

## **QURAN MANUSCRIPT FROM KERINCI: THE PROOF THAT THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN HARAMAIN (MEKKAH AND MADINAH AT THAT TIME) AND KERINCI BACK IN THE EIGHTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURY**

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### **Abstract**

Qur'an manuscript dated back in 18 to 19th century often written and copied by hand and part of an important cultural heritage in Indonesia and often found in various cities in Indonesia, including Kerinci. There had been lots of attention lately on the old Qur'an manuscript from Indonesia, but most of them are concentrated in big cities in Indonesia, not Kerinci. This old manuscript found in Kerinci belong to Syekh Ahmad Khatib, a very well-known Islamic scholar, who was educated in Makkah and Madinah in the late 19th to early 20th century. According to the watermark found in the paper used in this old manuscript, the manuscript was dated back in the 18th century and written on an old European paper. It finds that this old Quran manuscript is written beautifully using nasakh calligraphy that was often used at that time but with no illuminations. Even without illumination, this Qur'an manuscript is written beautifully and was written differently than other Quran manuscript found in the archipelago, making it a very rare finding among other manuscript found in Jambi. It was brought back by Syekh Muhammad Khatib from Makkah after he had finished his study back in the early 20th century. The existence of this manuscript belonging to one of the prominent family in Kerinci back in late 19th century had proven that there is a connection between Haramain (the two holy city in the Saudi Arabia, Makkah and Madinah) with Kerinci and other Islamic scholars in Indonesia back in the 18th – 19th century AD.

**Keywords:** Quran manuscript, Haramain, philology, Islamic scholar networks.

### **Introduction**

Most of our knowledge about a particular ancient inheritance or heritage can be seen or known from artefacts or old manuscripts. Most of these old manuscript has been found all over Indonesia and even in the museums across Europe and other developed countries. But, many of them are also being kept secret and kept being unknown to the public because they were belong to a particular person or individuals. If this is the case, many of them are become unknown and undocumented (Ismail Husein, 1974). One of these old manuscript that often found in Indonesia is *mushaf*. *Mushaf* or written Quran, written especially by hands actually are quite many found in Indonesia and other archieve around the world. This profiligation of written Quran or *mushaf* happened because it was one of the manuscripts the most often copied by hand (Omar Fathurrahman dkk, 2010: 18). Quran mushaf has also been a particular interest to history enthusiasts since most of these *mushafs* are so beautifully and artfully designed and drawn using various colorful and beautiful designs mostly known as Illuminations (A.T.L Johns, 1995:-). Many people and organization had also been cataloguing mushafs that had been found in Indonesia and around the world. These mushafs had been catalogued as part of old manuscript found not only in Indonesia but also manuscript that had been

originated in Indonesia but found all over the world, according to Hendri Chambert-Loir and Oman Fathurrahman, 1999. In Indonesia, many of these manuscripts had been catalogued as part of Masjid Istiqlal permanent archives and also were saved by Bayt Al Quran.

One of the areas where these old manuscript of written mushaf where manuscripts are found are in Kerinci. If we see it in historical perspective, Kerinci is one of the first areas in Sumatera where Islam had spread. Islam had reached Kerinci first then other cities or district in Jambi, even one of the cities where Islam had been spreaded first compared to other cities in Indonesia, because Kerinci is used to be part of the Kingdom of Minangkabau. According to *Tanto Adat* (written manuscript) of Minangkabau, Kerinci was officially part of the kingdom of Minangkabau. In this *Tanto*, Kerinci used to be called as “Rantau Tulah Tanah Datar” – an area where it was way lower then Minangkabau (most of Minangkabau or present day West Sumatera located in upper high ground) who was located a little far away but still part of the Kingdom of Minangkabau. These far away *Tanah Datar* – flat land - have several districts such as Gubuk Tiga Belas, Pesisir Barat/Selatan, spread from the Modern city of Padang to Indra Pura, Muara Labuh, and Kerinci. So it was not really surprising if there would several really old manuscripts including a written mushaf found in Kerinci.

