

**HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS ON THE REASONS FOR THE BANNING OF
NAQSHABANDIYAH KHALIDIYAH SUFI ORDER OF THE PROF DR KADIRUN
YAHYA FOUNDATION**

IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The Naqshabandiyyah Khalidiyah Sufi Order attached to the Prof. Dr. Kadirun Yahya Foundation was banned in Malaysia on the ground of deviations in its doctrine and practice. This article attempts to examine documents and sources related to the banning and elucidate reasons to this proscription. It is established that despite the order was initially banned due to social and security concerns as well as faults in term of its belief and practice, subsequent official state documents however have rely only on the latter and not the former.

Keywords: Reasons For the Banning, Naqshabandiyyah Khalidiyah Sufi Order, Prof. Dr. Kadirun Yahya Foundation, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Naqshabandiyyah Khalidiyah Sufi Order of the Prof. Dr. Kadirun Yahya Foundation was outlawed in Malaysia through the issuance of fatwas in the early 80's on the ground of deviations in its doctrine and practice. Despite the decree, the group which is an extension of a sufi order based in Medan Indonesian once lead by Prof. Kadirun Yahya survived the ordeal. They maintain several key lodges throughout the country and braces to be accepted by the Malaysian populace and authorities alike.

2. FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE KELANTAN STATE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Jemaah Ulama Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan was the first to find the fraternity being problematic when on January 20th 1978, it decided that “indeed, such belief and practice such as mentioned [in the paper or discussion] are wrong as it clearly contravened the Quran and the Sunnah, and whosoever is involved in such belief and practice must repent and return to the true Islamic teaching before he or she dies”. The document was released for the public by the Majlis Ugama Islam Kelantan on August 4th 1980.¹

3. SOCIAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Similar to the scenario in Kelantan where public complaints triggered the fatwa to be issued, at the federal level, Pusat Penyelidikan Islam issued a report of its investigation also on the basis of public complaints especially from close relatives to those involved, especially the spouse.² The report stated the name of Datin Aishah Abdullah and Datin Zainab Mohamad being the

¹ Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah–Kadirun Yahya*. LAMPIRAN ‘D’, p. 3-4. ; Baharuddin Abd Jalal et al. (ed.) 1995. *Ajaran Sesat : Satu Ancaman Terhadap Keselamatan Negara*. p. 100.

² Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah–Kadirun Yahya*. pp. 2 and 4.

wife of Malaysian prominent figures and former Deputy Minister - who were both disciples of Prof. Kadirun Yahya.³ A major concern the report raised was the effect that this fraternity has on its followers – that they willing to give and sacrifice just about anything for the sake of their master. This obedience, according to the report is so flagrant that even the question of sitting arrangement of disciples with the shaykh in meetings or during rituals is predetermined and obeyed.⁴ This will in its turn became disastrous socially, economically, and in term of national security.⁵

In terms of social harmony, the fraternity has caused families to suffer where a prominent figure who was a member of the fraternity divorced his wife and afterward married to the niece of Prof Kadirun Yahya himself. Others include a case where a couple almost ended up in divorce after one party refused to join the fraternity, a mother who disowned her child after the child joined the fraternity and refused to abandon it, a husband who forsook his family responsibilities, giving away his wealth at whims while making family relationship to fade,⁶ and a case where a man almost turned senile after he became baffled after joining the *tariqah*.⁷

While economically, much is related to first reason is how wealth was forsaken and handed over on donation or gift involving land, house, car and cash. Proofs for this is the handing over of a piece of land H.S. (D) 158 Mukim Kuala Lumpur, Lot No. 2 Jalan Duta Kuala Lumpur with its annual land tax of \$272.00, to the name of Prof. Kadirun Yahya made on November 22nd 1979. A house addressed at No. 162, Jalan Setiakasih, Bukit Damansara Kuala Lumpur was also handed over to Prof. Kadirun Yahya to become the fraternity headquarters. While a Mercedes car with registration number MA 1881 was presented to Prof. Kadirun Yahya's use in Malaysia, recurring cash contribution can also be traced by examining of the informer's husband's cheque book retain slip.⁸ Having said all these facts, and on the assumption that they are true, what is not found in the official record of *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah-Kadirun Yahya* however, is how the fraternity is indeed may be held responsible for all the 'wrongdoings of the disciples'. Other question perhaps is were there indoctrination on the part of the fraternity, and were these cases rampantly found among their followers or were they isolated cases of natural and mundane human experiences that happen in any given social settings.

