appear in the *Qur'ān*, it does appear in the *sunnaḥ* and was, therefore, heard by the *ṣaḥābah*. It occurs several times in the chapter concerning ritual purity (*kitāb al-ṭahārah*) of the *Sunans* of al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah and in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal as well as in the chapter on sales (*kitāb al-buyū'*) in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>146</sup> If Chalil and Hassan had been aware that the word *madhhab* does occur and is documented in the *ḥadīth* literature, they might have adopted a different attitude towards the institution, or, at least, have investigated its evolution with more sympathy and understanding.<sup>147</sup>

Chalil's argument also depends on the premise that the *ṣaḥābah* had such excellent judgment and were so consistent that no *madhhab* ever developed during that era, but only afterwards. In practicing one's religious duties, Chalil further argues, nobody ever claims that he is following the *madhhab* of Abū Bakr or that of other *ṣaḥābah*. Hence, Chalil believed that since the concept of *madhhab* took root after the era of the *ṣaḥābah*, it follows, therefore, that the doctrines of the various legal schools were not legally binding or worthy of emulation. Furthermore, Chalil demonstrates that the establishment of a separate legal school was neither the wish nor the intention of any of the founders of these schools.

<sup>144</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 380.

<sup>145</sup>Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 162.

<sup>146</sup>al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937), 3; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1952), 120; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1984), 405.

<sup>147</sup>Shāh Walī Allāh accepted *taqlīd al-madhhab* which in his view was in conformity with the soundest juristic traditions. These traditions, according to Shāh Walī Allāh, could be traced back to the great *mujtahids* who were linked with the *ṭābi' al-ṭābi'īn*, *ṭābi'ūn* and *ṣaḥābah* and ultimately to the Prophet. Syed Moinuddin Qadri, "Traditions of Taqlid and Talfiq, 1," *Islamic Culture*, 57 (1983), 47; Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 380.

Indeed, none of the founders ever claimed that his *fatwā* on one particular issue should be taken for granted and instead they insisted that it ought to be the arguments underlying the *fatwā* that should be accepted or rejected.<sup>148</sup> He further argues that the subsequent '*ulamā*', who were the followers of the founders of the *madhhab*s and lived in the fourth century of the *Hijrah*, propagated the practice of *taqlid* and the emulation of the legal school which they deemed to be the best.<sup>149</sup>

Chalil held to the premise that following a *madhhab* should be understood in the sense of adherence to the textual sources from which the rulings were extracted, rather than adherence to the *madhhab* that had extracted them.<sup>150</sup> Such an interpretation, he argues, is in agreement with al-Shāfi'i's assertion that his *madhhab* relied on the execution of whatever was prescribed in the content of a sound *ḥadīth* itself.<sup>151</sup> In his argument, Chalil makes use of al-Shāfi'i's well-known statement (*qawl mashhūr*) that "when a *ḥadīth* is sound it is my *madhhab*" (*in ṣaḥḥa al-ḥadīth fahuwa madhhabī*), a statement that has survived in numerous versions, four of which are quoted by Chalil.<sup>152</sup> It seems, however, that Chalil did not take full cognizance of all the meanings and implications of al-Shāfi'i's deceptively simple statement. In fact, Taqy al-Dīn al-Subkī wrote a treatise (*risālah*) entitled "Idhā Ṣaḥḥa al-Ḥadīth Fahuwa Madhhabī," which he devotes solely to a discussion of al-Shāfi'i's aforementioned saying and in which he explores all the variations and ideas which al-Shāfi'i might have intended.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid. 382.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Apa Arti Mengikuti Sesuatu Mashab," *Abadi* (January 29, 1954).

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.; Ibn Taymiyah also calls for the abandonment of a jurist's opinion if it contradicted a sound *ḥadīth*. The refusal of abandonment would mean a distrust of the Prophet's saying, reliance on an unauthoritative source and a belief in the abrogation of the *ḥadīth* in question. Ibn Taymiyah, *Raf' al-Malām 'an al-A'immat al-A'lām* (Damascus, Manshūrāt al-Maktab al-Islāmī, n.d.), 4.

<sup>152</sup>Chalil, "Apa Arti Mengikuti Sesuatu Mashab."

<sup>153</sup>Taqy al-Dīn al-Subkī, "Idhā Ṣaḥḥa al-Ḥadīth Fahuwa Madhhabī," in *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il al-Muniriyyah*, vol. 2 (n.p.: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1346.), 98-101.

In this treatise, al-Subkī examines the thought of scholars who had studied al-Shāfi'ī's legal decisions and the latter's consistency with the *sunnah*. His aim was to demonstrate al-Shāfi'ī's erudite knowledge and mastery of the *ḥadīth* literature, a mastery of which had brought the latter's *madhhab* into harmony with the Prophetic *sunnah*.<sup>154</sup> al-Subkī also demonstrates that in comparison with the other *madhhabs* al-Shāfi'ī's *madhhab* was the closest to the *sunnah* even in comparison with that of Mālik. He does so by referring to various cases to substantiate his thesis.<sup>155</sup> A case in point was the practice of *qunūt* which al-Shāfi'ī considered a *rukn* of the *Ṣubḥ* prayer. It was narrated that a certain Abū Ḥasan al-Karjī abandoned the practice on the basis of a *ḥadīth* which he understood to mean that the Prophet did not perform the *qunūt* in the *Ṣubḥ* prayer. Therefore, on the basis of this assumption and following al-Shāfi'ī's maxim (when a *ḥadīth* is sound it is my *madhhab*), al-Karjī refrained from practicing *qunūt*. Later, however, he found out that he had wrongly interpreted the *ḥadīth* and resumed the practice of *qunūt*.<sup>156</sup>

Chalil states that although the traditionalists claimed to be followers of al-Shāfi'ī, they did not utilize his works but instead availed themselves of the commentaries and the super-glosses which were composed by later jurists. He further comments that in consequence the traditionalists adopted the opinions of al-Haytamī, al-Ramlī and al-Bājūrī through such treatises as *Fatḥ al-Mu'īn* by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malibārī and *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn* by Abū Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Shaṭā al-Bakrī, while ignoring al-Shāfi'ī's primary legal work, *al-Umm*, which was left unstudied.<sup>157</sup> He, therefore, challenges them to plunge

<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>al-Sha'rānī reports that Abū Bakr al-Ājirī was asked about the *madhhabs* of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Ibn Rahwayh and al-Shāfi'ī to which al-Ājirī replied that for al-Shāfi'ī both his reason (*ra'y*) and the *ḥadīth* [that al-Shāfi'ī used] were sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), while for Ibn Rahwayh both were weak (*da'if*). As for Mālik only his *ḥadīth* was sound and not his reason, while Abū Ḥanīfah had none of these (*lā ra'y wa lā ḥadīth*). al-Sha'rānī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 1, 53.

<sup>156</sup>al-Subkī, "Idhā Ṣaḥḥa al-Ḥadīth Fahuwa Madhhabī," 103.

<sup>157</sup>*Fatḥ al-Mu'īn li-Sharḥ Qur'ān al-'Ayn bi-Muḥimmāt al-Dīn* was written by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malibārī and was commented upon by al-Bakrī in his *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn*. See Abū Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Shaṭā al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993); for the use of *Fatḥ al-Mu'īn* and *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn* by the traditionalists, see Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning," 247.

into *al-Umm* and to follow what al-Shāfi'i stipulated and to abandon what he did not mention.<sup>158</sup> This challenge was a common device adopted by the reformists in their attempt at dislodging adherence to the *madhhab* by the traditionalists. Adopting the same tone, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy also launches an attack on the traditionalist use of both the summaries of and commentaries on al-Shāfi'i's works while ignoring al-Shāfi'i's *al-Umm*.<sup>159</sup> Hence, Chalil had little regard for the traditionalists' claim to be following the practice of the Shāfi'ite *madhhab*, when this depended primarily on the views of his followers rather than on those of al-Shāfi'i himself.

It is generally known that ranks were assigned to the *madhhab* scholars depending on the levels of legal enterprise that they undertook and their adherence to the methodological means and other precepts set by their Imām. The highest rank was that of the *mujtahid muntasib* (*mujtahid* who was affiliated to a particular *madhhab*) whose expertise in the sciences of *ijtihād* and proficiency in the art of *istinbāṭ* (deduction) allowed them to exercise an independent *ijtihād*, although at the same time exhibiting an unbroken link with the method and principles of their Imām.<sup>160</sup> Next in rank came those whose full comprehension of the teaching of their Imām enabled them to systematize (*rattabū*), edit (*harrarū*) and generate their Imām's statements. Then came those scholars who had memorized, understood and mastered the teachings of their Imām in both simple and complex cases. The last rank was subdivided into several categories of scholars who due to their inability to acquire the proofs belonged to the lowest rank of scholarship.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>158</sup>Chalil, *Kembali kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, 368-369.

<sup>159</sup>Wahyudi, "Hasbi's Theory of Ijtihād in the Context of Indonesian Fiqh," 6.

<sup>160</sup>The *uṣūliyyūn* did not adopt a unified approach with regard to the number of ranks of the *madhhab* scholars and the name assigned to each rank. Nonetheless, in spite of difference in the number of ranks and their names they did not differ in describing the identity or the character by which each particular rank was recognized. For a conclusive discussion of the different ranks, their number and the time when each scholar lived, see Hallaq "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?," 29.

<sup>161</sup>al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhaddḥab*, vol. 1, 43-44; Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Ghāyat al-Wuṣūl Sharḥ Lubḥ al-Uṣūl* (n.p.: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1941), 148; Āl Taymiyah, *al-Musawwadab*, 489-491; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Fatāwā wa Masā'il Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 29-36.

The aforementioned hierarchy of *madhhab* scholars was not unknown to the traditionalists, because they mentioned that such a hierarchy existed.<sup>162</sup> As such, they might have logically deduced that their *fiqh* texts constituted an extended formulation of the legal opinions of al-Shāfi'i, who, due to certain circumstances, did not preach on many of the subjects which subsequent Shāfi'ite scholars dealt with. Shiddiq, for example, mentions that al-Shāfi'i did not offer any opinion concerning the obligation of *al-talaffuz bi-al-niyah* (mentioning the intention) for prayer. Rather, it was the *aṣḥāb al-wujūh* (the second rank according to his categorization) who discussed it on the basis of the general principles laid down by al-Shāfi'i.<sup>163</sup>

It should be noted that a number of the *fiqh* texts employed by Indonesian traditionalists were written by the great Shāfi'ite scholars, such as al-Ghazālī, al-Suyūṭī, al-Anṣārī, al-Haytamī, al-Ramlī and al-Rāfi'i who were all endowed with the title of *mujtahid muntasib*.<sup>164</sup> It was, perhaps, on the basis of the considerable legal authority of these scholars that their *fiqh* texts came to be called *al-kutub al-mu'tabarah* (recognized texts) or *al-kutub al-mu'tamad 'alayhā* (reliable texts) by the traditionalists.<sup>165</sup> Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that although Shāfi'ite scholars worked according to the same methodology, they occasionally disagree on technicalities the consequence of which was the provision of

<sup>162</sup>Shiddiq assigns a fixed name to most of the ranks ranging from *mujtahid muntasib*, *aṣḥāb al-wujūh* and *ahl al-tarjīh* to *ḥuffāz*, while to others he gives no names but places them in the lowest rank. Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*, 56-57; though not specifically concerned with the rank of the *madhhab* scholars, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidin* also mentions the title *mujtahid al-madhhab* which was ascribed to al-Muzanī and *mujtahid al-fatwā* which was assigned to the al-Shaykhānī, namely al-Nawawī and al-Rāfi'i. Bā 'Alawī, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidin*, 6-7.

<sup>163</sup>Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Ijtihad dan Taqlid*, 57.

<sup>164</sup>While the first two assumed for themselves the rank of *mujtahid fi al-madhhab* or *mujtahid muqayyad* (both in the sense of the meaning of *mujtahid muntasib*), the rest were recognized by their contemporaries and successors simply as *mujtahids*. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?", 17, 27, 28; Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 65; 'Abd al-Muta'ālī al-Ṣa'id, *al-Mujaddidūn fi al-Islām* (n.p.: Dār al-Ḥamāmī li-al-Tibā'ah, n.d.), 342, 375.

<sup>165</sup>For the use of the two terms, see A. Malik Madany, "Cara Pengambilan Keputusan Hukum Islam dalam Bachtsul Masail Nahdlatul Ulama," *Aula* (December; 1991), 54; Masyhuri, *Masuil Diniyah Hasil Mukhtar & Munas Ulama*, 40.

diverse legal opinions.<sup>166</sup> However, no matter how much they differed from one another, they utilized the same primary sources as did their Imām. As such, it is fair to conclude that their teachings fell within the continuum of a single school of thought and were an extension of the many ideas expounded by al-Shāfi'ī himself.

Chalil's pattern of applying reformist thought was similar to that of other reformists. He pleaded for the obligation of *ijtihād* and *itibā'*, the institutionalization of *ijmā'* and the abandonment of *taqlid* and the *madhhab*. Nonetheless, his *ijtihād*, which was aimed at making the *Shari'ah* more accommodating to the new realities, proved to be simply a means to refute the established practices of the traditionalists. He attempted to refute certain practices which belonged to the realm of theology and advocated the revision of *'ibādah*-related matters.

Chalil took into account the dynamics of a changing society by associating the classical concept of consensus with the modern notion of a legislative body. This association seems to have had little relevance for the Indonesian community of his time. His proposal of the concept of *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*, a role to be played by the '*ulamā*' acting as the sole makers of consensus, was infeasible. The '*ulamā*' were already unable to cope with the growing diversity of problems and needs. They were even incapable of reaching a consensus on purely religious matters due to an internal rift, let alone solving the complex problems which Muslims face in modern times.

Chalil launched a rigorous attack on *taqlid* in which he went beyond the opinions of other reformists, with the possible exception of al-Shawkānī, whose absolute rejection of *taqlid* was already an idiosyncrasy on his part. Chalil's rejection of the consensus of the '*ulamā*' on the validity of *taqlid* for the '*awāmm*' and his denial of its role in the process of building their faith exhibited his rigid intolerance toward *taqlid*. Likewise, his

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<sup>166</sup>For the solution which was proposed when disagreement took place, see al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Tālibin*, vol. 1, 27.

