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Philipp Bruckmayr

# Theory, Practice, and Tradition in the Malay *Khuṭba* Manuals of Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī

**Abstract:** This contribution focuses on the pioneering Malay-language *khuṭba* manuals of the Bangkok-born scholar Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī (d. 1376/1956). In his works, al-Faṭānī combined expositions of the conventions of different types of liturgical sermons with model *khuṭbas* intended for practical use by other preachers. In addition, he included various supplications and ritual formulas related to mortuary practices in his manuals. I argue that a closer analysis of his writings indicates that they were not only intended to educate aspiring scholars and preachers about the conventions of the *khuṭba* and other ritual practices, but also to defend a larger edifice of scholarly and ritual traditions against the growing challenge of Islamic reformism. However, the analysis also shows that the tradition defended was not stagnant. Rather, al-Faṭānī's manuals are important testimonies to the gradual shifts in the contents of local *khuṭbas* towards a more practical orientation as well as to the major sea-change represented by the shift from Arabic to Malay as the preferred language of the liturgical *khuṭba*.

## 1 Introduction

In the 1900s and 1910s, the Malay scholar Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī (1293/1876–1376/1956) wrote several works on the Friday, Eid, and other liturgical or canonical sermons (sg. *khuṭba minbariyya* or *khuṭba sharʿiyya*).<sup>1</sup> These *khuṭba* manuals were all subsequently published, either in the Hejaz or in Cairo, and included expositions on the elements and conditions of a valid *khuṭba* as well as standardized templates for Friday and other types of canonical sermons in either Arabic or Malay.<sup>2</sup> These works apparently not only represented the first Malay-language *khuṭba* manuals,

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1 On this term and the traditional categorization of different types of sermons, see Linda G. Jones, *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15–18, 38–43.

2 Malay terms will be transliterated according to present Malay spelling. Where necessary, the source language of transliterated words will be specified in abbreviated form, using “Ar.” for Arabic and “Ml.” for Malay.

but also—on the practical level—the earliest instances of the distribution of printed Malay model sermons for wider local Muslim audiences.<sup>3</sup> This naturally raises the question of why this development occurred at this specific point in history. The present contribution therefore not only introduces and analyzes al-Faṭānī's sermons and his theoretical elaborations on the conventions of different kinds of *khuṭbas*, but also inquires into the possible reasons for the emergence of such literature among Malay Muslims at that particular time. In this regard, it additionally scrutinizes the materials accompanying some of al-Faṭānī's *khuṭba*-focused texts. Interestingly, two of his manuals include instructions on the use of ritual formulas, such as supplications for ritual feasts (Ml. *kenduri*) and instructions for the recently deceased (Ar. *talqīn al-mayyit*). Both practices became subject to criticism by Islamic reformists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as was the case with the traditional style of Friday sermons in the region.

It is therefore argued that two opposing processes were underpinning al-Faṭānī's efforts. Initially, his composition of standardized model sermons was the expression of a wider growing tendency to firmly anchor local Malay ritual within Shafī'i parameters. This drive towards closely aligning local ritual practices with the tradition of the Shafī'i school of law, which predominates in the region, first manifested itself in the production and wide distribution of prayer and marriage manuals. In this regard, early Malay key texts such as *Munyat al-muṣallī* and *Iḍāḥ al-bāb li-murīd al-nikāḥ bi-l-ṣawāb*, respectively, both authored in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Dā'ūd b. 'Abdallāh al-Faṭānī (d. 1263/1847), played a central role.<sup>4</sup> With Maḥmūd Zuhdī's works, this process finally extended to the sphere of *khuṭba* handbooks as well. By that time, however, such texts were apparently no longer only intended as codes of ritual practice for believers. They were additionally used as vehicles to defend an overall edifice of *madhhab*-adherence and traditional ritual practices against the challenge posed by the emerging local reformist movement. Hereby standardized sermons, supplications,

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3 Proudfoot's survey of early Malay printed books lists no *khuṭba* manuals and only one published Arabic model Friday sermon. The latter was distributed in 1313/1895–6 by the official publishing house of the sultanate of Riau-Lingga and was explicitly intended for usage in all congregational mosques of the realm. Ian Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books. A Provisional Account of Materials Published in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920, Noting Holdings in Major Public Collections* (Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library, University of Malaya, 1993), 310–11.

4 See Francis R. Bradley, "Sheikh Da'ud al-Fatani's *Munyat al-Musalli* and the Place of Prayer in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Patani Communities," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 41 (2013), 198–214; Francis R. Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place. The Legacy of Shaykh Dā'ūd bin 'Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī in Mecca and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016).

and other ritual formulas were among the tools intended to preserve a religious tradition now called into question by certain segments of the community.