While in terms of national security, the report concluded that their presence was a threat. Not only with its alarming 40,000 members, but also involvement of those in the high hierarchy of

³ *ibid.* p. 4.

⁴ It is not clear if Pusat Penyelidikan Islam was aware that the sitting mentioned in the related 'Surat Keputusan Ayah Guru' was the order of sitting arrangement among disciples during *tawajjuh*. Sitting arrangement such as this is not something to be surprised about as it is part of etiquette of the Khalidiyah.

⁵ Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah-Kadirun Yahya*. pp. 29-33.

⁶ The wife called on her husband saying "kita ada anak, buat apa harta yang ada ini kita berikan kepada orang lain" to which her husband replied "awak apa peduli, ini harta saya, saya berhak beri kepada sesiapa pun". Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah-Kadirun Yahya*. p. 30.

⁷ *ibid.* pp. 31-32.

⁸ *ibid.* p. 30.

the society including seven cabinet ministers – alleged to be mentioned by Prof. Kadirun Yahya himself, judges, lawyers, doctors, military and police officers, businessmen and civilians. With members in every state without exception, willingness to accept loss of all the worldly and even death by some disciples when they were threatened or asked to leave the fraternity convinced Pusat Penyelidikan Islam the danger it posed to the country.⁹

A source from the fraternity has claimed that action against them was also politically motivated. Abang Mat Isa reiterated,¹⁰ being himself among Prof. Kadirun Yahya's earliest disciples, it was due to internal scuffle between certain individuals or groups within the Malaysian cabinet ministers line up then. Dato' Hamzah Abu Samah, Dato Hj. Zulkefli Dato' Abdul Hamid, both Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence respectively as well as several others were disciples of Prof. Kadirun Yahya. Abang Mat Isa is of the belief that action against the fraternity was the effort by some quarters in the Malaysian cabinet ministers to have the group consisting disciples of Prof. Kadirun shattered or weakened.¹¹ While Abdullah Fahim in a different scenario other hand admitted that in the awakening of sufi oriented teachings (some of whom were charged as deviant by the federal or state religious authorities) which entails possible retaliation in the form of legal battle, make formal fatwas on their deviation to be legally enacted.¹²

4. FAULT IN TERMS OF BELIEF AND PRACTICE

In addition to the social and security concerns mentioned above, the fraternity is faulty fundamentally due to the following beliefs and practices:¹³

- i. Believing in the togetherness of the *Nūr Allāh* with the *Nūr Muhammad*. The *Nūr* is channelled to Prophet Adam A.S. and the rest of the prophets and to the shaykhs and ultimately to Prof. Kadirun Yahya enabling him to gain the *ilm ladunniyy*, *kashaf* and *syafā'ah*.
- ii. Believing that the *Nūr Allāh* and *Nūr Muhammad* are channelled to the Kaabah.
- iii. Remembering shaykh means remembering Allah.
- iv. Believing that one who joins the *ṭarīqah* shall be guaranteed to enter paradise without *ḥisāb*.
- v. Believing that the shaykh gets the Prophet's inheritance namely key of a mosque, a turban and a sword.
- vi. While in terms of practice- is the use of the photo of Prof. Kadirun Yahya for the

⁹ Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah-Kadirun Yahya*. p. 32-33.

¹⁰ Abang (literally means elder brother) denotes a mark of respect, widely used within the circles of this order, seemingly an acculturation to the custom of people in the land of origin of this order.