"unawareness" of the role of *taqlid* in the judicial system showed his unawareness of the legal mechanism through which the practice of *taqlid* had evolved. Chalil's ultimate rejection of *taqlid* solicited the views of founders of the *madhhab* who warned against the unquestioning acceptance of their legal decisions. This reference, however, showed that he did not appreciate the legal meaning and the implications of their views.

Chalil's call for the practice of *itibā'* and the rejection of *madhhab* was intended to free Muslims from relying on the authority of others. His call for creative lawmaking by means of *ijtihād* was also directed to the same end. His concept of *itibā'*, however, seems to have been incompatible with the intellectual state of the *'awāmm* who were not capable of discovering the reasons behind the proofs that they were supposed to be demanding. *Itibā'*, therefore, did not bring its practicers out of the state of blind obedience which it initially was intended to do. Chalil developed arguments against the adherence to *madhhab*s and proposed a return to an independent legal reasoning by means of *ijtihād*. This proposal failed to materialize, since his *ijtihād* and that of his reformist counterparts eventually created other variant legal opinions, which not only augmented the state of legal stagnation, but also helped to foster a new *taqlid* against which his call for the abandonment of *madhhab*s was directed.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Moenawar Chalil's Views On Popular Religious Practices

Muslims observe the twelfth day of Rabi' al-Awwal in commemoration of the Prophet's birthday. This commemoration has become the occasion of the festival which is known as *Mawlid*. Likewise, Muslims venerate the tenth day of al-Muḥarram commonly called '*Āshūrā*', the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān known as *Laylat al-qadr*, as well as Ramaḍān itself and the month of Ṣafar. Reformists were generally opposed to the celebration of *Mawlid*, because they held that the celebration was not sufficiently supported by textual evidence. Moreover, they denounced it on account of the so-called "corrupt" practices surrounding it that were not upheld by the *Shari'ah*. Similarly, the manner of celebrating venerated days was not acceptable to reformists, because it entailed complex customs that were in direct opposition to their espousal of a simple tradition of veneration. This controversy became the subject of a heated debate between reformists and traditionalists in Indonesia. The reformists advocated a simplification of religious celebrations and rigidly imposed a set of text-based rules for their performance. Moenawar Chalil also spoke out against the traditional manner of celebration and veneration. His views on these controversial issues will be briefly discussed by examining his arguments and juxtaposing them with those of the traditionalists. When necessary, the arguments of the earlier scholars will be used in revealing the historical context of these issues, since this controversy constitutes part of a general trend which has survived to the present. While some early scholars showed a marked indifference to the legitimacy of the traditional trend of celebrations, others seem to have directly or indirectly supported these phenomena.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents Chalil's stand on the controversial *Mawlid* celebration, while the second part discusses his attitude towards practices commonly observed on the day of '*Āshūrā*'. The third part examines his stand on the issue of *ḥisāb* and *ru'yah*, along with his assessment of the veneration of *Laylat*

*al-qadr*. Although the *ḥisāb-ru'yah* debate has no direct connection to the issue of veneration, discussion of this debate is in fact a necessary prelude to the subject of venerating the month of Ramaḍān. Chalil's attitude toward the tradition of *Rebo wekasun* will complete the discussion on the veneration controversy, since the tradition of *Rebo wekasun* stemmed from a reverence for the month of Ṣafar.

# I

The *Mawlid al-nabī* is a controversial festival with a reputation for heterodoxy. The question of whether the celebration of the *Mawlid* is allowed or not has arisen from time to time. The fact that al-Suyūṭī was asked for a *fatwā* on the *Mawlid* shows that this question was of topical interest as early as in 9th/ 15th century Cairo and that there were people both in favor of and against its celebration.<sup>1</sup> Even the Fāṭimīds, whose claim to be the descendants of the Prophet had prompted them to initiate the tradition of *Mawlid*, temporarily suspended its celebration on the account of lack of a legal basis.<sup>2</sup> In modern times, not only did the Wahhābīs try to eliminate the celebration of *Mawlid*, but other Muslims too, with less puritanical views, attempted to reduce the celebration to a sober level.<sup>3</sup> A number of arguments against the permissibility of the *Mawlid* were put forward, the chief one of them being the fact that this festival is not mentioned in either the *Qur'ān* or the *sunnah* and was not celebrated by the Prophet or the *salaf*.

Moenawar Chalil's debates with the traditionalists also revolved around the controversial *Mawlid* celebration. Indeed, the celebration became a point of disagreement between the reformists and the traditionalists. The *Persis*, for example, considered the *Mawlid* to be an example of *bid'ah* (innovation in religious matters) and accused the

<sup>1</sup>N. J. G. Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 68-69.

<sup>2</sup>Ḥasan al-Sandūbī, *Tārīkh al-ḥitafāl bi-al-Mawlid al-Nabawī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Istiḳāmah, 1948), 64-65.

<sup>3</sup>Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 149.

traditionalist *'ulamā'* of perpetuating *bid'ah* by defending its practice.<sup>4</sup> The dispute over the celebration of *Mawlid*, although much less rigorous in the last three decades, has not entirely lost momentum and the issues of legitimacy and illegitimacy remain moot questions in both modernist and traditionalist circles.<sup>5</sup>

Chalil's investigation to the practice of *Mawlid* starts with an examination of its historical background. He begins by claiming to have discovered that the *Mawlid* originated from a tradition introduced by Abū Sa'īd al-Kokburī, known as al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Muẓaffar al-Dīn, who ascended to power in the city of Irbil, following his appointment by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī in 586 *Hijrah*. al-Kokburī was noted for his generosity, donating thousands of *ḍinārs* (the name of the gold currency) to the celebration of *Mawlid*, which came to enjoy enormous fame and attracted large numbers of people from various places. In describing its festive side, Chalil recounts that more than twenty wooden pavilions were divided into four and five stories. The main pavilion was reserved for al-Kokburī and each of the others for an *amīr* (prince) or some other persons holding high ranks in the state. In each of the pavilions there was a choir of singers, a band of musicians and a group of story-tellers. The influx of strangers continued without interruption from the month of al-Muḥarram, two months earlier until the celebration itself in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Howard M. Federspiel, *The Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1970), 57; A. Hassan, the chief figure of the *Persis*, enumerated four points by which the *Mawlid* celebration, as practiced by the traditionalists, deserved the classification of *bid'ah*. A. Hassan, "Maulud," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 4, 6-9; idem, "Perajaan Hari Lahir dan Mi'radnja Nabi s. a. w." *Sual-Djawab*, no. 8, 59-61.

<sup>5</sup>Among the latest pamphlets written on the controversy of *Mawlid* are Tim P. P. Majlis Tarjih, "Peringatan Maulud Nabi," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (1-15 July; 1992), 21; Zulfahmi, "Maulid ke- 1466," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (September; 1993), 28-29; Sahal Mahfudh, "Nabi Sendiri Sudah Mengisaratkan Perlunya Peringatan Maulid," *Aula* (October; 1990), 67-68; "Maulid Nabi Alih Semangat Zaman Ini," *Aula* (October; 1990), 69; also, see Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival*, 45, footnote no. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," *Pembela Islam*, no. 65, 19-20.

Chalil's attribution of the introduction of *Mawlid* festivities among the Sunnis to Muẓaffar al-Dīn al-Kokburī is supported by data in Ibn Khallikān's *Biographical Dictionary*.<sup>7</sup> Chalil goes on to describe how the *Mawlid* has since that time spread throughout the world and is known in every Muslim nation. He admits that even he was once caught up by the enthusiasm of the *Mawlid* at a time when he was less inclined to find fault with it.<sup>8</sup>

The *Mawlid* was considered by Chalil to be *bid'ah dalālah* (blameworthy innovation), since it ran counter to dogmatic theory. According to his view, the reverence for the Prophet should be encouraged, but only in so far as it does not exceed the limits prescribed by the *Shari'ah*. The fact that the celebration involves the reading of panegyrical texts, in which miraculous characteristics are attributed to the Prophet as the giver of intercession (*shafā'ah*), remission (*ampun*) and security (*salāmah*), clearly violates the basic tenets of the *Shari'ah*. These God-like attributes of the Prophet would deny Muḥammad's humanity and elevate him to divine stature. As such, the *Mawlid* which was originally intended as a pious practice became a reprehensible innovation.<sup>9</sup>

The panegyrical texts recited by the traditionalists, namely *al-Barzanjī*, *al-Dībā'ī* and *al-Burdah*, were particularly offensive to Chalil, who called them *qasidahs*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed,

<sup>7</sup>The description is cited by Chalil from Ibn Khallikān's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 2 (trans.) Bn Mac Guckin de Slane (Paris: printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1842-1871), 539; Muẓaffar al-Dīn al-Kokburī was the brother-in-law of the famed Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī. Under the authority of the latter, he ruled over Irbil, southeast of Mosul in Upper Mesopotamia. G. E. von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals* (London: Curzon Press, 1981), 73.

<sup>8</sup>Chalil uses a strong phrase in expressing his rejection of the *Mawlid* calling for a crusade against its practice by fellow Muslims in his own country (*membongkar kelakuan sahabat-sahabat dan orang-orang di negeri penulis sendiri*) Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Maulodan," 20.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*; while the first two texts are written in rhymed prose, the third is a poem. See Muḥammad Ibn Ahmad 'Aḥīs al-Malikī, *al-Qawl al-Munjī 'alā Mawlid al-Barzanjī* (Cairo: n.p., 1301 H.); 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dībā'ī, *Mawlid al-Dībā'ī* (n.p.: n.p.: 1983); Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Bājūrī 'alā Mawlid al-Burdah* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1947); for the recital of those three texts in the traditionalist *Mawlid*, see Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen*, 146 (1990), 261.

not only did the traditionalists chant these texts in the *Mawlid* gatherings, but they also incorporated a panegyric, namely *Madārij al-Su'ūd ilā Iktisā' al-Burūd*, a commentary on *al-Barzanjī* by Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Bantani, into the syllabus of their *pesantrens*.<sup>11</sup> Chalil's objection centered on the concept of *shafā'ah* and the extravagant exaltation of the Prophet which, in his analysis, went beyond sober eulogy and could easily lead to *shirk* (polytheism). For him, the idea of *shafā'ah* was incompatible with the concept of God as an omnipotent lord claiming man's total devotion, because *shafā'ah* assumes a graver aspect when it shifts man's faith from the Creator to Muḥammad, thus causing him to lapse into polytheism.<sup>12</sup>

The *Qur'ān* does not present a clear-cut position on the idea of *shafā'ah*. While some passages demonstrate an unfavorable attitude towards it, others do not absolutely exclude it.<sup>13</sup> However, the acceptability of *shafā'ah* is proven by an incident in the lifetime of the Prophet, reported in both *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ* and *qudsī*, when he interceded with God on behalf of someone.<sup>14</sup> Aside from this, the Prophet's intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is the type of intercession described in the panegyrical texts, is illustrated

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<sup>11</sup> Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Nawawī al-Bantani, *Madārij al-Su'ūd ilā Iktisā' al-Burūd* (Semarang: Maṭba'at Ṭāhā Putra, n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 22.

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Fiegenbaum, "The Ta'ziyah: A Popular Expression of Shī'i Thought," (M. A. thesis McGill University, Montreal, 1965), 123.

<sup>14</sup> *al-Aḥādīth al-Qudsiyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1990), 255-272; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Muassasat 'Izz al-Dīn, 1987), 363; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 258; the expectation of receiving the Prophet's *shafā'ah* was one of the factors which motivated the composition of works in honor of the Prophet's birthday. al-Bantani, for example, expresses this expectation when commenting on *Mawlid al-Shaykh Ahmad Ibn al-Qāsim*. Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Nawawī al-Bantani, *Faṭḥ al-Samad al-'Ālim* (Surabaya: Shirkat Piramida, n.d.), 1.

in a frequently occurring tradition.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the concept of *shafā'ah* in *ḥadīth* literature is not confined to Muḥammad, but is extended to martyrs and saints as well.<sup>16</sup>

Not only did Chalil's opposition to the idea of *shafā'ah* prove to be inadequately argued, he also failed to take into account the fact that the extravagant fashion of the texts in praise of Muḥammad was characteristic of the literary genre known as *al-madā'ih al-nabawīyah* (Prophetic panegyrics).<sup>17</sup> Typically, *al-madā'ih al-nabawīyah* express a lavish exaltation of the birth of the Prophet and praise his life and virtues. This is not entirely unacceptable in Islam, since the *Qur'ān* itself mentions Muḥammad in praiseworthy terms and God Himself confers blessings upon him.<sup>18</sup> From this perspective, the three aforementioned panegyrical texts could be regarded as sober eulogies, in which love of Muḥammad is expressed in tender, colorful and grandiose terms without elevating him to the level of a deity. This sobriety is quite unlike the mystical eulogies which bestow upon the Prophet a position tantamount to that of God. Even the most extravagant of the three, notably *Qasīdat al-Burdah*, takes great pains against any excess of exaltation. al-Būṣīrī, the author of the work, declares that no matter how much one wants to express his deep love of the Prophet, one must not indulge in excessive exaltations, as the Christians had done with respect to Jesus.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>A line of poetry in *Qasīdat al-Burdah* reads: "He [Muḥammad] is the beloved from whom the *shafā'ah* which will release [his people] from the terrifying anxieties [in the Day of Judgment] is expected. (*huwa al-ḥabīb al-ladhī turjū shafā'atuh, min kull hawl min al-ahwāl muqtahim*). See also al-Bājūrī's comment on the relation between *shafā'ah* and the Day of Judgment in the aforementioned line. al-Bājūrī, *Hāshiyat al-Bājūrī 'alā Matn Qasīdat al-Burdah*, 22-23; Muslim, *Sahīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, 230-232, 233-235, 237-239; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1987), 392-393.

<sup>16</sup>Muḥammad's *shafā'ah* is also recognized by *ijmā'*: A. J. Wensinck, "Shafā'a," *The first Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (eds.) M. Th. Houtsma et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 251.

