

Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas: A Study on the Fatwa by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on Slaughtering Poultry

Paiz Hassan¹, Nor Aileen Binti Ibrahim², Mohd Zahirwan Halim
Bin Zainal Abidin¹, Mohd Anuar Ramli³, Muhammad Yusri Bin
Yusof@Salleh¹, Hamdi Rahman Mohd Yaacob¹, Abd. Munir
Mohd Noh¹

¹ Academy of Islamic Contemporary Studies Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar, 32610, Bandar Baru Seri Iskandar, Perak, Malaysia, ² Academy of Language Studies Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar, 32610, Bandar Baru Seri Iskandar, Perak, Malaysia, ³ Department Fiqh and Usul Fiqh, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: mohdz560@perak.uitm.edu.my

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Abstract

Scholars of the Malay world have played an important role in the efforts to spread Islamic teachings to the people of this region. Their efforts were carried out through various mediums, be it through verbal presentations or writing. The glory of Malay scholarship and field of knowledge reached its zenith when many local scholars obtained their education at Masjidil Haram, Mecca in the 18th century. Among them was Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1802 M-1872 M), a scholar from the Malay Archipelago who was renowned for his expansive knowledge on Islam. This study will discuss the biography of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1802 M-1872 M) and analyse the contents of his writings, specifically "The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas On Ritual Slaughter". To reach this objective, this study's methodology will apply the qualitative method, encompassing document analysis and interviews to obtain research findings. The research findings of this study show that Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1802 M-1872 M) grew up in and was surrounded by an environment steeped in knowledge, which made him become one of the Archipelago's most revered scholars. His works related to ritual slaughter has been highly beneficial to the field of knowledge, especially relating to the issue of slaughter that is legally recognised by syarak (Islamic religious law). His fatwa on the issue remains relevant to this day as the problem is still ongoing. Therefore, his views relating to issues concerning ritual slaughter has provided a guide to the community and prevented misunderstandings about the status of the ritual slaughter performed. His fatwa has provided a shift in the issues of fiqh that are related to ritual slaughter, which are

unravelling based on the views of the Syafie school, besides providing solutions to issues regarding ritual slaughter that occur in the local community.

Keywords: Scholar, Malay Archipelago, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas, Fatwa, Ritual Slaughter

Introduction

The Malay scholars were given due recognition by not only the Malay community but also the Arab community for their extensive knowledge in religious matters during the 18th and 19th century. These scholars had produced numerous works in the Arab and also the Malay language. These works encompass numerous fields that include *tasauf*, *fiqh*, *Usuluddin* and *hadith*. These distinguished scholars came from Patani, Sumatera and also Kalimantan. The state of Sambas is situated in Kalimantan. It was ruled by the Malay-Muslim Sultanate that played a significant role in the spread of Islam and had produced many distinguished religious scholars that spread the teachings of Islam not just locally but also abroad.

Research Methodology

This method has applied the qualitative method of study based on document analysis and interview. A main document in this research is the copy of manuscript writing by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on title "The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas On Ritual Slaughter". The contents of manuscript were analysed to get a views and *fatwa* from Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas about slaughtering poultry especially in Syafie sect. Furthermore, the other documents including books and journals were analysed with the aim to collect more information about the intended study.

Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to collect information to achieve the objective of the study (Konting, 2000). The interviews were semi-structured. Using the interviews protocol developed before the interview, researchers, however, were given freedom to ask and to explore the answer given by the participants. The questions can be expanded, reduced, altered and arranged based on intended sequences to help the participants understand the questions given (Piau, 2011). The interview was conducted to get information about Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas also his writing "The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas On Ritual Slaughter".

The Biography of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas

The Arabs had produced two texts that narrated the life of the religious scholars of Makkah and in both texts the name Syeikh Ahmad Khathib Sambas was mentioned. Umar Abdul Jabbar had written the first text entitled *Siyar wa Tarajim*¹ while the second text entitled *Al-Mukhtasar min Kitab Nasyrin Nur wa al-Zahar*², was written by Abdullah Mirdad Abul Khair and was summarised by Muhammad Said al-Amudi and Ahmad Ali.

His fullname was Syeikh Ahmad Khathib bin Abdul Ghaffar bin Abdullah bin Muhammad as-Sambasi. Kampung Dagang, Sambas was his birthplace. According to Umar `Abdul Jabbar, Syeikh Ahmad was born in the month of Safar 1217 H (1802 century AD)

¹ Third edition TIHAMA, Jeddah 1403 H/ 1982 M.

