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# The Different Challenges of *al-Ṭarîqah al-Naqsabandîyah* in Indonesia and Turkey

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## Abstrak

Artikel ini mencoba untuk merefleksikan pemahaman saya mengenai tantangan yang dihadapi oleh Naqsabandî di Turki dan Indonesia. Untuk menganalisis hal tersebut, penulis memulai pembahasan dengan menjelaskan konsep sekularisasi dan bagaimana konsep itu direspons oleh masing-masing *citizen*. Di Indonesia, konsep sekularisasi berjalan secara pasif, sedangkan di Turki sekularisasi berjalan secara asertif. Dari sini, penulis menganalisis perbedaan tantangan tarekat Naqsabandî di masing-masing negara, bahwa di Indonesia tantangan itu berasal dari kelompok reformis yang banyak melakukan kritik terhadap tarekat atas perilaku sosialnya yang dianggap menyimpang (*bid'ah* dan *shirk*). Sedangkan di Turki, tantangan tarekat Naqsabandî justru berasal dari institusi negara. Sekularisme tampak dimanfaatkan oleh penguasa untuk meredam gerakan tarekat Naqsabandî yang dipandang sebagai ancaman terhadap kekuasaan. Selain itu, sekularisme juga menjadikan negara 'polisi' peradaban setempat dengan menjustifikasi tarekat Naqsabandî hanya akan membawa masyarakat menjadi semakin terbelakang dan tidak mampu menghadapi tantangan modernitas. Artikel ini akan melihat perbedaan masing-masing tantangan ini dan bagaimana kelompok Naqsabandî bisa bertahan.

**Kata kunci:** Tarekat Naqsabandî, Indonesia, Turki.

## Introduction

Al-ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah is well known Sufi order in Turkey and Indonesia, and it is the biggest Sufi orders in Turkey. The Sufi Order (or *ṭarīqah*) is a fraternity of individuals who follow a particular school of Sufism under the guidance of a *shaykh* (spiritual master). A Sufi order can be seen as an institutionalized version of the individually oriented practices of the early Muslim ascetics.<sup>1</sup> The orders are typically named in reference to their founders, such as al-Ṭarīqah al-Qadarīyah referred to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlânî, al-Ṭarīqah al-Shâdhilīyah referred to Abû Ḥasan al-Shâdhilî, and so forth. The Sufi orders typically link their shaykh, through a lineage of various shaykhs, to ‘Alî, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad and thus to Muḥammad himself. One exception to this is the al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah, which traces the chain of their spiritual masters to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph after Muhammad, and founder of this *ṭarīqa* was Bahaeddin Naksibend of Turkistan (b. 1490).<sup>2</sup> Both Turkey and Indonesia have several *ṭarīqas*. In Indonesia, for example, based on their national conference established by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Semarang in 1981, they determined forty-five different Sufi orders accepted as members of *Jam‘iyah Abl al-Ṭarīqah al-Mu‘tabarah* and considered as providing a link to the Prophet Muḥammad,<sup>3</sup> and *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* is one of them.

According to Dina Le Gall, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* is one of the most widespread and enduring of all the Sufi orders (*ṭarīqah’s*), and one of the better studied.<sup>4</sup> Yet the presence and vitality of this *ṭarīqah* in

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<sup>1</sup> Y. Alp. Aslandogan, “Present and Spiritual Impact of the Spiritual Tradition of Islam on Contemporary Muslims: From Ghazali to Gulen”, dalam Ihsan Yilmaz (ed.), *Muslim world in Transition: Contribution of the Gulen Movement: Conference Proceedings* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2007), 666.

<sup>2</sup> Hakan M. Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 135.

<sup>3</sup> Zamakhshari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), 143.