<sup>17</sup>Zakī Mubārak, *al-Madā'ih al-Nabawīyah fī al-Adab al-'Arabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992), 11-12.

<sup>18</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 33: 43; 33: 56.

<sup>19</sup>See the three lines of the *Qasīdat al-Burdah* and the comment provided by Khālid al-Azhārī on a *ḥadīth* which says "Don't attribute praise to me as the Christians have done to Jesus." (*lā tuṭrūnī kamā aṭrat al-Nasārā 'Isā*). al-Bājūrī, *Hāshiyat al-Bājūrī 'alā Matn Qasīdat al-Burdah*, 26.

Chalil's criticism of the three texts was not confined to an analysis of the extent to which these eulogies contradicted principles, but also extended to the behavior of the participants in the *Mawlid* celebration. He attacks their loud recitation of the texts, their movement of their heads and their usage of the tambourine.<sup>20</sup> It must be kept in mind that the movement of the head, objected to by Chalil, was not an act commonly seen in the *Mawlid* celebration, since it was not officially part of the ceremonies. Rather, it sometimes occurred simply as a result of the rhythmical recitation of the texts, which were often loudly performed and accompanied by great excitement.<sup>21</sup> It seems that his criticism of the head movement may have been influenced by his attitude towards the head movement in *ṣūfī dhikr* which was meant as an inducement of the ascetic experience and a sign of closeness with God.<sup>22</sup> This connection may have occurred to Chalil because of the fact that *dhikr* was an exclusive practice of the traditionalists, particularly those belonging to *ṣūfī* orders (*ṭarīqah*). *Dhikr* also became an issue in 'Abduh's argument against the *Mawlid* celebration. The latter reportedly blamed the 'ulamā' for tolerating the celebration of *Mawlid* under the pretext that it included some positive elements, such as *dhikr*, which 'Abduh considered to be a *bid'ah ḍalālah*.<sup>23</sup> Chalil classified the *Mawlid* celebration as an *'ibādah* purely on account of the nature of the celebration itself, even though it contained non-religious elements. Given this classification, he would have been justified in condemning the practice altogether, since it had no basis in the *Qur'ān* or *sunnah* and could therefore be qualified as *bid'ah*.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 22.

<sup>21</sup>Unlike *Qasīdat al-Burdah*, neither *al-Barzanjī* nor *al-Dībā'ī* are in verse. Nonetheless, they are written in rhymed prose (*masjū'*), so that the reciter is forced to follow the rhythmical tonation which brings a movement to his body. A comment on the rhyme of *al-Dībā'ī* can be found in Mubārak's analysis of its musical and poetical qualities. Mubārak, *al-Madā'ih al-Nabawiyah*, 177.

<sup>22</sup>In Egypt, for example, the *Mawlid* proper was accompanied by the so-called *dhikr*-meetings in which *dhikr* (remembrance of God with certain fixed phrases) was coordinated with bodily movements. von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 77.

<sup>23</sup>Cited in P. Shinar, "Traditional and Reformist Mawlid Celebrations in the Maghrib," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wier*, (ed.) Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1977), 375, footnote no. 17.

<sup>24</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 21.

The association of head movement with *ṣūfī* practices may be better understood, if seen in the light of A. Hassan's attack on the tradition of standing. Unlike moving the head, standing is an integral part of the *Mawlid* celebration. Hassan said that the traditionalists viewed the act of standing in a *ṣūfī* light. He argued that the traditionalists considered the act a mark of respect towards Muḥammad's spirit which was believed to be present at the moment of the procession.<sup>25</sup> Standing has always been a controversial issue in the *Mawlid* celebration. al-Nawawī, for instance, wrote an essay in its defense, as did Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, who wrote his work to counter the opinion of Ibn al-Ḥājj, the latter having rejected the act of standing in his *Raf' al-Malām 'an al-Qā'il bi-Istiḥsān al-Qiyām min Ahl al-Faḍl*.<sup>26</sup> Among the critics of standing, one may count al-Shibrāmsī who argued against it on account of its lack of exemplary precedence from the Prophet.<sup>27</sup> The "standing moment" took place in the latter part of the *Mawlid* procession, as practiced by the traditionalists, when the reciter of the text read the lines "*Ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad, ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam. Marḥaban yā nūr al-'ayn, marḥaban jadd al-Ḥusayn, marḥaban, yā marḥaban.*" which means "The blessing of God upon Muḥammad, blessing upon him and salutation. Welcome light of the eye, welcome grand-sire of Ḥusayn, welcome, oh welcome."<sup>28</sup>

It was said that standing during the *Mawlid* celebration was a mere gesture of respect to the Prophet, a gesture that grew out of a tradition where standing was considered to be a demonstration of honor towards people of distinction (*ahl al-faḍl*). In *al-Barzuqī* and *Madārij al-Su'ūd*, for example, standing is defined as a mark of respect to the Prophet which was recommended and considered good by the authority of *riwāyah* and *rawīyah*.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup>A. Hassan, "Maulud," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 4, 7.

<sup>26</sup>Muḥammad Ibn 'Alawī al-Malikī, *Bāqah 'Asirah min Siyagh al-Mawālīd wa al-Madā'ih al-Nabawiyah al-Karimah* (n.p.: n.p.: 1983), 17.

<sup>27</sup>al-Bantani, *Madārij al-Su'ūd*, 15.

<sup>28</sup>For the musical notes of this poetical stanza, see C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Later Part of the 19th Century* (trans.) J. H. Monahan (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1931), 118.

<sup>29</sup>al-Bantani, *Madārij al-Su'ūd*, 14.



Other evidence could be advanced demonstrating that the practice of standing was a gesture of honor to Muḥammad. For example, in a meeting with scholars of his time, Taqy al-Din al-Subkī reportedly stood when panegyrical poems were recited in praise of the Prophet.<sup>30</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī also describes in one of his *fatwās* the tradition of standing in the *Mawlid* current in his day as a gesture of respect to the Prophet. He explains that standing is not *bid'ah* since the act was merely a token of respect.<sup>31</sup> Siradjuddin Abbas even claimed that standing was inspired by the practice of the Prophet in ordering his *ṣaḥābah* from the *Anṣār* clan to give full respect to their chief, namely Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh, by raising from their seats.<sup>32</sup>

As for the playing of the tambourine, Chalil might have confused the *Mawlid* proper, which was held in celebration of the Prophet's birthday, with the *Mawlid* or the *selawatan*, conducted on the occasion of a male child's circumcision or a marriage ceremony. The use of the tambourine is particularly characteristic of this second type of *Mawlid* and is accompanied by the recital of several lines of poetry taken from *Qasīdat al-Burdah*. The tambourine and poetry signify the extreme joy of the parties concerned and are in no way connected to the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.<sup>33</sup>

Chalil insists that the *Mawlid* should focus on the reading of the Prophet's biography (*tārikh*) and the recitation of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīths* depicting his struggles for the sake of Islam and his meritorious deeds which set an example for his followers.<sup>34</sup> Partly motivated by a desire to correct the distorted biography of Muḥammad narrated in

<sup>30</sup>Siradjuddin Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1992), 179; Abu Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Shaṭā al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Tālibīn*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 364; al-Bantanī, *Madārij al-Su'ūd*, 15.

<sup>31</sup>Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Kitāb al-Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthiyah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'āhid, 1934), 58.

<sup>32</sup>Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 2, 189.; see also al-Maliki's *Bāqah 'Asirah*, 17.

<sup>33</sup>It is said that this *Mawlid* which is sometimes called *selawatan* (a Javanese word for *salawat* which means praise to the Prophet) is often performed without the accompaniment of the tambourine, which, in fact, does not constitute an integral component of the *Mawlid*. B. Soelarto, *Gerebeg di Kesultanan Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 1993), 42.

<sup>34</sup>Chalil, "'Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 22.

the *qasidahs*, Chalil wrote a complete biography of the Prophet's life basing himself on a vast number of citations from the *Qur'ānic* verses and *ḥadīth* literature, in which the Prophet is described as a compassionate and enlightened person and his success explained less in terms of divine miracles than as a result of will-power, vision and loving kindness.<sup>35</sup> Hence, out of a wish to see Muḥammad's biography purged of innovation, Chalil focused instead on commemorating his role as messenger of God who transmitted the *Qur'ān* to his people and who served as a perfect model for them to emulate. The restriction of *Mawlid* to this simple level is characteristic of the reformist attitude towards celebrating the birth of Muḥammad. The *Persis*, for example, went so far as to boycott the tradition of the parade (*parade*) of school children which was organized as an expression of the joy of the community on the occasion of *Mawlid* and which had nothing to do with the legal aspects of the celebration.<sup>36</sup>

Chalil consolidated his stance against the traditional celebration of *Mawlid* with the opinions of earlier scholars. He cites the opinion of Ibn al-Ḥājj, who in his book *al-Madkhal* had vehemently condemned the practice of reading *qasidahs* and regarded such an act as forbidden (*munkar*).<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj was a strict Mālikite scholar who criticized numerous practices involved in the contemporary *Mawlid* celebrations, particularly the participation of women.<sup>38</sup> He expressed a strong objection to the festive aspect of the *Mawlid* which, according to him, had turned the *Mawlid* into a place where all manners of unlawful practices (*al-muḥarramāt*) took place. He also denounced the *Mawlid* customs which were heavily dependent on the use of musical instruments, such as tambourines with jingles (*tār musūsir*), singing, dancing and listening to music.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Moenawar Chalil *Kelengkapan Tarich Nabi Muhammad s. a. w.* vol. 1 (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1957).

<sup>36</sup>G. F. Pijper, *Beberapa Studi Tentang Sejarah Islam di Indonesia*, (trans.) Tudjimah and Yessy Augusdin (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1984), 136-137.

<sup>37</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 20; see also Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 2 (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Miṣriyah bi-al-Azhar, 1929), 13.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

Another critic of the *Mawlid*, whose opinions are quoted by Chalil, was Ibn Taymiyah who condemned the introduction of festivals, particularly the one celebrated in honor of the Prophet during the first night of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal and the main observance on the night of the Prophet's birthday, allegedly falling on the 12th of the same month. In his quotation, Chalil stresses Ibn Taymiyah's disapproval of the practice of singing which became an integral component of the procession of the *Mawlid*. Ibn Taymiyah further stated, according to Chalil, that such a practice, identified as the *Mawlid's* "rite", undoubtedly belonged to the acts strongly forbidden in Islam. Only a *zindiq* (unbeliever), Ibn Taymiyah further declared, would permit the carrying out of such practices.<sup>40</sup>

Chalil depended on scholars who spoke out against the exaggerated festivities of the *Mawlid* to support his premise that its celebration by the traditionalists was an evil practice. It should be noted that although Ibn Taymiyah energetically attacked the lighthearted amusements of the *Mawlid* celebration, he deemed the celebration to be permissible as long as the gatherings sought to express a reverence for the Prophet and good deeds were done in expectation of reward from God.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, even though Ibn al-Hājj castigated the forbidden customs which took place during the *Mawlid* festivities, he did not totally reject the *Mawlid*. He praised the expression of gratitude during the ceremony, provided that it did not go to extremes and did not include folkloric elements, such as singing, music and feasting. This was in line with his understanding of the *Mawlid* as a day of mourning rather than an occasion of feasting.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Chalil, "Farwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 21.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibn al-Hājj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 2, 15; Ibn al-Hājj's *al-Madkhal* can be characterized as a manual of religiously proper behavior for Muslims. It is rich in its censure and description of the practices performed by Muslims and non-Muslims in their festivals. Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyah's Struggle against Popular Religion with an Annotated Translation of His Kitāb Iqūdā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḡim Mukhālafat Asbāb al-Jahīm* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 6.

Chalil also refers to Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī whose perspective differed from that of Ibn al-Hājj and Ibn Taymiyah, in that he tolerated the reading of *qasidahs*, considering such an act as a *bidʿah hasanah* (good innovation). This tolerance is in contradiction with Chalil's own view which, as previously discussed, firmly classifies the celebration of *Mawlid* as a *bidʿah dalalah* and rejected the recital of *qasidah*.<sup>43</sup> al-ʿAsqalānī's opinion was not uncommon among the Shāfiʿite scholars, who did not reject the traditions involved in the celebration. al-Suyūṭī, for example, showed considerable tolerance towards the tradition of *Mawlid* celebration for which he composed a treatise entitled *Husn al-Maqṣid fī ʿAmal al-Mawlid*, which defended its good innovations.<sup>44</sup> It was also on the basis of the opinions of al-ʿAsqalānī, al-Suyūṭī and al-Haytamī that the traditionalists justified the manner of their *Mawlid* celebration.<sup>45</sup> This justification was consistent with their approach to legal issues and their reliance on mostly Shāfiʿite authorities, as discussed above in chapter five.

In answer to the question of whether the *Mawlid* was condemned (*madhmūm*) or rewarded (*yuthāb*), the traditionalists referred to al-Suyūṭī, who held that in so far as the *Mawlid* took the form of a public gathering involving the recital of the *Qurʾān*, reading the Prophet's biography and serving a meal to those attending, the celebration was categorically a *bidʿah hasanah*.<sup>46</sup> They also referred to Abū Shāmah who had declared that among the most favorable innovations (*wa min aḥsani mā ubtudiʿa*) was the *Mawlid* celebration, which was marked by the distribution of alms (*sadaqāt*), the performance of

<sup>43</sup>Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bid'ah Mauloedan," 21.

<sup>44</sup>As an example of al-Suyūṭī's defense of the *Mawlid*, see his refutation of al-Fākihānī al-Maliki's work *al-Mawrid fī al-Kalām ʿalā ʿAmal al-Mawlid*, a work which vehemently condemned the tradition of *Mawlid* celebration and classified it as *bidʿah madhmūmah* (evil innovation). al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-Maqṣid fī ʿAmal al-Mawlid* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1985), 45-51.