All these old manuscript found in Kerinci, like some other old manuscript found in Indonesia in Jambi often being kept hidden and sacred by the family where the first person who had brought the manuscript born into. One of these old manuscript that belong to private collection and the object of this research is an old written manuscript of Quran that belong to the descendants of Syekh Muhammad Khatib, who once studied in Mekkah and Madinah, two cities that were known as *Haramain*.

The fact that there is already a direct connection between Kerinci and Haramain since early 19th and late 18th century is really need to be explored further in order to know more about the connection between these two holy cities and Islamic scholars in Indonesia, especially Kerinci. To know about the connection, the researcher will be done an in-depht research on the life of Syekh Muhammad Khatib, the owner of the manuscript and a little philological research approach to make sure that the manuscript are an original not a copy, like some of the manuscript found in Jambi.

## **Methods**

To study and explore more about the connection between *Haramain* and Islamic scholars in Kerinci in the late 18th to early 19th century, the researcher will use research method using philological and historical approach. The historical approach are done in order to find out the connection between the manuscript and *Haramain* (the two holy cities in Saudi Arabia, Mekkah and Madinah) through the life of Syekh Muhammad Khatib and his connection with several Islamic scholars in Indonesia and in Mecca and Haramain that were studied deeply through several interviews with the direct descendants of Syekh Muhammad Khatib, especially through his children and his private journals, while philological research are carried out to ascertain the originality of the manuscript and several other aspects.

## **Result and Discussion**

Sadly, this old manuscript was not in a very good condition, because there isn't any special care had been done during the years this manuscript was saved by the

family descended from Syekh Muhammad Khatib. This manuscript itself started not from the first pages, but from Surah Al Baqarah verse 237. It was started with the word “*fariidhatun*”. The manuscript has several hundred pages, 6 centimeters in thickness, 34 cm in length and 25 centimeters in wide. Three colors of ink are used in the manuscript: black, red and gold. The black ink were used to write the verses in *nasakh* style. The red ink was used to write something on the edges of the pages such as notes or corrections, the gold one were used to distinct one ayat to another. Since it was intended for personal use, the manuscript are written without illuminations. Even without illumination, it was still neatly written and quite valuable considering the way it was written. In the manuscript, every pages only contain 15 lines of written and copied verses. Each line are separated with 2 centimeters of spaces between the lines. The bottom of the page itself have 4 cm blank spaces, and each left sides of the pages have 9 cm of blank spaces and in the right spaces, there are 3 centimeters of blank space between the edge of the pages and the actual writing.

According to Annabel T. Gallop (A. T. Gallop, communication done during a workshop, December 13th, 2014), the manuscript was originated in the late 18th to early 19th century because it was written using Chinese ink and the paper used were often found in the old European time when this kind of paper often used, this old European time dated back to the late 18th to early 19th century, especially if we see the watermark found in this manuscript, which indicate the source of the paper.

Muhammad Khatib himself was born in Kuala Kangsar Malaysia in 1869 (According to Buya Burhanuddin Khatib, (2006), personal interview through a third party). His father was Muhammad Midin and his grandfather was Haji Akbar who was appointed by the Sultanate of Perak as a *mufti* (a religious chief) when he was a kid and went to Sultanate of Perak. After he was old enough he started to study in Kedah, his contemporaries are many prominent Islamic figures in Islamic history in South East Asia such as Syekh Daud bin Abdullah Al-Fatani and Syekh Abdul Samad Al-Falimban (Hasanah (2006, October 12th), Personal Interview). When he was 16 years old, Muhammad Khatib went back to his hometown and settled in Kerinci. Muhammad Khatib teaches Quran and Islamic teachings with one of his colleagues, Haji Karim Kecil in Surau Batu in Koto Teluk that was built by Tenku Lubuk Lintah (one of officials with a very high ranking in the Kingdom of Minangkabau) in 17th century. Muhammad Khatib also studied *kitab kuning* (an old Islamic text written in local language but using Arabic alphabet) with an Islamic scholar who also live in Kerinci, Syekh H Muhammad Syarif in Koto Lanang Kerinci.