² First edition Nadi al-Taif al-Adabi. 1398 H / 1978 M.

(Abdullah, 2009). According to Azrul Basharuiddin³, Syeikh Ahmad was brought to Makkah by Syeikh Daud Bin Abdullah al-Patani, a famous Malay religious scholar who once visited Sambas and seek an audience with Sultan Sambas, also known as Syeikh Shafiyuddin (Raden Anum Sultan Sambas the VIII known as Sultan Muhammad Ali Shafiyuddin I (1815-1829 century AD), who was his student. After that Syeikh Ahmad was brought to Makkah by Syeikh Daud. The former was taught by the latter the tariqat teachings that include Shatariyah, Ismailiyah dan Naqsbandiyah. According to Syeikh Abdullah Mirdad Abul Khair, Syeikh Ahmad was just a child when he had gone to Makkah but this is in contradiction with the opinion of Umar Abdul Jabbar that asserted Syeikh Ahmad was 19 years old in the year 1236 H/ 1820 century AD. In addition to being taught by Syeikh Daud B. Abdullah al-Patani, Syeikh Ahmad was also taught by other distinguished scholars that include Syeikh Uthman al-Dimyati, Syeikh Ab. Ghani al-Jawi, Syeikh Muhammad Saleh al-Rais, Syeikh Umar Ab. Rasul (Mufti of Makkah) and Syeikh Abdullah al-Mirghani (Abdullah, 2001).

Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas was well-known both locally and abroad and highly respected by the followers of the tariqat teachings, specifically Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah, because he was the best mursyid teacher that achieved the highest level of tariqat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah in Makkah. This was attested by not only the Malay community but also the other communities as well. According to Azrul, Syeikh Ahmad was the one mainly responsible for the merging of tariqat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah. Up to this day, most religious scholars unanimously agree that Syeikh Ahmad played a pivotal role in the development of tariqat Qadiriyyah in South-East Asia (Abdullah, 2001). According to Azrul, Syeikh Ahmad was the first man that had successfully merged the two tariqat into one. Since the spread and development of Tariqat Qadiriyyah in the Malay realm in the past up until the present day, the religious scholars of Jawi or the archipelago unanimously agree that Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas played a significant role in the spread of this particular tariqat. He was also a much well-known figure in Uzbekistan because one of his pupils was Syeikh Abdul Murad, a religious scholar of Tariqat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah that accepted and learnt both tariqat from Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (Abdullah, 2009).

In addition to being a well-known figure in the field of tariqat, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib was also an expert in the teachings of fiqh particularly of the Syafie sect and also the teachings of the holy al-Quran and al-Hadith. One of his renowned works in the field of tasawuf is *Fathul al- 'Arifin* while in the field of fiqh is *The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on Jumaat*. This particular work also discusses the Islamic laws related to the act of slaughtering poultry in Islam (Abdullah, 2001). Moreover, his other works comprise *Kitab al-Fiqh* that discusses purification, prayer and funeral rites and *Silsilah Tariqat Qadiriyyah wa al-Naqsyabandiyah* (Abdullah, 2004).

Among his notable pupils in the archipelago were Syeikh Zainal Abidin al-Kelantani that was sent to Sambas by Syeikh Ahmad to become a teacher there, Syeikh Ab. Karim al-Bantani as a teacher in the city of Makkah, Syeikh Ahmad Hasbullah B. Muhammad al-Manduri (Madura), Syeikh Zarkasyi Barjan in Central Java, Haji Ab. Latif B. Haji Ab. Kadir who

³ He was a pupil of the late Wan Shaghir Abdullah, founder of Khazanah Fataniyyah. An interview was conducted on 26th of May 2010, 11.00 a.m. -12.30 p.m.

hailed from Sarawak (Abdullah, 2009). His other pupils include Syeikh Nawawi al-Bantani, Syeikh Muhammad Yasin Kedah and Syeikh Saad Selakau Sambas (Abdullah, 2001).

In the end, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas passed away in Makkah but there were differing opinions on the year of his demise between Umar Abdul Jabbar and Abdullah Mirdad Abul Khair. Abdullah Mirdad Abul Khair asserted that Syeikh Ahmad Khatib died in the year 1280 H (1863 century AD), but according to Umar Abdul Jabbar, it was 1289 H (1872 century AD). Nevertheless, the views of Abdullah Mirdad Abul Khair were rejected due to the existence of a manuscript entitled *Fathul al- 'Arifin* which is a copy of Haji Muhammad Said bin Hasanuddin, the Imam of Singapore, stated that *"Muhammad Saad bin Muhammad Thasin al-Banjari learnt the tariqat from his teacher, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib that was in Makkah al-Musyarrafah, and memorised it on the day of Arba, which was the seventh day in the month of Zulhijjah 1286 Hijrah"*. This clearly stated that on the 7th of Zulhijjah 1286 H (1869 century AD) Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas was still alive. Thus, the year 1289 H (1872 century AD) is believed to be the actual year of his passing as stated in the text by Umar Abdul Jabbar (Abdullah, 2009).