<sup>4</sup> Dina Le Gall, “Forgotten Naqshabandis and the Culture of Pre-Modern Sufi Brotherhoods”, dalam *Studia Islamica*, No. 97, (2003), 87.

the Ottoman world in the two centuries or so prior to the coming of the first Naqshbandi *Mujaddidis* from India around 1700 has been unduly neglected. Meanwhile *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* came to Indonesia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which has closely related to the Mecca as the center of Indonesian Naqṣabandī. *Shaykh* Yûsuf Makassarî (1626-1699) was initially as the first disseminator of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Indonesia.<sup>5</sup> Then in the early 1850s, *Shaykh* Ismâ'îl Minangkabawî had successfully made this order as a strong religious organization socially.<sup>6</sup> Seeing at the Turkish history, it is an important fact that *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* played significant social and political roles ranging from artistic and architectural influences and sustaining the educational system, to provide healing spaces and social networks of support for the poor and the marginal, to direct involvement in the structures of power.<sup>7</sup> In Indonesia, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* played social role as well as political role. It means that no study on Islamic society, and particularly that of Indonesia, ought to ignore Naqṣabandî's *ṭarīqah* roles in social and politics. The *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*, binding together individuals with a supernatural bond, was themselves a social power. It came to be associated in various ways with different strata of society. It was religious organization for mutual help, and a venerated *shaykh* could voice the people's grievances and condemn tyranny and oppression. It assisted the poor, and ministered to the sick and travelers. But in fact, in actualizing their roles, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* faced many challenges. Based on this fact, this paper aims to highlight the different challenges faced by *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey and Indonesia related to the process of secularization in both two countries.

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<sup>5</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Nakṣabandīyah di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 98; Sri Mulyati et.al., *Mengenal dan Memahami Tarikat-tarikat Muktabarab di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2005), 95.

<sup>6</sup> Bruinessen, *Tarekat Nakṣabandīyah*, 98.

<sup>7</sup> Sadeq Rahimi, "Intimate Exteriority: Sufi Spaces as Sanctuary from Injured Subjectivities in Turkey", dalam *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2007), 410.

## Turkey's and Indonesia's Secularization

Before discussing the challenges of *al-Tarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey and Indonesia, it is helpful to start with a broad overview of Turkey's and Indonesia's secularization that have shaped the context of the challenges of *al-Tarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*. Both Turkey and Indonesia have different characteristics of secularization, but the issues of the secularization project are almost similar which is related to positioning the state-religion relations. The secularization in Turkey can be considered as assertive secularism; whereas in Indonesia the secularization can be called as passive secularism providing Pancasila as the basis of state.<sup>8</sup>

Ihsan Yilmaz explained the differences between passive and assertive secularism by adopting the view from Ahmet T. Kuru.<sup>9</sup> He stated that in passive secularism, the secular state plays a 'passive' role and while avoiding the establishment of any religions, it "allows for the public visibility of religion".<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, in assertive secularism, the state tries to exclude religion from the public sphere in addition to playing an 'assertive' role as "the agent of a social engineering project that confines religion to the private domain".<sup>11</sup> Because of different secularization projects in Turkey and Indonesia, it is clear the presence of different challenges faced by *al-Tarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*. Concerning to the state-religion relations, for example in Indonesia context, by passive secularization the state has obligatory public holidays for the

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<sup>8</sup> Abdillah Masykuri, "Ways of Constitution Building in Muslim Countries: The Case of Indonesia", dalam Birgit Krawietz & Helmut Reifeld (eds.), *Islam and the Rule of Law: Between Shariah and Secularization* (Germany: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2008), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Shantikumar Hettiarachchi, "Turkish Muslims and Islamic Turkey: Perspectives for a New European Islamic Identity", dalam Paul Weller and Ihsan Yilmaz (eds.), *European Muslims, Civility and Public Life: Perspectives On and from the Güllen Movement* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), 43.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmet T. Kuru, "Passive and Assertive Secularism: Historical Conditions, Ideological Struggles, and State Policies toward Religion", dalam *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 3, (2007), 571.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

majority Muslims as well as minority faiths. The state also recognizes six official religions, and accepts the presence of religion in public life and promotes the belief in God. In brief, it can be said that the state gives religious freedom to practice religious teachings in public spheres, including spiritual practices. On the other hand, in the context of assertive secularization in Turkey, the state campaign against traditional Islamic institutions, Sufi orders being one the chief targets.<sup>12</sup> As the result, the state banned all Sufi orders in 1925, including *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*.