¹¹ This may require further verification; Abang Mat Isa Mat (Senior Disciple of Prof. Kadirun Yahya). 2010. "Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyyah of the Prof Dr. Kadirun Yahya. Foundation" *Interview*. 14 November.

¹² Abdullah Fahim Abd Rahman. 2010. "Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyyah of the Prof Dr. Kadirun Yahya Foundation". *Interview*. 11 November.

¹³ Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah-Kadirun Yahya*. pp. 43-44.

purpose of visualising his face to achieve *khushu*^c in religious services,¹⁴ the use of the *Tawajjuh* water (*air tawajjuh*),¹⁵ the practice of *suluk* and being fully vegetarian (prohibition from consuming anything from animal sources such as meat, fish and anchovies – which are all clearly dubious and in contradiction to the *sharīʿah*.¹⁶

Elaborating further on the union of *Nūr Muhammad* with the *Nūr Allah*, *Nūr Muhammad* is negative while *Nūr Allah* is positive, and *Nūr Allah* is in the *Nūr Muhammad*. The *Nūr* is channelled to prophet Adam A.S. for which the angels were instructed to prostrate to him, for the *Nūr* that is in him. After prophet Adam A.S. died, it was channeled to the rest of the prophets and to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Salman al-Farisiyy and then the rest of the shaykhs and then to Prof. Kadirun Yahya. With the *Nūr* that was in him he was able to cure all illnesses, gain the knowledge of the unseen (*ghayb*), get the *ilm ladunniyy*, *kashaf* and *syafāʿah*. For all these and the contention that the *Nūr Allah* and *Nūr Muhamamd* are in the Kaabah – to which why man is asked to ‘submit’ himself to the Kaabah, there is no evidence from the Quran, Hadis or views of respectable scholars on the matter.¹⁷ Believing that one who joins the *ṭarīqah* shall be guaranteed to enter paradise without *hisāb* is also wrong because such determination is not in the hands of any man. No one is in the position to give such guarantee. While belief that the shaykh keeps the Prophet’s inheritance, the mosque key, turban and sword are clearly doubtful.¹⁸

Besides these fundamental charges, the fraternity is not trustworthy for many other indictments namely:

- i. Claims that Prof Kadirun Yahya has a Naqshabandi seal believed to be from Prophet Muhammad SAW.¹⁹
- ii. The *ṭarīqah* was initially named *Ṭarīqah Sirr*. The *ṭarīqah* took its strength from the secret of *Nūr Allah* and *Nūr Muhammad*, strength gained from the togetherness with Allah, just like an iron put in fire will ultimately function just like the fire itself.
- iii. The spirits of people making *munajat* to Allah shall penetrate several dimensions of worlds- *Jabarut*, *Malakut*, *Rohani* and *Rabbani*.
- iv. Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah Kadirun Yahya is the greatest and the most truthful. There is no other *ṭarīqah* similar to it.
- vii. Believing that Prof. Kadirun Yahya was ‘*Wali Kutub*’- the greatest *wali* (literally helper of Allah), one who possessed the *Ilm Ladunniyy*, *Kashaf* and *Syafāʿah*.

¹⁴ In another account the photo is said to be placed under the disciple’s pillow or mattress. Each disciple must have a photograph of the shaykh for that purpose. Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah–Kadirun Yahya*. p. 18.

¹⁵ Normal drinking water that was brought in and was read upon it verses of the Quran and the *dhikr* during the ritual of *Tawajjuh* the same way the Malays do during the recitation of Surah Yasin on Thursday nights. At all time the surau will have ready stock of the *air tawajjuh* for drinking purposes. Except for drinking purposes, he study have not find anything peculiar with regard to the use of the *air tawajjuh*.

¹⁶ Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah–Kadirun Yahya*. p. 43.

¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 41.

¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 41.

¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 26.