Syekh Muhammad Syarif was an Islamic scholar who studied Islamic teachings in Mecca around 1850s, along with Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minang Kabawi (1852 – 1916 AD). Syekh Muhammad Syarif had opened his own madrasa school where people could deepen their Islamic studies and teaching after he went back from his study in Mecca. Among his students are Syekh Haji Muhammad Khatib himself, Syekh H Muktar Pulau Tengah, Syekh Abdullah Imam Sebukar, Syekh Pagih Usman Hiang and H. Muslim Tanah Kampung (Buya Burhanuddin Khatib. (2006). Personal interview conducted through third party).

When he was 32 years old, Syekh Haji Muhammad Khatib went to Mecca al Mukarramah with his father to carry out one of five pillars of Islam and but elected to stay there for a few years to study Islam, and stayed in Syekh H. Mahyuddin Al-Mukmin Al-Kerincian’s house (According to Syekh Muhammad Khatib’s Personal Journal kept by His son Buya Burhanuddin Khatib (2006). Personal Interview with a third party). On the beginning of his study in Mecca, Syekh Muhammad Khatib only studied Arabic with Syekh Mahyudin Mukmin Al-Kerincian, the owner of the place

where he stayed in Mecca, after he mastered Arabic, Syekh Muhamamd Khatib then studied Islamic teachings such as Fiqh, Tawhid and Tasawuf to Syekh H Muhammad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi in 1916. Syekh Muhammad Khatib Al- Minangkabawi is the son of Haji Al-Minangkabawi one of Islamic scholars in Sumatera Barat. Syekh Muhammad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi was appointed as a mufti or an Imam in Masjidil Haram.

Syekh Muhammad Khatib unlike many Islamic Scholars in Indonesia at that time studied in Mecca for a very long time (approximately almost for fourteen years). One of the speciality that he studied is Islamic teachings according to Sunni, particulary from mazhab of Syafi'i along with other Islamic scholars such as Syekh Abdullah Imam Sebukar Kerinci, Syekh H. Muslim Tanah Kampung Kerinci, and Syekh H. Mukhtar Pulau Tengah Kerinci. Other scholars that he studied with are Syekh Ibrahim Musa Prabek.

Syekh H Abdul Karim Amrullah, Syekh Daud Rasyidi Balingkas, Syekh Mustafa Purba Baru Tapanuli Selatan and Syekh Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli Candung. Along with Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi where he studied in Mecca for so many years, Syekh Muhammad Khatib also studied Islamic teachings from Syekh Abdul Hamid Jeddah and Syekh Said Yamani and Syekh Yusuf Rabbany (According to Short story/his own biography while he studied in Mecca which were written in a journal and being kept by one of his daughter, Hajjah Aklina who lived in Kota Sungai Penuh, Kerinci).

He even met Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (1868 – 1923), one of prominent figures in Indonesian History, when he was studying in Mecca and the two of them even studied under the same teacher, Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi. In 1915, Syekh Muhammad Khatib went back to his hometown, Kerinci and after settling in Maliki Air Rawang village in Hamparan Besar Tanah Rawang (Hamparan Besar Tanah Rawang (like a big square in the middle of the city or maybe a village) is where officials of a district at that time meet or what we called 'musyawarah' in Indonesia. The existence of Hamparan Besar Tanah Rawang can be proven by an old documents documenting the existence of Hamparan).

Syekh Muhammad Khatib open his own school in Masjid Jami' Ar Rawaniyah and appointed as the chief of that mosque. There were many students studying under the guidance of Syekh Muhammad Khatib after he opened his school in that big mosque and most of them come from all over nowadays Kerinci, Indra pura or the east coast of Sumatra Island and people then called him Syekh or Tuan Guru. His teaching and his teaching system had established and guided many students that eventually become prominent figures in the development of Islam in Sumatera, because they were educated for at least three years in order to learn all the knowledge in the Halaqah system. Because of his prominent figure, extensive knowledge, his studying in Mecca for a long time, there are so many people all over the place wanted to study under his guidance, to help teach, Syek Muhammah Khatib asked two of his friends to help him, they are Haji Karim Kecil (who studied Islamic teaching in Kedah Malaysia) and H. Muhammad Husin (who studied Islamic teachings in Negeri Kelantan Malaysia) (According to the Darwis Fabang Dpt (a specialist in traditional lives of Jambi's culture), who happened to be one of the students in Thawalib Ar Rawaniyah (used to be the school where Syekh Muhammad Khatib teaches), interviewed in October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