The Manuscript Pertaining "The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on the Slaughtering of Poultry"

The manuscript pertaining *"The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on the Friday Prayer"* according to Azrul Basharuddin is a written work or known as *"imla'"* in the Arabic language produced by his pupil whilst teaching in Makkah because Syeikh Ahmad instructed the said pupil to copy the text. This particular manuscript is a compilation of fatwa related to the Friday prayer and the act of slaughtering poultry in Islam. The late Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah discovered this hand-written manuscript in the beginning of 1986 at Midai Island, Riau Islands. Eventually, he stayed in Midai Island and passed away there.⁴ The original manuscript was discovered at his home in Midai Island and is stored there until today. Copies of the manuscript were also made by the late Wan Shaghir for his own safekeeping.

The researcher has attained a copy of the manuscript from a heritage centre of the study of manuscripts written by the Malay and religious scholars of the archipelago, called Khazanah Fataniyah, located in Taman Melewar, Batu Caves, Selangor which was established by the late Wan Shaghir. Now, this centre is being managed by his pupils and among them is Azrul Bin Basharuddin. Khazanah Fataniyah is a centre that stores various written works of not only of its late founder but also manuscripts that belonged to him.⁵ Although the original work is in the Riau Islands, but it is still significant as it relates to the Friday prayer. Moreover, this manuscript has not been the focus of any study before (Basharuddin, 2010).

Eventhough this manuscript consists 2 main chapters which comprise the Friday prayer and the act of slaughtering poultry, this researcher will mainly focus on the latter. There were numerous notes, found in the last few pages of this particular manuscript, related to the advice and also various religious practices of *zikir* or otherwise known as devotional acts in Islam in which short phrases or prayers are repeatedly recited silently within the mind

⁴ Notes made by Wan Shaghir in his personal copy.

⁵ His manuscripts were mainly kept by his son who was studying at a pondok in Patani, South Thailand.

or aloud. It was recommended by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas that *zikir* be practised on a daily basis.

The Manuscript Contents of “The Fatwa of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas on the Slaughtering of Poultry”

Generally, this manuscript explains the issues pertaining to the act of slaughtering poultry in Islam in a series of queries. In the explanation made by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib, he highlighted three main areas of concern related to the slaughtering of poultry.

The act of Slaughtering does not Completely sever the Windpipe or Trachea

In the beginning, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib highlighted an issue about slaughtering poultry particularly about the issue of not completely severing the windpipe⁶ or *mari*⁷ although the animal is already dead, whether the act of slaughtering should be repeated or otherwise. It is stated in the manuscript that:

In this matter, the first issue is, when the windpipe of the animal being slaughtered is not completely severed and the animal dies anyway, is it necessary or harus that slaughtering be repeated or no action be taken?

Syeikh Ahmad Khatib explains that if the above situation happens then it is forbidden or haram to consume the meat of that animal. He further explains:

In answering the first question, when the 2 veins are not completely severed and although only some veins were still unsevered, then the animal is considered a carrion and *haram* or forbidden to be consumed by a Muslim...

However, if the animal has not died yet at that particular time, then it is necessary to repeat the act of slaughter for the second time. It is further explained in the manuscript:

If the animal has not died yet at that particular time, whereby it still has “*hayat mustaqirrah*”⁸: then it is necessary to repeat the act of

⁶ The cartilaginous tube carrying air to the lungs or otherwise known as the trachea.

⁷ The food pipe is a long tube that connects the mouth to the stomach or its scientific term oesophagus.

⁸ Based on the views held by the Syafie and Hanbali scholars, life as we know it is divided into three levels or states:

- i. *Hayah al-Mustamirrah* which is a normal and ordinary life whereby the lifespan of the animal ends with its slaughter or due to other factors. To enable its meat to be fit for consumption or halal, it has to be slaughtered according to the underlined injunctions in Islam.
- ii. *Hayah al-Mustaqirrah* which refers to a strong will to live and this is evident because the animal still has the ability to move about and showing signs of life. One of the signs

slaughter for the second time. However if the “*hayat mustaqirrahnya*” is no longer present, then it is unnecessary to repeat the slaughter.