### **The Different Challenges between *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey and Indonesia**

Generally speaking, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century we saw the Sufi orders were attacked on all sides, but it was not this which made the difference from the past time. Attackers had never been wanting; their beliefs had been refuted, their practices condemned, their dervishes ridiculed and occasionally executed, and their *shaykhs* castigated. None of this abated their popularity to the slightest degree. What we have seen in our time has been a process of erosion set in motion through the twentieth-century spread of secularization, with consequent changes in the social order and the infiltration of secularist ideas. This process of change has so undermined the Sufi orders that in many parts of the Arab world in particular and other Islamic countries in general, they have declined.<sup>13</sup>

Sociologically speaking, at the time, we have seen religion declined and displaced, or reduced from being the regulative principle behind life which should be sustaining and molding society, to become one among many aspects of social life, though receiving special recognition as a factor of differentiation within the universalism of secular culture. At the same time, Islam continues to be the guiding principle in the personal lives of vast numbers of people, and within

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<sup>12</sup> Yavuz, *Islamic Political*, 139.

<sup>13</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 246.

Islam the Sufi tradition will continue to fulfill its mission of maintaining the deeper spiritual values through the special linkage and relationship with the spiritual world that the *ṭarīqah* represents.<sup>14</sup> In the case of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*, the presence of different kind of secularization between Turkey and Indonesia led Naqṣabandī's *shaykhs* to respond the new challenges with different ways.

### 1. Naqṣabandī's Challenges in Indonesia

Naqṣabandī *ṭarīqa* in Indonesia faced challenges and attacks from Muslim reformers graduated from Mecca. The first challenge is critics came from Sâlim bin Samîr and Sayyid Uthmân. At the first time, actually they did not criticize *ṭarīqah* as religious institutional but they criticized the *shaykhs* personally, because they claimed *shaykhs* as pseudo-Sufis. In 1852 Ibn Sâmir's writings were focused to attack and criticize Ismail Minangkabawi personally. On the other hand, Sayyid Uthmân showed his angry to Naqṣabandī's *shaykhs* who had deep influence in Mecca, Sulaymân Zuhdî. He asserted that his critics to *tasawwuf* and *ṭarīqah* because the *shaykhs* made people backward and failed to face the challenges from modernity.

After Muslim reformers criticized on Naqṣabandī's *shaykhs*, they continued to criticize the teachings of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*. They stated that Naqṣabandī's teachings and practices were lead people to practice *bid'ah* (innovation) and *shirk* (polytheism). These critics came from Ahmad Khatib (1852-1915), he was famous '*ulamâ*' (Muslim scholars) who stayed in Mecca and he also was well known because of his critics to *adat* law considered as matrilineal. In 1906-1908, he successfully wrote three books to criticize *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*. Then his critics were answered apologetically by Naqṣabandī's *shaykhs* such as Muḥammad Sa'd bin Ṭanṭa' and his student, Khâtib 'Alî. They tried to prove that Naqṣabandī's rituals have the basis from al-Qur'an and Hadith. The effect of debates was not limited among Minangkabawî people but it affected to all regions in Indonesia. Another critic on *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* came from Aḥmad Khâtib's student, Haji Rasul

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 258.

or ‘Abd al-Karīm bin Muḥammad Amr Allāh. He is Hamka’s father. He wrote two risalah (articles) to criticize *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* and Khāṭib ‘Alī. The debates continued until the early 1981 because Nakhabandi’s shaykhs also wrote some books and articles to answer their critics. One of the latest books was written by Haji Yahya bin Laksemana with the title *Lisan Naqṣabandīyah*.