<sup>45</sup>Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 2, 177-181.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 179.

beneficial deeds (*al-ma'rūfāt*) on behalf of the poor and the expression of affection for the Prophet and gratitude to God.<sup>47</sup>

Chalil explains that the traditionalists had employed a false *ḥadīth* in their justification of the *Mawlid*. This *ḥadīth* states: "Whoever celebrates my birthday, I will bestow on him a *shafā'ah* on the Day of Judgment." This was an obvious fabrication, he further argues, because none of the authoritative collections of *ḥadīth* literature ever reported it.<sup>48</sup> Chalil scrutinizes the reliability of the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* closely, out of dissatisfaction with the extent to which the traditionalists evaluated the *ḥadīth* in general, a fault which he saw as responsible for the introduction of many un-Islamic traditions.<sup>49</sup> Chalil, however, does not mention the source or the names from which this false *ḥadīth* was derived. He only says that one of the readers of the daily *Abadi*, for which he wrote the religious column from 1953-1954 and intermittently from 1955-1960, had brought this *ḥadīth* to his attention. Besides, he himself had often heard mention of this false *ḥadīth* from "enthusiasts" of the *Mawlid*.<sup>50</sup>

The aforementioned *ḥadīth* can in fact be found in four different *ḥadīth*-texts, namely *Durrat al-Nāṣihīn*, *Waṣīyat al-Muṣṭafā*, *Uṣfūriyāh* and *Qurrat al-'Uyūn*, all of which were among the *ḥadīth*-texts embodied in the curriculum of the *pesantren*.<sup>51</sup> These texts, which do not provide a classification of the *ḥadīth* nor an examination of the reliability of its narrators, have a reputation of including false and weak *ḥadīths*. This is particularly true of the *Waṣīyat al-Muṣṭafā* which even goes so far as to leave out the names of transmitters. As such, *Waṣīyat al-Muṣṭafā* may be regarded as a narration of dialogues between Muḥammad and 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib on moral, ritual and belief issues. In

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 180-181.

<sup>48</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Hadits<sup>2</sup> Mauludan," *Abadi* (February, 20; 1953).

<sup>49</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemmat Islam?" *Pembela Islam*, no. 56, 25.

<sup>50</sup>Chalil, "Hadits<sup>2</sup> Mauludan."

<sup>51</sup>"Kitab Palsu Dalam Hadis Kuning," *Aula* (February; 1994), 13.

fact, due to its lack of many of the required elements of a *ḥadīth*-text, it could be better classified as a casual record of Muḥammad's sayings, irrespective of their authenticity, than as a proper *ḥadīth*-text.<sup>52</sup>

The traditionalists themselves admitted the falsity of this *ḥadīth* and even insisted that it was but one of several false *ḥadīths* (*ḥadīth palsu*) reported in those texts. They also unhesitatingly confessed that such fabrication was a grievous sin and strongly condemned by the Prophet.<sup>53</sup> It would seem, therefore, that this false *ḥadīth* was not deliberately employed by the traditionalists as a textual basis for the *Mawlid* celebration, as Chalil had suggested. Rather, they advanced a more subtle argument by referring to the Prophet's practice of fasting on Mondays in honor of his birthday. Sahal Mahfudh, the deputy chair of the Central Consultative Board of the *Nahdlat al-'Ulamā'*, believed that the *Mawlid* was a worthy tradition whose establishment could be justified on the basis of the fact that the Prophet himself fasted on Mondays in memory of his birthday.<sup>54</sup> Mahfudh's argument was not novel in the debate over the *Mawlid* controversy, since it had been employed by other proponents of the celebration.<sup>55</sup> Even Ibn al-Ḥājj, who accepted the *Mawlid* with considerable reluctance, resorted to the same *ḥadīth* put forth by Mahfudh, declaring that

<sup>52</sup>Although in *Durrat al-Nāṣihīn* the last reporter is not mentioned, the first reporter is often mentioned. This does not apply to *Wasiyat al-Muṣṭafā* where nothing appears except the dialogue between Muḥammad and 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib. 'Uthmān Ibn Ḥasan al-Khawbawī, *Durrat al-Nāṣihīn fī al-Wa'z wa al-Irshād* (Semarang: Maktabat Usaha Keluarga, n.d.); see the commentary on *Wasiyat al-Muṣṭafā* by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, *al-Minḥ al-Saniyah 'alā al-Wasiyah al-Matbūliyah* (Indonesia: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, n.d.).

<sup>53</sup>"Kitab Palsu Dalam Hadis Kuning," 13; there is a *ḥadīth* which says: "Whoever intentionally gives the lie to me, he will be permanently placed in hell." This *ḥadīth* is both *ṣaḥīḥ* and *mutawātir* (a *ḥadīth* which was reported by a group of people and which was handed down in uninterrupted sequence) and is related in almost all of the *ḥadīth*-texts (*fī aghlab dawāwīn al-ḥadīth*). Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil fī Du'afā' al-Rijāl* (Baghdad: Maṭha'at Salmān al-A'ẓamī, n.d.), 18, footnote 4.

<sup>54</sup>Sahal Mahfudh, "Nabi Sendiri Mengisaratkan Perlunya Peringatan Maulid," *Aula* (October, 1990), 67.

<sup>55</sup>al-Maliki, *Bāqah 'Aṣirah*, 6.

the Prophet had urged his followers to fast on Mondays as a way of honoring his birthday.<sup>56</sup>

Chalil's attack on the *Mawlid* targeted in particular the practice of reciting the panegyrical texts. Although the traditionalists were unable to cite any specific textual evidence for this practice, they did consider it to be valid on the basis of the *Mawlid's* overall classification as *bid'ah hasanah* by the Shāfi'ite jurists. Chalil said nothing about the festive side of the *Mawlid*, since the recital of the panegyrical texts was not part of the festivities. Indeed, it was partly against these festivities that scholars expressed their rigorous intolerance towards the *Mawlid*. This intolerance was not only expressed by Ibn al-Hājj and Ibn Taymiyah, whose opinions Chalil has briefly mentioned, but also by 'Abduh who denounced the festivity and viewed it as an indecent practice. For this reason, 'Abduh perceived the celebration of *Mawlid*, as it was commonly exercised, to be a "bazaar of sins" (*sūq al-fusūq*).<sup>57</sup>

The feasting aspect was not characteristic of the traditionalists' *Mawlid*, but rather of the *Gerebeg Mawlid*. The latter, which was observed annually by the Yogyakarta Sultanate, was not unknown to Chalil, since it constituted a "national" feast for the Javanese. It was in the course of the *Gerebeg Mawlid* that all kinds of "indecent" activities including shadow-plays, games, theater, gambling and lotteries took place. Had Chalil turned his attention to this tradition, he would have condemned it, since it was a "distortion" of the noble meaning of religious celebrations.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, he spoke against the festive

<sup>56</sup>He further states that respect for the Prophet's birthday implies respect for the month of Rabi' al-Awwal. Hence, it is appropriate, he explains, that Muslims should honor the Prophet's birthday by doing things which God had distinguished the outstanding months. Ibn al-Hājj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 2, 3; the *ḥadīth* which notes the Prophet's Monday fast is reported by Muslim and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. See Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1988), 242; Ibn Rajab, *Kitāb Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif li-Mawāsim al-'Āmm min al-Waṣā'if* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1975), 93.

<sup>57</sup>Muḥammad 'Abduh, "al-Ittibā' wa al-Taqlīd," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh*, (eds.) Adūnis and Khālidah Sa'id (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1983), 61.

<sup>58</sup>The *Gerebeg Mawlid* is closely associated with a number of attractions which could be found in the *pasar malam* (night market). Often, gambling, lottery and their like take place in the *pasar malam*, although the committee, set up to coordinate the *Gerebeg Mawlid*, has

aspects of the celebrations of '*Āshūrā*', *Laylat al-qadr* and *Rebo wekasan*, which will be briefly presented later. In addition, a very pronounced pre-Islamic syncretism could be found in the procession of the *Gerebeg Mawlid*.<sup>59</sup> Chalil's attack on the manner of the *Mawlid* celebration did not touch upon the central problem of "distortion" which was more evident in the festivities and the syncretism of the *Gerebeg* than in the mere recital of the *qasidah*, for which legal justification had been provided by its proponents.

## II

The veneration of special days and months traditionally generated controversy among Muslims and has led to the creation of two opposing stands. While one opinion venerates the month of Rajab, incorporating within it *ṣalāt al-raqhā'ib* (communal supererogatory prayer) and welcoming the Rajab sacrifices, the other view rejects these practices. Needless to say each opinion claims that it was authorized by the utterances of the Prophet.<sup>60</sup> This dispute is also pertinent to '*Āshūrā*' which is celebrated on the tenth day of al-Muḥarram. '*Āshūrā*' is the name of a feast regarded by Muslims as commendable and holy on historical grounds.<sup>61</sup> However, a number of *ḥadīths* promoting observances, in addition to fasting on the tenth day of al-Muḥarram, were rejected by some scholars. al-Shawkānī, for instance, listed a number of *ḥadīths* describing the virtues, qualities and

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always declared such games to be illegal. Judaningrat, "Sambutan Ketua," in *Risalah Sekaten*, 1 (November, 1954), (?).

<sup>59</sup>In the *Gerebeg Mawlid*, syncretism with pre-Islamic elements is pronounced, as the procession includes the *gunungans* (food mounds) which are believed to carry blessing for those who receive them and to have as well mystical dimension symbolized in the choice of certain kinds of vegetation, flowers and eggs. In addition, the playing of the *gamelan* (a set of Javanese musical instruments) and the use of various ceremonial items clearly indicate the pre-Islamic influence in the *Gerebeg Mawlid*. For further discussion, see Soelarto's *Gerebeg di Kesultanan Yogyakarta*, 68-84; this is in spite of the fact that the *Gerebeg* remains an Islamic celebration and indeed the reading of *al-Barzanji* constitutes the culmination of the celebration. Soedjono Tirtokoesoemo, *The Gerebegs in the Sultanat Jogjakarta*, (trans.) F. D. Hansen Raae (n.p.: Nadruk Verboden, n.d.), 16.

<sup>60</sup>M. J. Kister, "Rajab Is the Month of God..." in *Studies in Jāhiliyya and Early Islam* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980), 193.

<sup>61</sup>A. J. Wensinck, "Āshūrā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1 (new ed.) (eds.) H. A. R. Gibb et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 705.



merits of the day of 'Āshūrā' which he considered to be either *mawḍū'* or *marfū'*.<sup>62</sup> While Ibn Rajab closely examined *ḥadīths* which promoted meritorious practices during 'Āshūrā', Ibn Taymīyah regarded certain practices observed on this day as incompatible with the *Shari'ah*.<sup>63</sup>

'Āshūrā' is one of the ceremonial occasions in the Muslim calendar that have acquired a special significance in Javanese culture.<sup>64</sup> Its celebration, known as *bukak luwur* (the opening of the cover of the grave of Sunan Kudus), for example, is annually conducted in Kudus, central Java, where the Javanese come in throngs from all over the region to keep alive this venerated day. The *bukak luwur* procession involves a component of *barakah* (blessing), which is believed to be present in the ceremonial food and in the pieces of the cloth tomb-cover from Sunan Kudus grave. These are distributed at the end of the procession to participants eager to benefit from divine favor. As a religious ceremony, *bukak luwur* is also a festive occasion featuring a number of events and attractions during the evening in the *pasar malam* (night market).<sup>65</sup>

As was the case with his attack on the celebration of the *Mawlid*, Chalil's discussion of 'Āshūrā' did not address the phenomena which developed out of local traditions, such as the observance of *bukak luwur*. Rather, he attacked a set of practices revered by the traditionalists, whose arguments in their favor can be found in their interpretation of the *fiqh*-texts. This discussion of the celebration of 'Āshūrā', therefore, will also investigate these *fiqh*-texts in order to establish the viewpoint and arguments of the traditionalists. Chalil was well aware of the role of the *fiqh*-texts in shaping the

<sup>62</sup>al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1986), 113-114.

<sup>63</sup>Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif fīmā li-Mawāsim al-'Āmm min al-Waḥā'if*, 52-53; Ibn Taymīyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 295-304.

<sup>64</sup>Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), 393.

<sup>65</sup>Sunan Kudus is one of the *wali sanga* (nine sacred apostles) who pioneered in the propagation of Islam on the island of Java. For a short description of the *bukak luwur*, see Thomas B. Ataladjar, "Menara Kudus," in *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia*, vol. 9 (Jakarta: Cipta Adi Pusaka, 1990), 210.

traditionalists' way of venerating '*Āshūrā*', as demonstrated by his enumeration of ten practices mentioned in one of these texts.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, our discussion of '*Āshūrā*' will not be complete without juxtaposing Chalil's opinion with that of the early scholars on this issue.

The fact that the day of '*Āshūrā*' belongs to the set of days venerated by the *Shari'ah* does not prevent Chalil from subjecting it to scrutiny. In a number of articles, he expresses his belief that the traditionalists had spoiled the excellence of this day by introducing practices which were not prescribed by God, the Prophet or the *salaf*. Chalil then argues against the customs attached to the day of '*Āshūrā*', customs which he considered to be *bid'ah dalālah*. He opposes treating '*Āshūrā*' as a feast day in which joy is expressed in the form of wasteful parades, parties and public gatherings involving sinful activities.<sup>67</sup> Although he does not reject the holiness of '*Āshūrā*', he nevertheless states that its veneration should be in line with a sound *ḥadīth* which explains that the Prophet observed the fast of '*Āshūrā*' merely out of gratitude to God, who had granted victory to Mūsā and his people over the Fir'awn on that day. Chalil further argues that the Prophet did not introduce the performance of the complex customs, which later prevailed in the community as a result of the spread of weak *ḥadīth* traditions in the writings and words of religious scholars.<sup>68</sup>

Chalil denounces the claim that whoever performs a voluntary prayer (*ṣalāt al-sunnah*) of forty *raka'ahs* during '*Āshūrā*' between *zuhr* (noon) and '*asr*' (late afternoon-prayer) and recites *istighfār* (a formula of repentance) seventy times upon its completion will be rewarded with paradise.<sup>69</sup> In fact, Chalil deems it sinful to ascribe such

<sup>66</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura," *Abadi* (September, 25; 1953); al-Bakri, *I'ānāt al-Tālibīn*, vol. 2, 302.