The Windpipe is Severed but the Animal is Still Alive

The second issue highlighted by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib is when the windpipe is severed but the animal is still alive and whether it is necessary to repeat the slaughtering act. Syeikh Ahmad Khatib explains that the animal is considered halal or permissible and that there is a need to wait until it dies eventually. It is explained in the manuscript that:

The second issue is when the windpipe and *mari'* are completely severed but the animal still lives. It is deemed necessary to repeat the act of slaughtering but at a different part this time. However if the windpipe and *mari'* are severed but the animal is still alive at that moment, therefore it is necessary to wait until it dies. The meat of the animal is deemed halal or fit for consumption although it was still alive for a day or more than that....

However, if the animal is still alive then the act of slaughtering can be repeated. Syeikh Ahmad further explains:

However if the said animal still has hayat mustaqirrah, then it is necessary to repeat the act of slaughtering but it must be done at a different place at its neck. If the animal is still alive because the cut on the vein had healed, then it is compulsory to slaughter the animal

Severing the vein of the Windpipe or tracheal vein and *mari'* but not the small veins (*Waddajain*)

The third issue involves severing the vein of the windpipe and *mari'*, but not the small veins (*Waddajain*)⁹, and the animal is found to be still alive and whether the slaughtering act

include the spray of blood after the windpipe and *mari'* are severed. According to 'asah' views, it is suffice to claim it is still alive if it still shows signs of movement.

- iii. The state in which the slaughtered animal still shows signs of movement but it has lost its ability to see or hear and control over its movements (al-Zuhayli,, 1994).

⁹ The fuqaha' scholars unanimously agree that the meat of the animal that has been slaughtered and has its two blood vessels (*waddajain*), *mari'* and windpipe severed is *harus* for consumption. However, they differ on the matter pertaining the minimum number of veins that should be severed:

- i. Fuqaha' Hanafi: It is compulsory to sever three out four which are the windpipe, *mari'* and one of the two blood vessels.
- ii. Fuqaha' Maliki: one of the more popular views refer to the need to sever the windpipe and both blood vessels without the need to sever the *mari'*.
- iv. Fuqaha' Shafie dan Hanbali: Slaughtering should include severing not only the air passage (windpipe) but also the food pipe or oesophagus (*mari'*) because they are

should be repeated or not. Thus, Syeikh Ahmad stated that it is necessary to wait for the animal to eventually die. However if the cut has healed, then it is compulsory for the animal to be slaughtered again. Syeikh Ahmad stated:

The third issue involves the matter of severing the windpipe or merih but not the small veins called "*waddajain*"¹⁰ yet the animal still lives, it is deemed necessary to repeat the slaughtering act. However, when the windpipe or merih are severed but not the "*waddajain*", then it is necessary to wait for the animal to eventually die and when it does, its meat is halal or permissible to be consumed. On the other hand, if the wound of the cut on the animal has healed, it is then compulsory to repeat the slaughter *wallahu a'lam bi al-sawab*

The Underlined Injunctions of Slaughtering Poultry

According to Syeikh Ahmad Khatib, the injunctions are divided into two aspects:

- a) Severing the windpipe
- b) Severing the *mari'*

It was further explained in the manuscript :

The underlined injunctions of slaughtering poultry comprise 2 aspects which include severing the windpipe and also the *mari'*....

The windpipe and *mari'* have to be severed in a single swipe of a razor sharp knife. However, when the *mari'* is only severed after several swipes of the knife then it must be observed after the second and third swipe whether the animal still has *hayat mustaqirrah* or otherwise. If it is still alive even after the second and third swipe of the knife, then the meat of the animal is considered halal or permissible to be consumed. On the other hand, if there is no *hayat mustaqirrah* after the second and third swipe of the knife, then the meat is haram or forbidden to be consumed. Syeikh Ahmad Khatib stated:

Therefore it is vital to sever the windpipe and *mari'* in a single swipe of the knife. But if the windpipe and *mari'* are only severed after the second and third swipe of the knife, then it should be observed whether the animal still has *hayat mustaqirrah* after the second and third swipe. If it is so, then its meat is halal or permissible to be consumed. Nevertheless, if the animal does not have *hayat mustaqirrah* even though the windpipe and *mari'* are severed after the second and third swipe of the knife, then its meat is considered haram or forbidden to be consumed *wallahu a'lam bi al-sawab*.

necessary for any being to live and it is *sunat* to sever both blood vessels on the left and right side of the neck of the animal (al-Zuhayli, 1994 ; al-Qardhawi, 1993)

¹⁰ Veins or blood vessels on the right and left of the neck that supplies blood to the brain. The scientific terms are artery or vein.