## 2 The Author

Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. Tengku ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī was born in Bangkok (Siam, i.e. present-day Thailand) in 1876. His father was the former ruler (*raja*) of Jambu in the Malay sultanate of Patani in present-day southern Thailand, which had been broken up into smaller principalities by its Siamese overlords. After participating in an uprising with other local rulers in Patani in 1832, Tengku ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was captured and sent into captivity in Bangkok. There he was placed under house arrest, far removed from his native Patani. His son Maḥmūd Zuhdī therefore personifies a key development in the history of his ancestral region. Since 1785, Patani had gradually lost its independence, its political power, and a significant part of its population, as large numbers of Patani Malays were either killed or deported to Central Siam during successive conflicts between 1785 and 1838.<sup>5</sup> This situation propelled the emergence of new sources of authority in the form of religious capital, as Patani developed into a major center of Islamic learning on the Malay peninsula in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> This dynamic is well captured in the figure of Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī, who, even though born into the Patani diaspora in Bangkok and hailing from a ruling rather than from a scholarly family, would directly tap into the networks of Patani scholars established from the mid-century onwards.

Maḥmūd Zuhdī received his early education from his father. Subsequently he studied under the prominent Patani scholar ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Faṭānī in Tha It near Bangkok before proceeding to Mecca at the tender age of eight or nine. There he was educated in both the traditional teaching circles of the Masjid al-Ḥarām as well as in one of the emerging modern institutions of Islamic learning. As far as the former system is concerned, his main teacher was the most prominent Patani scholar of his day, Aḥmad al-Faṭānī (d. 1908), the founder of the Ottoman Malay printing press in Mecca.<sup>7</sup> Regarding the modern madrasa system, he studied at

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5 Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, 39–62.

6 Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, 84–137.

7 Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghīr Abdullah, *Al ‘Allamah Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani Ahli Fikir Islam dan Dunia Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1992); Ahmad Fathy al-Fatani, *Ulama Besar dari Patani* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2002), 52–61; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 306–307.

the *Madrasat al-Şawlatiyya*, established in 1875 by the Indian exile Raḥmat Allāh al-Ūthmānī al-Kayrānāwī (d. 1308/1891), which had a diverse student and teaching body of South Asians, Southeast Asians, and Arabs.<sup>8</sup> From 1895 or 1899 onwards, Maḥmūd Zuhdī himself taught there. After further studies in Cairo, he returned to Mecca, where he received official permission to teach at the Masjid al-Ḥarām in 1905. In 1923, the worsening conflict between the Sharif of Mecca and the Saudis prompted Maḥmūd Zuhdī to return to Southeast Asia. In 1929 he settled down in the sultanate of Selangor in present-day Malaysia, following an invitation by Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Sulaymān Shāh (r. 1315/1898–1357/1938) to become his advisor and teacher. Subsequently, he rose to the position of *shaykh al-islām* of Selangor. In 1953 he travelled to Mecca once more to re-establish himself as a teacher. He died there in 1956.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.1 His Works

Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī left nine works. Of these three were on Arabic language and grammar, and one each was on the articles of belief (*‘aqīda*) and Islamic law (*fiqh*). Most noteworthy for the present purpose, however, is that one third of his output was concerned with the *khuṭba*. This includes his first small work, *al-Farīda al-saniyya wa-l-khuṭba al-bahiyya*, completed in 1321/1903 and printed at the Ottoman Malay printing press in Mecca in 1331/1912–13. In 1335/1916 he finished his largest work on the subject, *Thimār al-khuṭab al-maḥbara al-minbariyya*, which was published by the famous Cairene printing house Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī and Sons. The undated third book in this category, *Dua Khutbah bagi Dua Hari Raya Fithrah dan Adhha* (Two Sermons for the Two Festive Days of Fiṭr and Aḏḥā), published in Jeddah in 1327/1909–10, must have been written in the intervening period. Apart from the respective dates of publication, the clearest evidence for this is that

<sup>8</sup> On the school, see Seema Alavi, “Fugitive Mullahs and Outlawed Fanatics’: Indian Muslims in the Nineteenth Century Trans-Asiatic Imperial Rivalries,” *Modern Asian Studies* 45 (2011): 1367–75; Michael Farquhar, *Circuits of Faith: Migration, Education, and the Wahhabi Mission* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 38–41. By 1912, Southeast Asians constituted 30 per cent of the school’s student body. M. F. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia. The Umma Below the Winds* (London: Routledge, 2003), 200.