<sup>67</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Peringatan Asjuraa," *Abadi* (August, 3; 1954).

<sup>68</sup>Among the *ḥadīths* that he mentions is one declaring "Today, obligatory fast is not imposed on you and I am fasting today, so he who wishes to observe the fast should do so and he who does not wish to can take food." Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."

an innovative prayer to the Prophet.<sup>70</sup> The performance of an *'ibādah maḥḍah* (pure worship), such as an unprescribed prayer, could never have escaped the criticism of a puritan like Chalil, especially if it was based on a weak *ḥadīth*. A similar prayer was discussed by Ibn Taymiyah who held that the *Shari'ah* condemned the performance of a voluntary prayer that exceeded the ascribed number of *raka'ahs* and in which a particular *sūrah* (verse) was recited a fixed number of times in veneration of the month of Rajab.<sup>71</sup>

Chalil attributes the introduction of this voluntary prayer to the traditionalists, even though it is not mentioned in their *fiqh*-texts. Rather, it originates from a *ḥadīth* discussed in al-Suyūṭī's *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*. It, therefore, seems that Chalil derived the tradition of this voluntary prayer from al-Suyūṭī's work and then incorporated it into the body of practices associated with the traditionalists' veneration of *'Āshūrā'*. This may be inferred from the fact that Chalil himself mentions that al-Suyūṭī was among those scholars who rejected the authority of this *ḥadīth*.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, al-Suyūṭī conducts in his *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah* an intense inquiry into the prayers observed in veneration of particular days and months and cautiously examines the *ḥadīths* by which the prayers were justified. He does so in order to unravel and expose any defective or inauthentic elements occurring in them.<sup>73</sup> With regards to the voluntary prayer of *'Āshūrā'* in particular, al-Suyūṭī reveals that the order of such a prayer was based on a *ḥadīth* whose reporters were unknown (*majhūl*).<sup>74</sup>

The common notion that *'Āshūrā'* is the day on which various miraculous events occurred, such as the creation of Ādam, the recovery of Ya'qūb's sight, the revelation of the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū'at Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyah*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Kurdistān al-Islāmiyah, 1326 H.), 2-3.

<sup>72</sup>Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."; idem, "Peringatan Asjuraa."

<sup>73</sup>See part of "*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*" (chapter on prayer) in al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 48-63.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. 54-55.

Old Testament to Mūsā, the anchoring of Nūḥ's ark and others are dismissed by Chalil.<sup>75</sup> As mentioned elsewhere, Chalil was fascinated by the power of reason and employed it in rejecting senseless statements and legendary traits attributed to the *Qur'ān*. He was particularly suspicious of the primitive aspects of those stories that exalted the peculiarities of the day of 'Āshūrā'. This is despite the fact that these same stories, which are reported in a *ḥadīth* narrating the miracles of the early Prophets, are one of the sources for the 'Āshūrā' fast which Chalil strongly believed in.<sup>76</sup>

Chalil made it a practice to reject *ḥadīths* that were in contradiction with reason. Thus, illogical *ḥadīths* like the one discussed above were met with a high degree of disapproval. Although al-Suyūṭī ascribes the account of the above *ḥadīth* on the miracles of the prophets to Abū Hurayrah and considers its reporters trustworthy (*riḥālūh thiqāh*), he nevertheless expresses his suspicion that its *matn* (content) was a mere fabrication of later scholars.<sup>77</sup> A full citation of the *ḥadīth* as narrated by al-Suyūṭī can be found in one of the traditionalists' *fiqh*-text, namely the *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn* by al-Bakrī, who, unlike al-Suyūṭī, does not investigate the reliability of its *isnād* or the authenticity of its *matn* al-Bakrī simply accepts the legends as historical facts in order to establish the holiness of 'Āshūrā'.<sup>78</sup>

Chalil lists other practices absorbed into the tradition of 'Āshūrā' which he considers to be grave diversions from the pure teachings of the Prophet. He shows an uncompromising position even against the minor tradition of *iktihāl* or *celakan* (coloring one's eyelids with kohl). In fact, he declares, associating the practice of *iktihāl* with a healing power capable of guarding or curing the eyes from diseases owing to the sanctity of 'Āshūrā' was a ridiculous belief. He further argues that *iktihāl* originated from a false

<sup>75</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Menjingskap Tabir Kepalsuan Dari Hadits2 Mengenai Kekeramatan dan Kesaktian Hari Asjura" *Abadi* (July 15; 1960).

<sup>76</sup>al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, vol. 2, 109-110.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>78</sup>al-Bakrī, *I'ānah*, vol. 2, 302.

tradition ascribed to Muḥammad.<sup>79</sup> Although *ikṭihāl* was mentioned in the traditionalists' *fiqh*-texts, there is no common traditionalist position on its practice. While some display a favorable attitude towards it, others entirely exclude it. Several lines of *naẓm* (poetry) are quoted in *Bughyat al-Mustarshidīn* encouraging people to practice *ikṭihāl* along with other commendable acts during 'Āshūrā'.<sup>80</sup> The *Bughyah*, however, is the only traditionalist *fiqh*-text which unequivocally favors the practice of *ikṭihāl*. This indicates that its practice was debatable even among the traditionalists, since *Bughyah* is a collection of *fatwās* (legal opinions) intended to settle matters disputed in Muslim religious life.<sup>81</sup>

*I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn* also raises the issue of *ikṭihāl* by examining the validity of the textual evidence behind this tradition. Nonetheless, unlike the *Bughyah*, the *I'ānah* rejects the practice of *ikṭihāl* in as much as it is based on a *ḥadīth* that, for various reasons, had been largely rejected by scholars, such as al-Ḥākim, who considered it to be *munkar* (rejected), and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāmī, who deemed it to be *mawḍū'* (false). Some Ḥanafite jurists even saw in *ikṭihāl* a humiliating metaphor, symbolizing the manner by which Yazīd and Ibn Ziyād rubbed their eyes with Ḥuṣayn's blood.<sup>82</sup>

It must be borne in mind that the tradition of *ikṭihāl* is not restricted to the day of 'Āshūrā', since it is a recommendable exercise for those who fast, particularly during the month of Ramaḍān. al-Shāfi'ī endorses the practice of *ikṭihāl* on the basis of the Prophetic tradition stating that: "Smear [your eyes] with antimony sprinkled [with perfume], since it

<sup>79</sup>Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."

<sup>80</sup>Abd al-Rahmān Bā 'Alawī, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidīn* (Semarang: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Usaha Keluarga, n.d.), 114.

<sup>81</sup>*Bughyah* is an abridgment of a large collection of *fatwās* which were issued by five *fuqahā'* (jurists), namely 'Abd Allāh Bā Faqīh, 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar Ibn Yaḥyā, 'Alawī Ibn Saqqāf, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr al-Yamanī and Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Madanī. Ibid., 2.

<sup>82</sup>al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn*, vol. 2, 301; the relation between *ikṭihāl* and the death of Ḥuṣayn is also mentioned in Ismā'īl Ibn Muḥammad al-Jazāhī's *Kashf al-Khaṣā' wa Muzil al-Ibbās min al-Aḥādīth 'ammā Ishtabara min Alsinat al-Nās*, vol. 2 (Aleppo: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islāmī, n.d.), 325.

can increase the vision and make the eyelids grow."<sup>83</sup> 'Alī al-Qārī confirms the acceptability of *ikhtihāl* by saying that its practice is good as long as it is intended as following the *sunnah* of the Prophet and not as expressing joy or grief, as was the case with the Khawārij and the Rāfidah.<sup>84</sup>

Another practice which Chalil considers textually groundless and devoid of religious principles is the tradition of *ighṭisāl* (bathing), by which immunity from diseases was thought to be secured. Like the tradition of *ikhtihāl*, Chalil condemns *ighṭisāl*, because it is not backed up with conclusive textual evidence and because of its reliance on a non-scientific explanation.<sup>85</sup> His stand against the belief in non-scientific explanations paralleled his rejection of the so-called *al-ḡibb al-nabawī* which promoted health care, medication and healing formulas based on Muḥammad's personal experience and observation. Even if the *ḥadīths* on *ikhtihāl* and *ighṭisāl* were proven to be sound, Chalil would still question their scientific value. In contrast to its rejection of *ikhtihāl*, the *I'ānah* justifies the practice of *ighṭisāl* and considers it a virtue esteemed by the *Sharī'ah*. Nonetheless, in justifying the practice the *I'ānah* does not rely on *ḥadīth*, but on poems which enumerate a set of commendable acts, including that of *ighṭisāl*, to mark the momentous tenth of al-Muḥarram.<sup>86</sup>

The *ḥadīth* upholding the practices of *ikhtihāl* and *ighṭisāl* was rejected by scholars for sundry reasons. While al-Ḥākim, who traced the *ḥadīth* back to Ibn 'Abbās, classified it as *marfū'*, Ibn Rajab disqualified it as *mawḍū'*. al-Ḥākim also called into question one of the transmitters of the *ḥadīth's isnād*.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Najjār narrated the *ḥadīth* in

<sup>83</sup> al-Munāwī said that the Shāfi'ites agreed in recommending *ikhtihāl* as it promoted the physical well-being of its practitioners. 'Alī Ibn Aḥmad al-'Azīzī, *al-Sirāj al-Munīr: Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Sagḥir*, vol. 1 (Miṣr: al-Maṭba'ah al-Khayriyah, 1304 H.), 268; al-Shāfi'i, *al-Umm*, vol. 7 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah li-al-Kitāb, 1987), 133.

<sup>84</sup> Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī, *al-Asrār al-Marfū'ah fī al-Akḥbār al-Mawḍū'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Amānah, 1971), 475.

<sup>85</sup> Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."

<sup>86</sup> al-Bakrī, *I'ānah al-Ṭalibīn*, vol. 2, 302.

<sup>87</sup> al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, vol. 2, 111.

question on the authority of Abū Hurayrah but doubted its *isnād* on account of one of its reporters, namely Ismā'īl Ibn Mu'ammār Ibn Qays, whom he considered unreliable.<sup>88</sup> Ibn Taymīyah, who does not chose to rank this *ḥadīth*, offered an overall view saying that the traditions commonly observed during 'Āshūrā', such as those of *ikhtihāl* and *ighisāl*, were *bid'ah munkarah*, having been ordered neither by the Prophet nor by the al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn (the four orthodox Caliphs) nor even by the *imam al-Muslimīn* (the leaders of Muslims). He further argues that the *ḥadīths* which report these practices were introduced by the *muta'akkhirūn* (later scholars) whose opinions on their authenticity are not to be trusted.<sup>89</sup>

Chalil's disagreement with 'Āshūrā'-related practices went beyond those originating from a belief in the merit of voluntary prayer, the miracles of the early Prophets and the healing powers of *ikhtihāl* and *ighisāl*. He took a firm stand against the special status of other practices performed during 'Āshūrā', even if they served a devotional purpose, such as almsgiving (*sadaqah*), compassionate visits to the sick and added support to relatives (*kelapangan kepada segenap keluarganya*). Chalil argues that the employment of the *ḥadīth* to legitimate these so-called devotional acts was defective, since one of its narrators, Ḥabīb Ibn Ḥabīb al-Marwazī, was declared a liar by al-Dhahabī, al-'Asqalānī and al-Suyūṭī. He further states that the pursuit of a religious cause would nullify the act, regardless of its merit, unless the act could be justified on the basis of an authentic argument.<sup>90</sup>

He was supported in this by early scholars who were critical of the *ḥadīth* in question. Ibn Rajab, for example, cites the opinions of three *ḥadīth* scholars, each of whom concluded that the *ḥadīth* was either *marfū'* or that its *isnād* was *majhūl* (unknown) or

<sup>88</sup>al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, 114; Ibn Rajab, *Lata'if al-Ma'ārif*, 52.

<sup>89</sup>Ibn Taymīyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 301-302.

<sup>90</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Menjingkap Tabir Kepalsuan."

*ghayr mahfūz* (unprotected),<sup>91</sup> whereas Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyah discovered it to be false.<sup>92</sup> According to Ibn Taymiyah, sectarian antagonism was involved in the introduction of devotional practices into the observance of the day of 'Āshūrā'. He holds that the *ḥadīth* which encouraged people to give added support to their family, for example, was created by heretics (*ahl al-bid'ah*) whose hatred towards 'Alī and his followers had led them to counter the Rāfiḍah by creating a false *ḥadīth*. He further states that the rivalry between the heretics and the Rāfiḍah was an antagonism between two evils, since each of them had fabricated a *ḥadīth* to establish a tradition not prescribed by the Prophet.<sup>93</sup>

The *ḥadīth* in support of devotional acts in 'Āshūrā' was not entirely rejected by scholars. Unlike the *ḥadīth* on *ikrīḥāl* and *ighṭisāl*, there were scholars who categorized it as authoritative. Abū al-Faḍl Ibn Nāṣir in particular argued that this *ḥadīth* had been passed down from Abū Hurayrah in a number of ways (*ṭuruq*), some of which were sound. al-Suyūṭī was also convinced that the *ḥadīth* in question was unequivocally sound (*thābit ṣaḥīḥ*).<sup>94</sup> The *I'ānah* quotes the *ḥadīth* on devotional purposes with no reference to the controversy over its authenticity.<sup>95</sup> Even if it was considered a weak *ḥadīth*, it did not lose its value for guidance, since it dealt exclusively with virtuous practices (*faḍā'il al-a'māl*). This attitude was consistent with the traditionalist principle which held that a weak *ḥadīth* could be used to support virtuous acts.<sup>96</sup>

The same principle was maintained by most of the Shāfi'ite scholars who, according to al-Nawawī, were in consensus on the permissibility of the use of a weak

<sup>91</sup> Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, 52.

<sup>92</sup> al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah fi al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, 115-116.

<sup>93</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, vol. 2, 302.

<sup>94</sup> al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah fi al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah*, 115-116; al-Jazāhī, *Kashf al-Khaṭā' wa Muzil al-Ibbās*, vol. 2, 392.

<sup>95</sup> al-Bakrī, *I'ānah*, vol. 2, 302.