- viii. One who practices the *ṭarīqah* shall always be highly regarded in society, whose position will never be absconded, and will be able to know the intention of anyone who comes to see them.²⁰
- ix. The shaykh is able to see his disciples wherever they are, would know whatever is in one's heart, is able to cure any given illnesses through the *Nūr* (and not a witch doctor or sorcerer of any kind), is able to lead as many warriors as possible in battle.²¹

Besides these, there were other observations namely:

- i. Excessive obedience to the shaykh that he must be remembered all the time even during religious observances which is clearly against the Islamic teaching.
- ii. Sacrifice and giving up of land, house, vehicle and cash above family responsibility.
- iii. Influence over renowned figures as well as professionals in the public and private sectors into the fraternity, which triggered fear that all the negative tendencies will bring adverse impact to the security and advancement of the society.
- iv. Discordant and abrasive attitude of the followers to the extent of their willingness to lose all the worldly and even death posed serious security concerns like that of the Batu Pahat incident.²²

These facts and charges contained in the *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al- Khalidiah – Kadirun Yahya* were presented in a paper entitled *Tarekat Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah Yang Dibawa Kadirun Yahya*²³ in the Fatwa Committee Meeting, of the Malaysian National Council For Islamic Affairs – FCM, MNCIA (Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Islam Malaysia) on November, 15th and 16th, 1981, at the Bilik Gerakan Negeri Terengganu. Based on the arguments that there were elements contradicting to the teachings of Islam namely: veneration of *guru* (shaykh) by disciples, idolization of *guru* (shaykh) to the status of prophethood, *ṭarīqah* practices that contain practices of blasphemy (*shirk*) and that they are elements that violate the *sharīah*, the meeting concluded that the fraternity have deviated from the true teachings of Islam, practicing it is a deviation, which therefore must be outlawed.²⁴

There were at least four meetings²⁵ between the Islamic Affairs Division²⁶ and the fraternity's

²⁰ *ibid.* p. 27.

²¹ *ibid.* p. 28.

²² It was an incident in 1980 where members of a deviant group run amok at the Muar police station resulting in the death of several people. Pusat Penyelidikan Islam, Bahagian Ugama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri. *Kertas Lapuran Tarikat Naqshabandiah al-Khalidiah–Kadirun Yahya*. p. 41-42.

²³ Written in the Malay Jawi (Arabic) script.

²⁴ 1981. "Tarekat Nakshabandiyah Khalidiah Yang Dibawa Oleh Kadirun Yahya". *Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia Kali ke -3*. 15-16 November. p.7-8

²⁵ Dated on 22nd December 1983, on 29th April 1985, in August 1985 and on 22nd September 1986. See 1985. "Laporan Kedudukan Tarekat Nakshabandiyah Prof. Kadirun Yahya". *Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia Kali ke 14*. 22- 23th November. p.16. ; 1986. "Tarekat Nakshabandiyah dan Permasalahannya". *Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia Kali ke -17*. 6 October. p.6

representatives between December 1983 and September 1986, in all of which the fraternity have failed to furnish convincing answers.²⁷ There were subsequent meetings²⁸ of the Fatwa Committee Meeting, of the Malaysian National Council For Islamic Affairs (FCM, MNCIA) throughout 1985-86 in which the predicament of the fraternity was discussed. The Fatwa Committee Meeting in its 14th meeting on 22-23rd October 1985 thoroughly discussed the paper presentation entitled *Tarekat Naqshabandiyah dan Permasalahannya* and has decided that the matter is to be forwarded to the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Affairs that it shall raise the matter to the Council of Rulers (*Majlis Raja-Raja*) for a formal fatwa to be decreed. Subsequently the Malaysian National Council For Islamic Affairs formally reached to the decision in its meeting on 17th January 1986, as previously suggested by its Fatwa Committee Meeting.