<sup>9</sup> The biographical information in this section was drawn from two accounts, which present more or less the same information, although sometimes with slightly conflicting dates as far as his first stay in the Arab world is concerned. Wan Mohd Shaghbir Abdullah, *Ulama-ulama di Serambi Istana Sultan ‘Alauddin Sulaiman Shah (Sultan Selangor ke-5)* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1441/2020), 16–19; al-Fatani, *Ulama Besar*, 278–80.

*Thimār al-khuṭab* contains a revised version of an *ʿīd al-ḥiṭr* sermon, which was first published in *Dua Khutbah*.<sup>10</sup>

All three texts are in Malay, although they contain large portions in Arabic as well. They are now available in facsimile versions in a compilation of Maḥmūd Zuhdī's works.<sup>11</sup> His last remaining book, *Tazkiyyat al-anzār wa-taṣfiyyat al-afkār*, is likewise of great interest for our inquiry. It is a refutation of two fatwas by the Malay reformist scholar Wān Mūsā b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad (d. 1357/1939) on the question of sustaining the *niyya* (intention) as a necessary condition of valid prayer.<sup>12</sup>

### 3 The Contents of his *Khuṭba*-Related Writings

After a brief introduction in Arabic, *al-Farīda al-saniyya* sets out to enumerate and explain the obligatory elements (*arkān*) and conditions (*shurūṭ*) of a valid *khuṭba*, including the behavior and succession of ritualized actions of the *khaṭīb* and the audience. Hereby, it reflects certain specifically Shafīʿi doctrines, such as the obligatory quorum of 40 believers, which is prominently placed as the first condition of a valid Friday prayer.<sup>13</sup> Another typical Shafīʿi practice, introduced by the author as an established tradition (*sunna*), is that of the imam formally greeting the audience for a second time, immediately before commencing with his sermon.<sup>14</sup> The remainder of the work consists of two Malay Friday sermons (i.e., the *khuṭbatān* of the

<sup>10</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab al-maḥbara al-minbariyya* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1335/1916), 44–54; Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah bagi Dua Hari Raya Fithrah dan Adhha* (Jeddah: Maṭbaʿat al-Iṣlāḥ, 1327/1909–10), 2–16. Without specifying the prior publication, the heading in the later work explicitly describes the *khuṭba* in question as a revised version of one printed before. Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *Himpunan Karya Tengku Mahmud Zuhdi Al-Fathani* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1440/2019). It is the facsimile editions contained therein which have been consulted for this study. References are always to the original pagination.

<sup>12</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *Tazkiyyat al-anzār wa-taṣfiyyat al-afkār* (Pattani: Dār al-Ṭibāʾa al-Islāmiyya, 1339/1920). On the overall debate, see Marion Holmes Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 44–55.

<sup>13</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya wa-l-khuṭba al-bahiyya* (Mecca: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mīriyya al-Kāʾina bi-Makka, 1321/1903), 4.

<sup>14</sup> al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 6. On this as a point of inter-*madhhab* dispute, see ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, *Adab al-khaṭīb*, ed. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulaymānī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1996), 101–102.

Friday prayer), which are each introduced as the first and second sermon “for every Friday prayer” (*bagi tiap-tiap jumaat*), respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Al-Faṭānī’s second work on the subject, *Dua Khutbah*, which is intermediate in length, is completely practical in orientation, leaving out any theoretical discussion. It begins with a Malay first *khutba* each for *īd al-fiṭr* and *īd al-aḍḥā*, followed by a single second one for both occasions.<sup>16</sup> Next up is an Arabic supplication (*du‘ā*) for the completion of the recitation of the entire Qur’an (Ar. *khaṭm al-qur’ān*) or for a ritual feast (Ml. *kenduri*). The context and the following text suggest that both practices are associated with the commemoration of the dead.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the next section consists of a *talqīn* formula, designed to address a male corpse,<sup>18</sup> and an accompanying *du‘ā*. This is then followed by a supplication for the middle of the month of Sha‘ban.<sup>19</sup> Then the book returns to the subject of the *khutba* and closes with two Arabic Friday sermons “for every Friday.”<sup>20</sup>

Whereas these two works are both rather short, the later *Thimār al-khuṭab* is significantly longer and a much more comprehensive work. It can therefore be regarded as Maḥmūd Zuhdī’s definitive manual on the *khutba* and related ritual practices. After a brief introduction, *Thimār al-khuṭab* reproduces the expositions on the conventions of the *khutba*, as found in *al-Farīda al-saniyya*.<sup>21</sup> Then come the two Malay Friday *khutbas* already contained in the latter work, albeit now “newly embellished with some additions,” followed by two new Malay Friday sermons and the Arabic originals from which they were derived.<sup>22</sup> The next chapter is devoted to Eid sermons. First their specific elements and conditions are discussed,<sup>23</sup> and

15 Al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 14.

16 Al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah*, 2–28.

17 On such contested commemorative practices in South and Southeast Asian contexts, see Shah-rul Hussain, *What the Living Can Do for the Dead: According to the Qur’ān and Sunna and the Opinions of the Classical Scholars of Islam* (London: White Thread Press, 2016), 89–90; John R. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 70–71, 259–72.