<sup>96</sup> For the connection between the reverence of 'Āshūrā' and *faḍā'il al-a'māl*, see in *ibid.*, 203; for an opinion that *faḍā'il al-a'māl* means recommended practices (*ibadat-ibadat sunnat*) to which the practices on the day of 'Āshūrā' could be connected and which were condemned by the reformists, see A. Hassan, "Memakai Hadits Dla'if," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 3, 20-21.



*ḥadīth* for the inducement of such practices.<sup>97</sup> Siradjuddin Abbas also notes that while the Shāfi'ite *madhhab* allowed the use of a weak *ḥadīth* for the execution of *ḥaḍā'il al-a'māl*, the Hanafite employed it to accommodate legal provisions.<sup>98</sup> The acceptance of a weak *ḥadīth* in such circumstances was disallowed by the reformists, who argued that these latter also fall within the criteria of religious devotions which must, therefore, rest on a sound textual basis. Hence, the use of a weak *ḥadīth* to justify such practices could not be sustained in light of the reformist principles to which Chalil strongly adhered<sup>99</sup>

Chalil himself observed '*Āshūrā*' by simply fasting on the tenth day of the month, as an authentic *ḥadīth* prescribed.<sup>100</sup> There is no dispute over the solid textual basis of the fast of '*Āshūrā*'. In fact, scholars even considered it an obligatory fast before it was abrogated by the requirements of the Ramaḍān fast.<sup>101</sup> They championed the obligatory nature of the fast of '*Āshūrā*' on the basis of statements (*kalām*) by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Bakr al-Aṭṭam.<sup>102</sup> In addition, a certain *ḥadīth* even contained an order to pay *zakāt* during '*Āshūrā*', an order made before the verse on the obligatory *zakāt al-fitr* was revealed.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>97</sup> al-Nawawī, *Matn al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyah fi al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah al-Nabawiyah* (Algiers: al-Madrasah al-'Āliyah li-al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyah, 1950), 8.

<sup>98</sup> Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 3, 183.

<sup>99</sup> Moenawar Chalil, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemmat Islam?" 21; see also Hassan's rejection of the use of a *ḥadīth ḍa'if* (weak *ḥadīth*) to justify virtuous deeds. Hassan, "Memakai Hadits Dī'if," 20-21.

<sup>100</sup> Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."

<sup>101</sup> There is a false *ḥadīth* on the fast of '*Āshūrā*' related by an authority of Ḥabīb Ibn Ḥabīb which emphasizes the blessing attached to it and which declares its reward to be equal to sixty years of worship. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *al-Manār al-Munīf fi al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa al-Ḍa'if* (Aleppo: Maktabat al-Maḥbū'āt al-Islāmiyah, 1970), 47.

<sup>102</sup> Ibn Rajab, *Lata'if al-Ma'ārif*, 47; al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, vol. 6 (Damascus: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, n.d.), 383; unlike the other recommended fasts, the fast of '*Āshūrā*' can be observed by a woman, even if she does not ask her husband's consent. This indicates the high status of the fast of '*Āshūrā*' which is to be contested only by the recommended fast of '*Arafah*' for which a husband's consent is equally not required. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Minhāj al-Qawīm* (Semarang: Maktabat Usaha Keluarga, n.d.), 127; for instances in which husband's consent is required for a woman who wants to fast, see Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah wa Shay' min Fiqhihā wa Fawā'idihā*, vol. 1 (n.p.: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985), 679-670.

<sup>103</sup> Majd al-Dīn al-Mubārak Ibn al-Aṭṭar, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl fi Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 311.

Further evidence exhibiting Chalil's simple veneration of the day of 'Āshūrā' can be seen in the fact that he was not in favor of fasting on the ninth day of al-Muḥarram, known as *Tāsū'ā*.<sup>104</sup> This fast was also mentioned by some scholars as part of a series of fasting days during al-Muḥarram, which included the eleventh day of the month as well.<sup>105</sup> Both *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* literature report that the Prophet planned a fast on the ninth of al-Muḥarram to distinguish the Muslim fast of 'Āshūrā' from that of the Jews, but his death put an end to the plan. Despite his failure to realize this goal, the concept of *Tāsū'ā* had a strong appeal and the fast was faithfully observed by Muslims.<sup>106</sup> Chalil's rejection of the fast of *Tāsū'ā* followed from his puritanical belief that only those rituals based on the Prophet's actual deeds should be performed, because only in such cases is there a reliable guide to the manner of their execution. In fact, the fast of *Tāsū'ā* remained a subject of controversy, as scholars disagreed on the events that had led to the issuance of that order (*sabab al-wurūd*).<sup>107</sup>

From the point of view of a puritan like Chalil, the excessive practices of 'Āshūrā' were antithetical to the authentic teachings of the Prophet, since an examination of the *ḥadīth* from which the complex customs of 'Āshūrā' had descended clearly proved its unreliability. No wonder, therefore, that he opposed all these practices, accepting only the fast of the tenth of al-Muḥarram which had conclusively been performed by the Prophet. Chalil was not merely concerned with denouncing those practices, but was also concerned

<sup>104</sup>Chalil, "Bid'ah Pada Asjura."

<sup>105</sup>Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl fī Ahādīth al-Rasūl*, vol. 2, 311.; Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Fath al-Wahhāb bi-Sharḥ Manhaj al-Tullāb*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 124; al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, vol. 6, 383; some scholars recommended fasting during the first ten days of al-Muḥarram. See Majd al-Dīn Abī al-Barakāt, *al-Muḥarrar fī al-Fiqh 'alā Madhhab al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, n.d.), 231.

<sup>106</sup>Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, 498-499; the Prophet reportedly said: "Distinguish yourselves from the Jews by fasting the ninth and the eleventh of al-Muḥarram," Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, 49; for the opinion which associated the Jewish 'Āshūrā' with that of the Muslims, see S. D. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 95-97.

<sup>107</sup>For the controversy, see the three arguments put forth by Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī in his *Kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq fī 'Ilm al-Ḥadīth wa al-Zuhdiyyāt*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, n.d.), 204.

with providing a textual basis for their illegitimacy. His objection to the traditionalists' veneration of '*Āshūrā*' partly revolved around his presumption of their use of weak *ḥadīths*. Hence, the reasons for the divergent opinions concerning its veneration lie mostly on the different perceptions concerning the acceptability of weak *ḥadīths*. Chalil certainly rejected the use of weak *ḥadīths*, thus conforming to the puritan principle which provided no room for the use of weak *ḥadīths* even in support of the so called- *ṣaḍā'il al-a'māl*.

### III

Another controversy pertinent to the veneration of particular months involved the debate over the method used to determine the first day of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl. While the reformists utilized the science of astronomy (*'ilm al-falak*), by which *ḥisāb* (calendrical computation) was conducted to calculate the appearance of the new moon (*hilāl*), the traditionalists depended on *ru'yah* (sighting the new moon with the naked eyes) to detect the new moon. The debate over *ḥisāb* and *ru'yah* has not shown any sign of abating and still heats up every year when the months of Sha'bān and Ramaḍān are drawing to a close.<sup>108</sup> In an attempt to reach a unified solution, the Department of Religious Affairs created a Board of *Ḥisāb* and *Ru'yah* (*Badan Hisab dan Rukyat*) in 1972. It was felt that without such an initiative a schism would emerge within the Muslim community.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, this controversy prevails the Muslim community as a whole, despite the fact that

<sup>108</sup>The recurrence of this controversy is reflected in various articles recently published in the traditionalist and reformist media. Muhammad Kurdi, "Hisab Hilal Suatu Kemajuan atau Kemunduran dalam Penetapan Awal Bulan," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (January 16-31; 1993), 26-27; Basit Wasid, "Rukyat Dengan Alat Canggih," *Suara Muhammadiyah* (November 1-15; 1993), 56-57; "Jawaban Ahli Rukyat atas Ahli Hisab," *Aula* (April-May; 1992), 30-39; "Mengintip Hilal Bukan Melihat Purnama," *Aula* (April-May; 1992), 16-23; Aziz Masyhuri, "Rukyah Hilal Bukan Khilafiyah," *Aula* (April-May; 1992), 23-30; A. Salam Nawawi, "Problema Hisab dan Prediksi Rukyat," *Aula* (February; 1991), 51-57; "Penetapan Awal Ramadhan dari Tahun ke Tahun," *Aula* (February; 1994), 67-70; "Satu Tahun Beridul Fitri Dua Kali," *Aula* (April-May; 1992), 11-16; "Idul Fitri Beda Lagi Beda Lagi," *Aula* (May; 1994), 29-33.

<sup>109</sup>A. Mukti Ali, "Sambutan Menteri Agama," in *Laporan Musyawarah Nasional Hisab dan Rukyat Direktorat Jendral Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 9 s/d 11 Maret, 1977*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Pembinaan Badan Peradilan Agama Departemen Agama, 1977), 3-4.

attempts have been made to reconcile the two approaches of *ḥisāb* and *ru'yah*.<sup>110</sup> Needless to say, before the emergence of the reformist movement in Indonesia, *ru'yah* constituted the only method exercised by the Muslims.<sup>111</sup>

The *ḥisāb-ru'yah* controversy prompted Chalil to speak on behalf of the reformists.<sup>112</sup> He describes that the observance of the Ramaḍān fast should begin when the new moon was sighted, since the verse declares: "So whosoever of you see the moon (*wa man shahida minkum al-shahr*) he shall fast therein". This is confirmed in a *ḥadīth* which states: "Do not fast till you see (*taraw*) the new moon and do not break fast till you see (*taraw*) it, but if the weather is cloudy calculate about it." He explains that the word *shahida* and *ra'ā* (the infinitive form of *taraw*) indicate a visual, intellectual and scientific meaning as pertaining to the act of sighting. He also illustrates that this inexact indication of the words *shahida* and *ra'ā* was designed to accommodate the intellectual means of society. Hence, the *Shari'ah*, according to him, instructs that the commencement of the Ramaḍān fast should begin with the sighting of the moon using the naked eyes (*ru'yah*) for those who have no scientific means to do otherwise and expects those who are able to do so to utilize calendrical computation (*ḥisāb*) for the purpose.<sup>113</sup>

Chalil argues that the Prophet practiced *ru'yah* due to illiteracy and the scarcity of astronomical knowledge in his time. If the science of astronomy had been advanced enough, the Prophet would have determined the commencement of the Ramaḍān fast

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<sup>110</sup>Several international conferences have been held in an attempt to reach a compromise solution according to which the beginning of the Ramaḍān fast would be determined by using an approach embracing both *ḥisāb* and *ru'yah*. See Abdul Hamid b. Mohd. Tahir, *Permasalahan dalam Penentuan Awal Puasa dan Hari Raya* (Johor: Unit Penerbitan Akademik Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 1991), 1, 10.

<sup>111</sup>C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Kumpulan Karangan Snouck Hurgronje*, vol. 8 (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 95-97.

<sup>112</sup>For the reformist support of *ḥisāb*, see "Puasa dengan Hisab," *Sual-Djawab*, no. 7, 56-58; this is not to say that the reformists totally rejected the method of *ru'yah*, when the findings of *ḥisāb* proved to be void due to the appearance of the moon and its detection by naked eye. Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: P. P. Muhammadiyah, 1967), 291-292.

<sup>113</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Nilai dan Hikmah Puasa* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), 65-66.

according to *hisāb*. This was so, Chalil explains, because the Prophet himself had admitted that illiteracy and the absence of the skill of *hisāb* among his people constituted an obstacle in their exercise of *hisāb*. Chalil quotes the following *ḥadīth* to justify his premise: "We are unlettered people who can neither write nor count. The month is thus and thus, folding his thumb when he said it the third time."<sup>114</sup> Nowadays, Chalil argues, the practice of *ru'yah* should be replaced due to Muslim expertise in astronomy and on account of the *hisāb's* high level of accuracy in fixing the beginning of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl.<sup>115</sup> Chalil then points the inconsistency of the proponents of *ru'yah*, who persistently reject the use of *hisāb* for the calculation of the first day of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl, but unconditionally resort to it for the calculation of the obligatory prayer times.<sup>116</sup>

Chalil agrees with the traditionalists on the fact that *hisāb* had never been put into practice during the era of the Prophet, but disagrees with them on its adoption by the *ṣaḥābah* and the *ṭābi'ūn*. Citing Ibn Taymīyah's opinion, Aziz Masyhuri, the deputy chair of the Consultative Board of the *Nahdlat al-'Ulamā'* of east Java, notes that *hisāb* as a practice began only after the third century of *Hijrah*. Prior to that, *ru'yah* had continually served as the sole method from the time of the Prophet, the *ṣaḥābah* and the *ṭābi'ūn*. Moreover, all four of the great *madhhab* founders had reached an agreement on the absolute observance of *ru'yah*.<sup>117</sup> The traditionalists also demonstrated that the proponents of *hisāb* had developed different approaches, which in due course resulted in the formation of three categories of *hisāb*.<sup>118</sup> These categorical divisions, with their divergent levels of mathematical accuracy, had brought about varying deductions, the consequence of which

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>117</sup>Masyhuri, "Rukyah Hilal Bukan Khilafiyah," 24.