Even with limited time and limited teaching resources, considering the lack of people know lot about Islamic teachings, at that time Syekh Muhammad Khatib also open another school in a *Surau* (literally means a small mosque, usually no

more than a few meter squares-wide), who was called as Surau Batu in Sungai Penuh. This old surau or little mosque had educated so many prominent and important figures in Kerinci with modern belief in Islam (have more open and more modern thinking in Islam and Islamic thinking) such as KH. Janan Thalib, one of the chief and also prominent figures in Muhammadiyah Kerinci. Now the old surau had become the office of Religious Affairs especially in the matter of daily life or what we know in Indonesia as KUA – Kantor Urusan Agama in Sungai Penuh. Most of the people that also helped him teach in this Surau (which will use the same teaching system he used in Masjid Ar Rawaniyah) are H. Abdul Hamid Bukit Tinggi, Haji Abdurrahman dan H. Pakih Usman from Hiyang. Thanks to his dedication in spreading Islamic teachings and his efforts in teaching people Islamic teachings in these two traditional schools, many of his students had continue their study in Kedah Malaysia and in Sumatera Thawalib. Most of these students did not stay where they study but they came back to Kerinci to continue Syekh Muhammad Khatib's efforts in educating people in Islamic teaching through Islamic schools and dakwah (teachings through public speech in public spaces).

In 1927 Syekh Muhammad Khatib with several prominent figures in Kerinci had established Sumatera Thawalib Ar Rawaniyah, established in the same place that he was teaching before, Masjid Ar Rawaniyah. In this new school. Syekh Muhammad Khatib had asked several of his former students and friends to be fellow teachers in that school such as H Azhari Thaib ( unknown – 1936), Abdurrahman bin Karim ( unknown – 1953), H Bustanuddin, H Imrah H Kamal Mukhtar, H Ishak Syahid H Saleh Samad, H Latif, and H Mat Yunus. Islamic scholars and several prominent figures had become donors in this school and had become the one that help established the school such as H Ishak, H Said Pangeran, H. Idris Jamil, H. Mohd Nuh, H. Bakri, H Abd Samad, H Mad Rasyad, H Mat Tamrin, H Bakhtiaruddin, H Kamal Mukhtar and so many others. Among his students, there are KH. Abd Rahman Dayah, KH Janan Thaib Bakri, KH. Dahlan, KH Abd Rauf, KH Namiri and KH Jufri Amin, who was among his former students and had established several traditional school for people to study Islamic teaching, especially hadist (and it was called *hadisah*) in Sungai Penuh after they are back from their study in Sumatera Thawalib Padang Panjang.

His appointment as religious officials in the colonial government had not stopped once the Dutch had been gone and Indonesia then had been under the the invasion of the Japanese Royal Army. In Japanese preoccupation time, once again Syekh Muhammad Khatib are appointed as the head Wadhi in Kerinci and Indrapura from 1942 – 1945 (Rahman, 2009). But because he was getting old and sometime not in a very good health, his official jobs will be carried out by his deputy, Syekh H Nahri ( birth unknown – 1983) one of his former students that had studied in Meccah for six years after he studied Islam under the guidance of Syekh Muhammad Khatib in Kerinci. Syekh Muhammad Khatib with his history in the the Dutch colonial government and in also again in the time of Japanese occupation as government officials dealing with Islamic affairs and religion eventually become the one that pioneered the established of Kantor Urusan Agama (Office of Religious Affairs) in Kerinci Indrapura that at time dealing with religious affairs of the people in Kerinci and the east coast of Sumatera. In Januari 3rd, 1946, the office of Religious Affairs (that are now known as office of Religious Affairs, as part of the what we know as the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia) were established for the first time thanks to Syekh Muhammad Khatib's appointment as government

officials that deals with Islamic affairs in the time of Dutch colonization and Japanese Occupation.