Beside critics from Muslim reformers, Naqṣabandī ṭarīqa also faced some critics from Islamic organizations such as al-Irsyad (1913) and Muhammadiyah (1912). They criticized that *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* to be specific and other *ṭarīqahs* in general led Muslims to innovation (*bid‘ah*), superstition (*khurafat*) and imagination (*takḥayyul*). Perhaps Muhammadiyah is the most active organization attacking Sufi ṭarīqas.

The critics from Muslim reformers and “puritanists” Islamic organizations led Naqṣabandī’s shaykhs and other shaykhs from other *ṭarīqahs* to join traditionalist Islamic organization such as Nahdlatul Ulama (1926) in Java and PERTI (1928) in Minangkabau. They joined the organization to respond Muslim reformers’ critics. Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn, a khalīfa of Shaykh ‘Alī Riḍā of Jabal Abū Qubays claimed that the PPTI had been established as early as 1920, and that the initials then stood for *Persatuan Pembela Thariqat Islam* (Union of Defenders of the Islamic *Ṭarīqah*). This organization seems to be attached to the Naqṣabandī ṭarīqa and in the first Indonesian elections in 1955, a Sumatran Naqṣabandī was elected to the national parliament as the sole representative of the ṭarīqa political party.

## 2. Naqṣabandī’s Challenges in Turkey

The most challenges of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey came from the state. It is totally different with the challenges of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Indonesia. This is because the secularization projects in Turkey led the state to control religion in public spheres. As one of its consequences, in 1925 the state banned all Sufi orders, including *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* which was the biggest Sufi orders in Turkey. At the time there were between 1,000 and 2,000 lodges in the

core of provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia (the Balkans). Especially in the capital of Istanbul, there were 305 Sufi lodges, 65 of which were Naqṣabandī.

Brian Silverstein stated that in the Ottoman Empire until 1923 and briefly in the Republic of Turkey, Sufi orders were of major importance to social, political and economic life. But after the secularization, in 1925 the Republican administration proscribed the orders and closed their lodges. It has since been technically a punishable offence to be involved in a Sufi order – as *shaykh* (a title not recognized by the Turkish state) or as devotee – although a number of orders have continued to function in a somewhat ‘public secret’ fashion. Under Legal Code 677, the Republic closed Sufi lodges on November 30, 1925, later replacing them with the Halkevleri, or People’s Houses, which promoted radical secularization and obedience to the new state elite.

The most interesting question is why the state banned and closed Sufi orders. It seems that the Father of Turk, Mustafa Kemal wanted to modernize the country, to release it from the hold of what he felt were backward religious ideas. Annemarie Schimmel, one of the foremost scholars of Turkish mystical literature, agrees in part with Kemal's assessment of the majority of the Muslim fraternities (*tariqahs*) at that time, namely that it was very difficult for these institutions to respond to modernizing influences in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, she explained that

[at the same time,] . . . the institutions found themselves unable to respond to the need for modernization and changed outlook. Instead of fulfilling their centuries-old function as centers of spiritual education, they became headquarters of obscurantism and backwardness. That is why Ataturk abolished the orders in 1925 - a step that some of the leading personalities in the mystical hierarchy even approved of. They felt that the spiritual values of Sufism as taught by the poets of Anatolia would survive without the ruined framework of the orders - and perhaps in a more genuine way. And these values are, indeed, still alive.

At the same time, what Ataturk did not understand fully was that although the orders may have been backward and corrupted; their

abolition would not eradicate the Islamic values and practices on which they were founded. However, Schimmel's statement that the values of the Muslim and Sufi teachers would not die with the abolition of the institutions has proven true. During the years of one-party rule in Turkey, religious sentiments and practices remained quiet and separate from the public sphere of politics.