<sup>118</sup>Nawawi, "Problema Hisab dan Prediksi Rukyat," 50-51.

was that different dates were sometimes assigned to the first day of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl.<sup>119</sup>

Masyhuri argued that the exercise of *ru'yah* was in perfect conformity with religious doctrine and that its replacement by *hisāb* would oppose the *Shari'ah*, which provided conclusive evidence for the unconditional acceptance of *ru'yah*. According to his view, *hisāb* can only act as a supplement to *ru'yah*, because *hisāb*, which generates its formulas from logical norms, cannot function as a legal basis for a religious act. *Hisāb* should be simply taken as a guide in calculating the night when the *ru'yah* is to be conducted, while the final determination has to be based on the authority of *ru'yah* alone. Masyhuri further argued that the word *tarāw*, as mentioned in the *ḥadīth* quoted by Chalil, cannot be interpreted as the act of sighting in either an intellectual or a scientific sense, as Chalil had maintained. Rather, it should be understood to mean visual sighting alone, because the phrase which follows *fa'īn ghumma* (if it is cloudy) particularizes its meaning, notably the sighting of the new moon with the naked eye.<sup>120</sup>

According to the traditionalists, Chalil's translation of the *Qur'ānic* verse also presented some problems. They rejected his interpretation of the verse *wa man shahida minkum al-shahr* as meaning "So whosoever of you see the moon", because such an interpretation ignores the context in which the verse stands. All the classical exegetes

<sup>119</sup>The central board of the *Muhammadiyah* abrogated the establishment of the first day of Shawwāl as Sunday, March 17th 1991, which had been the data announced earlier, and moved it to the following day, Monday, March 18th 1991. The central board of the *Muhammadiyah* did this once again in 1992, when the first day of Shawwāl was revised from Saturday to Sunday. The one day lapse in the first day of Shawwāl reoccurred in 1994, although this time the change was not proposed by *Muhammadiyah* circles. The revision was a reflection of an inaccuracy which befell the *hisāb* system. "Satu Tahun Beridul Fitri Dua Kali," 14; Nawawi, "Problema Hisab dan Prediksi Rukyat," 51-52; see also Abbas, 40 *Masalah Agama*, vol. 1, 233.

<sup>120</sup>Masyhuri, "Rukyah Hilal Bukan Khilafiyah," 24; it is worth mentioning that the word *ru'yah* in the *ḥadīth* is always followed by the phrases *fa'īn ghumma*, *fa'īn ḥālat dūnabū ghayābah*, *an yaghumma*, *fa'īn ghubbiya* or *fa'īn ughmiya*, all of which have the general sense of "if it is cloudy". See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, 458-459; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 119; al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī 'alā al-Muwatta'*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1980), 152-155.

translated *shahida* as "staying home", in the sense of not going on a journey, and not as seeing the moon. Thus, the sense of the verse should be: "So whoever of you is present [staying home] in the month, he shall fast therein." This translation was derived from its assumed contrast with the following verse which declares: "But if anyone is sick or on a journey, then a number of other days."<sup>121</sup> Siradjuddin Abbas, therefore, felt that the verse has nothing to do with the issue of searching for the first and the last day of Ramaḍān. Rather, it presents the subject of fasting in general, since the question of the commencement and the end of Ramaḍān fast was exclusively ordained by the *ḥadīth*.<sup>122</sup>

Chalil does not refer to the opinion of any of the early scholars in the course of his discussion of the *ḥisāb-ru'yah* controversy. Scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyah and al-Shawkānī, whose opinions often served as his point of reference, seem to have favored *ru'yah*. al-Shawkānī held that *ru'yah* was the only viable basis for determining the commencement of the Ramaḍān fast as none of the *ḥadīth* traditions commanded otherwise.<sup>123</sup> Ibn Rushd, whose *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* was widely accepted by the reformists, found in *ru'yah* an authoritative way of defining the beginning of Ramaḍān.<sup>124</sup> The traditionalists, on the other hand, were able to claim the support of the early scholars. Thus, besides legitimizing their view with the opinions of non-Shāfi'ite scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyah, al-Shawkānī and Ibn Rushd, the traditionalists also solicited support from the opinions of the authoritative Shāfi'ite scholars, such as al-Nawawī, al-'Asqalānī and al-Ramli.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>121</sup>For the verification, see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Istiḳāmah, 1956), 216; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1997), 114; al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 5 (Miṣr: al-Maṭba'ah al-Bahīyah al-Miṣriyah, 1935-38), 96; al-Bayḍāwī, *Awwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 1 (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1968), 101.

<sup>122</sup>Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 1, 248-249.

<sup>123</sup>al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṣār min Aḥādīth Sayyid al-Akhyār: Sharḥ Muntaqā al-Akḥbār*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992), 188-191.

<sup>124</sup>Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 284.

<sup>125</sup>Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 1, 254-255.

The traditionalists further challenged the notion advanced by Chalil that *ḥisāb* did not exist in the Prophet's time. Masyhuri notes that historical evidence indicates the practice of *ḥisāb* in pre-Islamic Arabia as proven by the archeological discovery of places where *ḥisāb* was "taught."<sup>126</sup> He shows that Ibn 'Abbās was among those who had expertise in the art of *ḥisāb*, whereby he calculated the number of twenty *manzilahs* (phases) through which the moon consistently rotated in a year.<sup>127</sup> Thus, the *ḥadīth* speaking of illiteracy and lack of astronomical skill should not be interpreted as an absolute negation of the arts of writing and astronomy among the Arabs and, as such, should not be used to justify the concept of *ḥisāb*.<sup>128</sup>

Another controversy which attracted Chalil's attention with regards to the veneration of Ramaḍān was the way *Laylat al-qadr* (the night of power) was supposed to be observed. *Laylat al-qadr* is the night during Ramaḍān which is proclaimed in the *Qur'ān* as excelling any other night. It is the night when "the angels and the Spirit descend therein, by permission of their Lord, with every decree."<sup>129</sup> It was when the month of Ramaḍān became the month of the obligatory fast that *Laylat al-qadr* apparently assumed its lofty stature. Since then it has become one of the most venerated nights in the Muslim calendar.<sup>130</sup> The legitimation of *Laylat al-qadr* was linked with the elaboration of the idea of its virtues and merits. In comparing *Laylat al-barā'ah* (the night of innocence) to *Laylat al-qadr*, scholars note that the former had a fixed date, while the latter did not. In addition, the former was the night of judgment and decree, while the latter was the night of mercy.

<sup>126</sup>Masyhuri mentioned Farīd Wajdi's opinion that scholars had discovered archeological evidence in the form of stones, which indicated *ḥisāb*-related activity. Masyhuri, "Jawaban Ahli Rukyat atas Ahli Hisab," 32; see also Muḥammad Farīd Wajdi, *Dā'irat al-Ma'arif al-Qarn al-'Ishrin*, vol. 6 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dā'irat al-Ma'arif al-Qarn al-'Ishrin, 1915-1919), 250.

<sup>127</sup>Masyhuri refers to al-Suyūṭī who mentions that Ibn 'Abbās even had identified the names for each of those *manzilahs*. Masyhuri, "Jawaban Ahli Rukyat atas Ahli Hisab," 32; see also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manṭūr fī al-Tafsīr al-Ma'ṭūr*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 264.

<sup>128</sup>Machfudz Anwar, "Ilmu Falak," *Aula* (April; 1995), 77.

<sup>129</sup>The *Qur'ān*, 97: 4.

<sup>130</sup>For the opinions which signified the importance of *Laylat al-qadr* and traced its historical reason, see K. Wagtendonk, *Fasting in the Koran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 45.



Scholars reason that had the date of *Laylat al-qadr* been precisely determined, people would have abstained from every exertion on that day only and would have relied upon the mercy of God.<sup>131</sup>

As with his attack on the celebration of venerated days, Chalil rejects the practices largely associated with *Laylat al-qadr* and insists that its celebration be purged of all accretions incompatible with his viewpoint. He criticizes many of the customs as unacceptable, such as the belief that *Laylat al-qadr* always takes place on one of the odd-numbered days between the 20th and the 30th of Ramaḍān. He also finds unacceptable the decoration of houses with lights and the assembly of people in the *alun-alun* (the public park located in front of the residence of the regent of a district) in anticipation of the arrival of *Laylat al-qadr*. Moreover, he criticizes the increasing tendency to use *Laylat al-qadr* as an occasion for feasting, in which a large sum of money is spent on food, drink and processions (*arak-arakan*).<sup>132</sup> Worse still was the fact, Chalil confirms, that in the celebration of *Laylat al-qadr* emphasis is placed on the reading of false reports regarding the merit of reciting particular *sūrahs* (chapters) or *āyahs* (verses) of the *Qur'ān*, while reports on the *Qur'ān* as a guide for human life are discarded.<sup>133</sup> Chalil wanted *Laylat al-qadr* to assume a reformist character and prescribed the abandonment of old forms of feasting and their replacement by socially-oriented activities, such as feeding the poor and setting aside part of one's wealth for the construction of schools, orphanages and other charitable institutions.<sup>134</sup>

Chalil devoted particular attention to the issue of the fixed date of *Laylat al-qadr* and whether it falls during the last ten days or on one of the odd-numbered days of the last

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<sup>131</sup>M. J. Kister, "Sha'bān Is My Month," in *Society and Religion from Jāhiliyya to Islam* (Hampshire: Variorum Gower Publishing Group, 1990), 28.

<sup>132</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Memperingati Peristiwa Nuzul Al-Qur'an dan Lailatul Qadar," *Abadi* (May 22, 1953).

<sup>133</sup>Chalil, *Nilai dan Hikmah Puasa*, 81.

<sup>134</sup>Chalil, "Memperingati Peristiwa Nuzul Al-Qur'an dan Lailatul Qadar."

ten days or on the seventeenth day of the month.<sup>135</sup> He specifically attacks the belief in the occurrence of *Laylat al-qadr* on the odd days, because people generally went out of their way to observe it on those days. Restricting its observance to a particular day is not justified, he affirms, since each of the three proposed days has a sound *ḥadīth* to support it.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, even though the three possibilities are supported by *ḥadīths*, none of them can be made absolute since the *Qur'ān* itself does not give a precise date for *Laylat al-qadr*.<sup>137</sup> Accepting the odd days over the other possible days would inject polemics into an atmosphere of harmony and would divert attention away from the main aim and spirit of such a holy night. For Chalil, the debate over fixing the date of *Laylat al-qadr* did not carry any real significance, since the merit of *Laylat al-qadr* does not lie in the date of its occurrence, but in the degree of devotion that Muslims show during the month of Ramaḍān as a whole. Citing 'Abduh's opinion he affirms that the *ḥadīth* which gave different dates for *Laylat al-qadr* simply meant to incite Muslims to be more actively devoted on those days. Veneration of *Laylat al-qadr* should not be confused with the debate over the question of its exact date, since its occurrence on a fixed day or during the whole of Ramaḍān would only have significance if proven by the intensity of devotional exercises.<sup>138</sup>

Chalil was of the view that the time at which devotional exercises take place is of much less importance than the sense of religious piety brought to these occasions by the person performing them. There was no day or month which was in itself bad or good. What makes a day better or worse, according to Chalil, is the value which is invested in it

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<sup>135</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Lailatul Qadar: Ibadat dan Amal Shalih Selama 10 Malam Jang Terahir," *Abadi* (March; 18; 1960).

<sup>136</sup>Not less than six *ḥadīth* are quoted by Chalil to justify the validity of the three different days of *Laylat al-qadr*. Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.; see also Muḥammad 'Abduh's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm: Juz' 'Ammā* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyah, 1322), 129.

by a person. This alone determines the quality of a time period and not *vice versa*.<sup>139</sup> Convinced of the unimportance of time, he rejects the Prophetic traditions which describe God having created certain beings on particular days due to the merit of those particular moments, despite the fact that those *hadiths* are narrated in the *Musnad* of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the *Sahih* of Muslim.<sup>140</sup> This general belief in the neutrality of time underlies Chalil's refutation of practices motivated by a belief in the danger or the merit of a particular day or month.

Chalil's brief discussion of the *Rebo wekasun* will shed more light on this aspect of his thought. He rejects the traditional ceremony held to ward off bad omens, a ceremony which by tradition occurs on the last Wednesday of the month of Šafar and which is known as *Rebo wekasun* (a Javanese phrase meaning the last Wednesday). He explains that on that day people suspend all daily activities to observe special prayers, hoping for safety and for protection from misfortunes and calamities, which they believe might haunt them on that particular day of the month.<sup>141</sup> The tradition of *Rebo wekasun* is said to be an idiosyncratic part of the calendar of ceremonies celebrated by Javanese Muslims.<sup>142</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that no trace of the celebration can be found in the classical *hadith* or *fiqh* literature.

The tradition had a religious connection when it was associated with the *kiyais* who, according to Chalil, were the providers of the *jimat* (charm) and the *tangkal* (amulet), which brought forth magical powers securing the safety of people on this unlucky

<sup>139</sup>Moenawar Chalil, "Tachajul Dlm Bulan Šafar Jang Harus Dibongkar," *Abadi* (November 6; 1953).

<sup>140</sup>He justifies his argument by revealing the weakness of the *isnad* (chain of narrators) because of its inclusion of al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Jurayj, whom he considers to be a person with a psychiatric problem (*akalnya tidak beres*). Moenawar Chalil, "Betulkah Kedjadian Alam Semesta Dalam Waktu Lima Hari," *Abadi* (June, 5; 1960).

<sup>141</sup>Chalil, "Tachajul Dlm Bulan Šafar Jang Harus Dibongkar." For a detailed account of the tradition on *Rebo Wekasun*, see Pijper, *Beberapa Studi Tentang Sejarah Islam di Indonesia*, 153-165.

<sup>142</sup>Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, 393-394.

day.<sup>143</sup> The use of the term "*kiyais*" in Chalil's statement denotes the traditionalist religious scholars and implies that they approved of such a tradition. Nonetheless, if they were indeed involved, their involvement did not stem from the nurturing source of the Shāfi'ite *fiqh*-texts, as none of them mention anything about the month of Ṣafar, let alone the specific tradition of *Rebo wekasua*. This was in contrast to the other venerated months which receive a full explanation in these texts of their virtues, merits and qualities.<sup>144</sup>

The tradition of *Rebo Wekasua* was likely local in origin but imbued with a religious flavor, since veneration of particular months is not peculiar to Islam after all. In numerous utterances attributed to the Prophet, he is said to have recommended fasting to venerate the months of al-Muḥarram, Rajab and Sha'bān. The Prophet said, for example, that "Sha'bān is my month," and "The superiority of Sha'bān over other months is like my superiority over other prophets." These utterances are widely circulated and are usually coupled with his statement about the status of Rajab and Ramaḍān.<sup>145</sup> Rajab is also a month of devotional practices and of fasting. According to some traditions, swearing against wrong-doers in this month is especially effective.<sup>146</sup> In another broad statement, the Prophet declared that "Rajab is the month of God, Sha'bān is my month, Ramaḍān is the month of my people."<sup>147</sup>

These months thus enjoyed a special merit and anyone who undertook devotional exercises during them, such as prayers, vigils and supplication, would see their rewards multiplied. Another *ḥadīth* also mentions that the pious observances of the present are of

<sup>143</sup>Chalil, "Tachajul Dlm Bulan Shafar jang Harus Dibongkar."