Syekh Muhammad Khatib died in 1949 (the exact date are unknown but he passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> of Rajab (the month in Islamic Calender) 1368 Hijriah. He died in the age of 80 and were buried in family burial site in Panda just in front of SD 16/III Rawang. In his life, Syekh Muhammad Khatib had several children from his two marriages. Six children (three boys and three girls) from his first marriage with Hajjah Aminah binti Abd. Rahim, who he was married when he was still studying Islam in Mekkah. And he also got three other children from his second marriage to Syadiyah binti Abd. Hakim, his wife that he was married in 1923 AD in Sungai Penuh. His children from the first marriage, that most of them is the source of this writing are Muhammad (the first born), Burhanuddin Khatib (the second born child, one of the primary source of this research), Ja'araf (the third child), Ra'yah (the fourth and the first born daughter), Damanhuri (the fifth child) and Sahibah (the sixth child). From his second marriage, Syekh Muhammad Khatib got three children: Rasina, Juwariah and Aklina (also one of the sources of the research).

His life showed that during his study in Mekkah and Medinah and also during his life teaching Islam in Kerinci and surrounding cities, Syekh Muhammad Khatib had met and befriended many prominent Islamic scholars at that time, and one of them is the father of Buya Hamka himself, one of the most famous Islamic scholars in Sumatera and Indonesia. From the historical evidence found in Masjid Raya Rawang, Buya Hamka's father not only studied along with Syekh Muhammad Khatib but he also had visited Kerinci and Syekh Muhammad Khatib in Kerinci at the time when the Masjid Raya Rawang were officially opened for the first time in his time.

## Conclusion

This research is one of the efforts to introduce Syekh Muhammad Khatib to the public. Syekh Muhammad Khatib although had been appointed twice as Qadhi (a religious chief/judge) a very prominent position at that time in the era of Dutch colonization and again appointed as Wadhi (also some kind of religious judge or chief) had not been known in Indonesia despite many of his efforts in spreading Islam in the West coast of Sumatera, especially in Kerinci. This is because Kerinci was only a small town and used to be part of Kingdom of Minangkabau or present day Sumatera Barat, so it was rarely well-known. The same with Syekh Muhammad Khatib who had not as well known through the public as other well-known *ulama* (Islamic scholar) on his time because he never published any books. Syekh Muhammad Khatib has his own legacy: an old Quran manuscript, although written for personal use and written without illuminations (like any other famous Quran manuscript often found in the archipelago or around the world), it was written in a clear *nasakh* style, a fact that distinguishes this manuscript from other personal mushaf or Quran manuscript found in Indonesia. At that time, a mushaf written for personal use are not so clearly written in certain style, but only written according to how the copier copied the manuscript. This mushaf or old manuscript had proven that Syekh Muhammad Khatib had a wide arrangement of networks with Islamic scholars not only in West Sumatera and several with other Indonesian Islamic scholar in Indonesia, but he also has a strong network with scholars both in the city of Mecca and Medinah or Haramain at that time, proven by his ownership of a beautifully written personal mushaf, a manuscript proven to be from the late 18th and early 19th century, written in Chinese ink, a very valuable book at that time that not so many many people would have. So with this manuscript, it was proven that

Kerinci, through Syekh Muhammad Khatib has a direct connection with Haramain since the late 18th to early 19th century.

Unfortunately, since the source of the primary data are only from his direct descendants who lived in Jambi, maybe an in-depth research could also be done to verify how Syekh Muhammad Khatib got hold onto the manuscript and maybe trying to find who the writer of the manuscript himself. This had not been done yet, because the lack of other sources. Aside from that, although according to his descendant that Syekh Muhammad Khatib has been appointed as Rod Landrod (a prominent position in Dutch Colonial era) or Qadhi, there is still little verification on this fact. The verification of his position as Rod Landrod could be verified through document that sadly are not found in Indonesia or Kerinci but it might have been documents documenting his time in various archives in the Netherland. So further research on this could be done through a thorough research on various documents that might have been found in the Netherlands.

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