5. PROCLAMATION OF THE BANNING

Based on the recommendation of the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Affairs, the Council of Rulers in its 139th meeting on 6th November 1986, agreed that the development of the *ṭarīqah* is to be monitored and released a decree which reads “being grave and precarious to the *ummah*, whichever aspects deemed wrong in the teaching of *ṭarīqah* Naqshabandiyah brought by Kadirun Yahya must be clarified and duly corrected in agreement to the accord of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah. Elucidation on the matter must be carried out to Malaysian public including those involved in the *ṭarīqah*”²⁹ The above outcome of the Council of Rulers’s 139th meeting was deemed insufficient by the Fatwa Committee Meeting, that in its 18th meeting on 25th February 1987 the Fatwa Committee Meeting requested the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Affairs to make a second representation on the matter to the Council of Rulers, to which the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Affairs concluded in its meeting on July 12th 1987 that such re representation is unnecessary while all states can individually proceed with issuing a fatwa, have it enacted and make the necessary enforcement.³⁰

As at August 2004, JAKIM has classified Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyyah of the Prof. Dr.H. Kadirun Yahya Foundation (Tarikat Naqshabandiah Kadirun Yahya) as being among 45 active deviant teachings in the country.³¹

²⁶ It was then under the name Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam (BAHEIS), Jabatan Perdana Menteri.

²⁷ According to the 14th and 17th minutes of the Fatwa Committee Meeting, of the Malaysian National Council For Islamic Affairs (*Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam*). p. 16 and p. 6 respectively.

²⁸ 12th meeting on 21-22 January 1985, 13th meeting on 1-2nd July 1985, 14th meeting on 22-23th October 1985, 16th meeting on 18-19 February 1986, 17th meeting on 6th October 1986.

²⁹ 1987. “Laporan Kedudukan Tarekat Nakshabandiyah Prof. Kadirun Yahya”. *Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia Kali ke 18*. 25th February. p.7.

³⁰ 1987. “Laporan Urusetia Untuk Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa kali ke 19”. *Minit Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia Kali ke 19*. 6 October. p. 1.

³¹ Farawahida Mohd Yusof. 2007. *Aliran Kepercayaan: Sejarah dan Perkembangannya di Malaysia*. Skudai: Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. p. 58.

6. DISCUSSION

Of the two main reasons discussed, while social concerns may be accorded certain merits on the grounds of human limitations, reasons on security concerns seems not to be very convincing. They are not well substantiated. No police report involving any sort of crime and no recommendation from the authorities on national security like intelligence of the police and the military, or any agency under the home ministry like the Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) has ever been presented in the *Kertas Lapuran*. It became even interesting when the whole lot of reasons on national security vanished in subsequent official state documents of Terengganu, Selangor and Melaka.³² Some conclusions (like forsaking everything for the sake of the shaykh, detrimental involvement of many Malaysian cabinet ministers and professionals in strategic positions etc.) are largely based on assumption and does not suit the profile of the fraternity both in Indonesia and Malaysia all these while. With subsequent state documents of Terengganu, Selangor and Melaka rely solely on aberration in term of its belief and practice, independent assessment on the matter is now warranted.

7. CONCLUSION

With no exaggeration, it may be summed up that the paper *Kertas Lapuran* responsible for banning of the order, contained claims which have failed to be corroborated, namely threat to the security of the country and people. A review regarding the matter especially a procedural one is in order, to ensure similar lapses do no recur.

8. REFERENCES

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³² See n.a. 1990. *Penjelasan Terhadap Tarikat Naqshabandiah Pimpinan Prof. Kadirun Yahya*. n.pl: Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Terengganu; n.a. 2004. *Himpunan Ajaran, Amalan Dan Fahaman Yang Telah Difatwa Dan Diwartakan Menyeleweng Dan Sesat Dalam Negeri Selangor*. Shah Alam: Bahagian Penyelidikan Dan Pembangunan Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor.; n.a. 2005. *Himpunan Fatwa: Warta Kerajaan Negeri Melaka (1986-2005)*. Melaka: Jabatan Mufti Negeri Melaka.

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