<sup>144</sup>With regards to the months venerated by the *Shari'ah* and during which the fast is recommended, the Shāfi'ite *fiqh*-texts mention the months of Ramaḍān, Dhū al-Qa'dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, al-Muḥarram, Rajab and Sha'bān, but not the month of Ṣafar. See, for example, al-Haytamī, *al-Minhāj al-Qawīm*, 126; Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb bi-Sharḥ Taḥrīr al-Lubāb* (Indonesia: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, n.d.), 50; al-Bakrī, *I'ānat al-Tālibīn*, vol. 2, 307.

<sup>145</sup>Kister, "Sha'bān Is My Month," 15.

<sup>146</sup>Kister, "Rajab Is the Month of God...", 191-192.

<sup>147</sup>*Ibid.*, 203.

less merit than those of the past, as the Prophet had reportedly said that "Indeed, our present year is less worthy (*arḥasṭhamanan*) than the last year was."<sup>148</sup> Apart from these *ḥadīths*, a number of traditions also recommend fasting on white and black days (*al-ayyām al-bīḍ wa al-sūd*), which might be interpreted as symbols of good and evil which the fasting either honors or atones for, as the case may be.<sup>149</sup> Thus, Chalil's inclination to de-emphasize the eminence and merit of particular moments of time was not really in keeping with the Prophet's own statements.

Chalil was following puritanical principles when he rejected elements of the celebration of the *Mawlid* and the veneration of 'Āshūrā', *Laylat al-qadr* and *Rebo wekasan*. He based his refutation on the fact that no sound *ḥadīth* ever suggested the celebration of the *Mawlid*, let alone the excessive exaltation of the Prophet as outlined in the panegyrical works. Chalil's puritanical zeal was directed at a number of practices performed in veneration of 'Āshūrā' which he identified as innovations that no reliable traditions had ever suggested. He also spoke against the practices of *Laylat al-qadr* and *Rebo wekasan* and tried to purge these celebrations of all accretions that were incompatible with his puritanical outlook.

Chalil's rejection of belief in the merit or the demerit of a particular time, as manifested in his attack on the debate over the fixed date of *Laylat al-qadr* and his condemnation of the superstition associating bad omens with the *Rebo wekasan*, followed from his belief that exalting particular days or months violates the unity of God by making certain times independent of Him. Chalil's observation focused on the incompatibility of such a belief with the concept of pure monotheism (*tawḥīd*) which is based on the absolute dependence on God. The Prophet had declared, Chalil argues, that "foretelling misfortune is

<sup>148</sup>The *ḥadīth* was related to the authority of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd. See Ibn al-Ḥajj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 1, 300.

<sup>149</sup>The order of the fast on the white and black days was reported in *Sunan al-Nasā'i*, one of the six canonical collections of *ḥadīth*. al-Anṣārī, *Tuḥfat al-Tullāb*, 50.

the act of *shirk*.<sup>150</sup> In addition, Chalil held that it was one's own deeds that would bring bliss or calamity and not the merit and the felicity of a given time. By saying so, he "rationalized" the concept of the veneration of particular days. This was not only reflected in his views on *Laylat al-qadr* and *Rebo wekasan*, but also in his advocacy of *hisāb* over *ru'yah* and his rejection of irrational practices during 'Āshūrā'.

It should be pointed out, however, that Chalil's rejection of the traditional manner of veneration was a denial of practices which naturally emerged to satisfy the religious emotion and which cannot be fully judged by a rigid interpretation of the texts. Religion should also be conceived as a means of expressing a variety of emotions, such as hope for protection (*shafā'ah*), fear of calamity (*Rebo wekasan*), belief in the multiplication of rewards (voluntary prayer), contemplation of fairy tales (belief in the miraculous stories of the early Prophets) and expression of joy (festivity). No religion can live in the hearts of its adherents without the expression of such emotions. Any attempt to eradicate them would consequently reduce the emotional dimension of one's religious experience.

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<sup>150</sup>Chalil, "Djangan Pertjaja Kepada Tachajul Dan Churafat," *Abadi* (October 30, 1954).

## CONCLUSION

Moenawar Chalil's thought offers an insight into the main features of reformist doctrine in Indonesia. Although his concerns and outlook were for the most part derived from his experiences during his early career, one can also see how they were inspired by his positions as head of the *Majlis 'Ulamā'* of the *Persis* and member of the *Majlis Tarjih Pusat* of the *Muhammadiyah*. His active membership in both organizations obliged him to propagate their religious doctrine and to communicate the religious principles of their mother organizations. Chalil's thought followed an archetype, which historically had shaped the thought of the early reformists. This can be seen from the kinds of issues that he raised, which were the same as those addressed by his predecessors in expressing their religious convictions. Such issues included his call for a return to the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*, the creative interpretation of these two sources by means of *ijtihād* and the liberation of reason from the shackles of *taqlid* as well as from affiliation to *madhabs*. Moreover, his discussion of the basic tenets of Islam and his ceaseless attacks against the traditional approach to religious celebrations are further proof of his faith in the doctrine of reform. This is not to deny that a shift of emphasis can be discerned in the topics he focused on, which changed with time, circumstance and other factors of a personal nature.

The reformist call for a return to the *Qur'ān* and adherence to the Prophetic *sunnah* set the parameters of Chalil's thought and was reflected in his attempts at revitalizing the "lost function" of the *Qur'ān* and at proclaiming the *sunnah* as the supreme authority for all Islamic religious observances. His efforts in this direction began with his writing of an exegesis and resulted in the production of a number of books and articles, all of which attempt to highlight the importance of the *Qur'ān*, its message and its role as the supreme source of law, dogma and guidance for the *ummah*. This endeavor also constituted a manifestation of his refutation of the prevailing mode of exegesis, which he believed to be a deliberate misinterpretation of the *Qur'ān*, not only understating its overall message, but

also fostering irrelevant practices. In addition to revitalizing the interpretation of the *Qur'ān*, he also made a case for the *Qur'ān* as the chief vehicle for modernizing society, this by elucidating its verses according to rational principles. In so doing, he stripped the texts of legendary traits and primitive notions, rejected the principle of *naskh*, offered a different way of interpreting the *mutashābihāt* verses and emphasized the *i'jāz 'aqlī*.

The principle of the emulation of the Prophetic *sunnah* found its full expression in his *Al-Fiqh al-Nabawī* and *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, in which he drew attention to Muḥammad's model performance and portrayed it as the ideal religious paradigm for all Muslim practices. In so doing, he also contested the employment of conventional *fiqh*-texts, which, due to their indirect deduction from the legal sources, he considered inauthentic. He is also credited with the creation of the *Lajnah Ahli-Ahli Ḥadīth*, which was entrusted with the rejuvenation of the science of *ḥadīth*. His adoption of the principle of emulation, however, was limited to the traditions dealing with *ibādah*, so that only those which were associated with Muḥammad's position as Prophet were legally binding, while those pertaining to the idiosyncrasies of his personal life were discarded. More importantly, he called for a strict scrutiny of the authenticity of *ḥadīths* and advocated submitting them to the test of reason. However, this attitude led to his adopting an overly rigid stance with respect to any and every proposition, rejecting those which did not comply with his puritan standards. By adopting this attitude, he expected to restore the simplicity of faith and, in keeping with this principle, he subjected many fields of belief and conduct, which were ridden with additional materials, to an examination in the light of the texts.

Chalil placed himself in the forefront of reformist thought by waging an ardent campaign against the "misconceptions" attached to *ijtihād*, *taqlīd*, *itibā'* and *madhhab*. By taking *ijihād* as their point of departure, Muslims, the reformists believed, would be able to answer the challenges that they faced in their lives. Chalil's *ijihād*, however, was not an effective tool in coping with social changes. Rather than exercising *ijihād* in order to



expand the "accommodation" of the *Shari'ah* to the new realities, he used it to refute established practices. Hence, he concerned himself with issues that had already been addressed many times by scholars, even though not to his satisfaction. This restriction on employing *ijtihād* was the logical result of his puritan mindset, which could only deal with purely debatable matters. Thus, the ethical activism, which the reformists saw as being at the core of *ijtihād* and essential in terms of achieving social progress, appears to be absent in Chalil's attempts at manipulating the sources.

The characteristic feature of reformist Islam, in all its variety, was the call for the rejection of *taqlid*. Chalil supported this *anti-taqlid* doctrine to the extent of totally rejecting the practice. This extreme stance went beyond what even the early reformists saw as necessary, for he did not perceive the cognitive dimension of the meaning of *taqlid* and its role in the procedures of the judicial system. The fact that the debate over *taqlid* had been settled by earlier scholars, some of whom were reformists themselves, did not appease him. Rather, he diversified his arguments by referring to their opinions, which due to his inadequate comprehension of their seemingly simple arguments, led him to adopt an increasingly hostile stance with regard to *taqlid*. Chalil was, thus, trapped into denying that people are endowed with different levels of intellectual capacity with some destined to become *mujtahids* and others merely *muqallids*. He failed to see how, in accordance with this equilibrium, the *muqallid* had the right to choose from the convenient opinions of the learned, just as a jurist was equally under no constraint to arrive at a predestined opinion. Indeed, it was out of an understanding of its function in allowing the *'awāmm* to fulfill their religious duties that the majority of the *'ulamā'* showed considerable tolerance for its practice.

Notwithstanding his failure to perceive the factors underlying the necessity of the practice of *taqlid*, Chalil's negative attitude may also be attributed to his objection to any suggestion of passivity with respect to the Islamic faith. Putting an end to such passivity

was of paramount importance to him, because he feared that *taqlid* would result in apathy towards worldly affairs, which was condemned by Islam. Islam, he believed, obliged its followers to be active participants in every aspect of life on this earth. This attitude extended to hostility towards *sūfism* and a misconception of *zuhd*, *ikhtiyār* and *du'ā'*. This was in conformity with the reformist call for the promotion of social progress through the abandonment of passive imitation and the doctrine of fatalism. Chalil, in opposing the two notions of *taqlid* and fatalism, saw a link between them. He believed that the solution to the problems lay in a fresh approach to the problems arising from social change. One way in which he saw this as being possible was in his attempt to connect the classical concept of consensus with the modern notion of a legislative body. Although this last association had little relevance for contemporary Muslims, the fact that he made such a suggestion signified his intention to bring about necessary change.

Basic to Chalil's puritan view was the notion that *'ibādah*, which by its nature carries a legal value, requires a textual validation, which in the case of the *'awāmm* could only be accomplished through *iṭbā'*. His notion of *iṭbā'*, however, was not entirely correct, as he was deceived by its literal meaning and failed to perceive the intellectual activity required by its practitioners. As a result, his concept failed to take into account the intellectual state of the *'awāmm*, whose inability to detect the reasons behind the proofs had led to the abandonment of its exercise. Hence, *iṭbā'*, which he saw as an alternative of *taqlid*, amounted to an ignorance of the ideas behind the proofs. Moreover, not only did his concept of *iṭbā'* perpetuate the same ignorance as *taqlid*, but his rejection of *madhhab*s entailed the introduction of a *madhhab* by itself, thus producing further *taqlid*. This last version of *taqlid* manifested itself as a consequence of the reinforcement of the reformist version of legal opinions. Hence, one might declare a failure his attempt to forge a legal independence from the authority of others through the execution of the principle of *iṭbā'* and non-affiliation to any *madhhab*.

Central to Chalil's reformist thought was his concern to revise the understanding of the basic tenets of Islam and to correct certain aspects of traditional religious celebrations. This revision was pursued, so as to promote the concept of the absolute unity of God as well as the purity of belief. While the reform of the popular religious celebrations had as its chief concern the elimination of the concept that God's favor or disfavor depended on the calendar (thus imposing a constraint on God), his attempt at clarifying basic doctrines was intended to correct what he saw as a distorted understanding of Islam and Īmān. On the basis of the latter notion, he built arguments affirming that Islam should be defined in terms of the concept of pure monotheism, which constituted the core of its system of belief. Islam was not to be confused with other belief systems, because it was not one religion among others, but the only religion revealed throughout the chain of prophethood. As Īmān was the essence of the spiritual message of Islam, the meaning of Īmān too must be correctly understood. Hence, anything that could distort the right perception of Īmān should be eliminated, so that Īmān would always be pure and unadulterated.

Chalil's criticisms of popular religious celebration were designed to foster the purity of belief. To this purpose, he took pains to invalidate the textual bases of the extravagant eulogies recited on the occasion of *Mawlid*, the excessive devotions on the day of 'Āshūrā', the belief in the merit of the particular day of *Laylat al-qadr* as well as the superstitions surrounding *Rebo wekasun*. His verification of the texts not only led him to condemn the customs associated with these celebrations, but also to declare that these same customs skirted the edge of *shirk*, against which he issued a stern warning. In adopting this stance, Chalil hoped to purify Islam of centuries of accretions and return it to its state of pristine purity. Nevertheless, he failed to take into account that such popular customs were a manifestation of the emotional dimension of religious experience, which existed in the hearts of the followers of any religion, an experience resulting from their love and appreciation of their religion. Such practices, therefore, should not have been judged by

their conformity to textual doctrine, since this inevitably resulted in the suppression of the intensity of people's religious emotions.

Finally, Chalil's reformist thought aimed at transforming Islam from what he perceived as its backward state into a new and improved form, which he considered better and closer to the ideal form. This could only be accomplished by the preservation of its essence, which he believed to have been spoiled by corrupt human interpretations. His reform also embodied the idea that Islam possessed an innate compatibility with modern rational inquiry and a receptivity to change. The two terms reformist and modernist, thus, can be employed to characterize his thought. Similarly, he manifested a puritan outlook, featuring as it did an obsession to achieve a pure, strict and unspoiled brand of Islam. His reform consisted in fact of a reformulation of permanently valid and immutable dogma, free of any subsequently added elements.

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