## Conclusion

Based on above comparison, I try to reflect my understanding related the challenges faced by *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey and Indonesia. *Firstly*, In Turkey, where the secularizing movement of Mustafa Kemal brought about their prohibition in 1925, is an example of what has been taking place less spectacularly in other countries through the process of secularization; changes in the outlook and in the social order undermining confidence in former religious ways. So, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* was banned because they were politically dangerous, and it claimed to led Muslims into backwardness and did not able to respond to the modernity. On the contrary, in Indonesia these days we observe some prominent figures have shown their interest in Sufism on one hand, but certain Muslim reformers such as Salim ibn Samir, Sayyid Usman, Ahmad Khatib, and Haji Rasul criticized *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* and claimed that it led Muslims to innovation (*bid'ah*) and polytheism (*shirk*). In the similar way, "puritanists" organizations such as al-Irsyad and Muhammadiyah also criticized *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* and claimed that this *ṭarīqah* led Muslims to practice several things considered as innovation (*bid'ah*), superstition (*khurafat*) and imagination (*takḥayyul*). From this explanation, it can be said that the rival of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey is the state; whereas the rival of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Indonesia is Muslim reformer or puritan's organization.

*Secondly*, in Indonesia, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* and other Sufi *ṭarīqahs* are religious organizations which deeply concern to spiritual life. The social significance of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* was many sided but the religious significance was primary. It cannot be denied that to some

extent *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* was fully blended with the saint-cult and living saints: exploiting it, in fact, represented the religion of the ordinary people. While in Turkey, the *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*, became a significant element in establishing nation identity and became state's opposition. We find leaders of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* aspiring to political power, and revolting against established authority. For example, Resat Halli mentions that between 1924 and 1938, there were 18 rebellions against the draconian policies of the state, and most were led by the *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*.<sup>15</sup> In Indonesian history, especially in the nineteenth century the Sufi orders were in the forefront of Muslim reaction against the expansion of colonialist powers. For example, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Sammāinīyah* actively opposed the Dutch in Palembang in 1819 and in South Kalimantan in 1860. *Al-Ṭarīqah al-Qadiriyyah wa al-Naqṣabandīyah* took part in the peasant's revolt of Banten in 1888 and in 1891 in Lombok against Hindu oppression in Bali.<sup>16</sup> In West Sumatra, where there is also a strong *Naqṣabandī* presence, strong resistance was shown in 1908 to Dutch presence by the *Sattârīyah* order. In addition, the *Sanūsīyah* in the late nineteenth century inspired the Acehese war against the Dutch while its *shaykh* in Libya was fighting against Italian incursions there from 1914 to 1918.

*Thirdly*, in the context of Turkey's secularization, building nation-state is more important, while in Indonesian context, purifying religion is more important. Thus, reformer Muslims attacked Naqṣabandī *ṭarīqa*, in order to purify religion. *Fourthly*, although *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* or other *ṭarīqahs* suspected as the cause of Muslim backward, but it still has important roles in social and politics. In social life, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* can be regarded as Muslim identity which offers spiritual values. In politics, Naqṣabandī *ṭarīqah* and other *ṭarīqahs* can be functioned as political vehicle, to get voice in public election for example. It is because they have strong bonding relationship among *ṭarīqahs* followers with their *shaykh*.

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<sup>15</sup> Yavuz, *Islamic Political*, 139.

<sup>16</sup> Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development", 29-31.

Since the nineteenth century, the general trend in the Muslim world was trying to rationalize or secularize many aspects of human life and develop their nation. The different of secularization projects in Turkey and Indonesia caused the different challenges faced by *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah*. In Turkey, before the secularization occurred, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* played significant roles in society, but in 1925 the state banned all Sufi orders. While in Indonesia, at the time, *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* faced the critics from reformer Muslims and Puritans Islamic organization. The main challenge of *al-Ṭarīqah al-Naqṣabandīyah* in Turkey was closely related to the state's efforts to control religion; whereas in Indonesia the main challenge was concerned to purify Islamic teachings from *bid'ah* (innovation) and *shirk* (polytheism).

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