Relevance of The Fatwa by Syeikh Muhammad Khatib Sambas Regarding Ritual Slaughter and Today's Reality

In reality, the fatwa by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas relating to subject of ritual slaughter remains relevant for implementation to this day. Today, animal slaughter is carried out in a variety of ways as a means of simplifying the slaughtering process. Among the methods applied are the use of tranquilizers and electrocution (stunning) to weaken the animals, as well as slaughter using machines. Scholars in Malaysia have deemed these modern slaughter practices halal with certain conditions. The process of modern slaughter is carried out considering that it involves a large quantity of animals to fulfil market demands (Yusuf, 2016). The method and process of ritual slaughter in the Malay Archipelago is based on the Syafie school. This matter should not cause any issues to arise as ritual slaughter activities have been studied by religious authorities such as JAKIM. Additionally, it is in line with the *fatwa* by Syeikh Khatib Sambas, whereby an animal that is still alive can be ritually slaughtered and is *halal* to be eaten.

There is also the issue of animals that have been slaughtered that do not die and are still alive. There are situations whereby the slaughtered animal rises up again even after being ritually slaughtered in the Islamic way. Based on the fatwa by Syeikh Khatib Sambas, this does not cause an issue as the animal can be slaughtered again, as long as it is still alive (*hayat mustaqirrah*) after the first slaughter.

During the ritual slaughter process, sometimes the edge of the knife is lifted off of the animal, and there is a widespread belief in the Muslim community that this renders the meat non-permissible according to *syarak*. From the aspect of *fiqh* and *fatwa* by Syeikh Khatib Sambas, the process of ritual slaughter can be continued although the edge of the knife was lifted, this is because the *hayat mustaqirrah* of the animal is still intact.

There is also a case where chickens that have been ritually slaughtered are thrown into water and soaked after the slaughtering process¹¹. This clearly shows that the slaughtering is not permissible and the animal is considered carrion that is haram to eat. This is considering the chickens may have died from drowning rather than the slaughtering. This is explained by Syeikh Khatib Sambas in his fatwa, whereby an animal that has not died after slaughter, even if its adam's apple and jugular vein has been severed, must be left alive first until it dies by itself.

Furthermore, there is a lot of doubtful ritual slaughter happening today. Among them is the slaughtering of chickens whereby the jugular vein is not severed but the chicken has

¹¹ One of the cases that occurred whereby the slaughter of chickens at the Peremba Market, Alor Setar, Kedah. The chickens that have been slaughtered are thrown into a container of water and it is feared that the chickens died due to drowning or being crushed by other chickens. See <http://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/sembelihan-ayam-di-pasar-besar-peremba-tidak-patuh-standard-halal-30916/> 27 February 2014. Visited on 25 September 2018. Also one cases in Selangor (unknown location). The chickens that have been slaughtered not followed a syariah regulation and thrown into a container of water. The other workers managing chickens on the floor which is filled with blood. See Sinar Harian 25 December 2018. <http://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/3998/BERITA/Di-mana-pusat-penyembelihan-ayam-itu> Visited on 19 Mei 2020.

already died.¹² This slaughter is clearly not permissible and this issue is in line with the *fatwa* released by Syeikh Khatib Sambas in the past.

Conclusion

Based on the above statements, it can be concluded that Syeikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas was really mindful and thorough when issuing any decree or religious edict especially those pertaining to the aspect of slaughtering. It is imperative that he exercised caution because it is of utter importance to be thoroughly precise as it involves the concept of permissible (halal) and non-permissible (haram) food and drinks that should be consumed by Muslims. In Islam, it is believed that consuming halal food and drink will help shape good moral character of a Muslim individual.

Through careful examination of his work on the topic of slaughtering poultry, it is evident that he was more predisposed towards the Syafie sect because this particular sect was most probably received by the community in the archipelago. Therefore, it would only be natural that he would also be influenced as he was also a part of that community.

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¹² One of the cases concerning the slaughter of chickens at the Jalan Othman Market, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Once checked by authorities it was found that the jugular vein was not completely severed. See Sinar Harian 6 December 2015. <http://www.sinarharian.com.my/edisi/selangor-kl/sembelih-ayam-tak-ikut-syarak-1.459127>. Visited on 25 September 2018.