18 For an anthropological perspective on this practice and the continuing debates around it in Sumatra, see Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*, 252–59.

19 Al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah*, 28–35.

20 Al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah*, 35–40.

21 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 5–13; *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 1–6 (rest of section missing).

22 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 13–36 (pages 16–34 are missing, quotation from 5). Due to missing pages in the facsimile editions, a full comparison was only possible with reference to a later edition of the work. Maḥmūd Zuhdī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab al-maḥbara al-minbariyya* (Penang: Maṭba‘at al-Hudā, n.d.), 11–31. I am indebted to Wan Jumanatun Nailiah binti Wan Mohd Shaghīr (Kuala Lumpur) for supplying me with a digital copy of this edition. Citations are to the Cairo edition throughout.

23 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 37–44.

then two *ʿid al-fiṭr* and one *ʿid al-aḍḥā* sermon are provided for the first *khuṭba* of each canonical feast. The first of the *ʿid al-fiṭr* sermons is a corrected version of its counterpart in *Dua Khutbah*,<sup>24</sup> whereas the much longer second one and the *ʿid al-aḍḥā* sermon are new. They are followed by one second sermon, applicable to both occasions.<sup>25</sup> All these *khuṭbas* are in Malay.

The third chapter deals with the *khuṭab* for the solar and lunar eclipse prayers and features two Malay sermons.<sup>26</sup> The fourth chapter revolves around the *khuṭbas* of the prayer for rain (*ṣalāt al-istisqāʾ*).<sup>27</sup> Going beyond merely reproducing the sermons, the sequence is here interrupted during the second sermon to indicate the moments in which—following the example of the Prophet Muhammad as conveyed in hadith—the *khaṭīb* should face towards the *qibla* and turn his cloak inside out, or turn to the audience, respectively.<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that all sermons in these three chapters are in Malay, clearly testifying to Maḥmūd Zuḥdī’s privileging of the vernacular over Arabic.

The remainder of the work is concerned with prayers of need (Ml. *sembahyang hajat*) and various Arabic *duʿā*’s, including for guarding against the “red wind” (*rīḥ al-aḥmar*, i.e., a sickness associated with demons or *jinn*).<sup>29</sup> As in *Dua Khutbah*, there is a section on mortuary practices. Thus, it includes an Arabic *tal-qīn* for a female as well as the appropriate *duʿā*’ for the *khatm al-qurʿān* ceremony in commemoration of the deceased.

## 4 *Khuṭba* Manuals and Sermon Collections: Genres Between Theory and Practice

Two of Maḥmūd Zuḥdī al-Faṭānī’s works on the *khuṭba*, namely *al-Farīda al-saniyya* and *Thimār al-khuṭab*, fulfill a dual function as both *khuṭba* manuals and sermon collections. As noted, the contained *khuṭbas* were hereby explicitly in-

24 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 44–54; al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah*, 2–6.

25 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 55–101.

26 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 102–116.

27 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 117–139.

28 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 136–137. On the respective report, see Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū Zakariyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Ḥilyat al-abrār wa-shiʿar al-akhyār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Arnāʿūt (Alexandria: Dār ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb li-l-Ṭibāʾa wa-l-Nashr, n.d.), 151–152.

29 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 139–156. On the “red wind,” see Tobias Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam: Eine Untersuchung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung schriftlicher Quellen aus der vor-modernen Zeit (600–1500)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 145–46; Susan M. Kenyon, *Spirits and Slaves in Central Sudan: The Red Wind of Sennar* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 77–90.

tended as model sermons for practical use. *Khuṭba* manuals have not been a widespread genre in Arabic, let alone in Malay. When Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 724/1324) composed his *Adab al-khaṭīb*, he asserted that he was not aware of any preceding books in the field.<sup>30</sup> The conventions of liturgical sermons were rather covered in hadith collections and commentaries and in general *fiqh/furūʿ* works instead.<sup>31</sup> This also applies to the Malay world, where the *arkān*, *shurūṭ* and traditions of the *khuṭba* were commonly discussed in the field of *furūʿ*, beginning with the first Malay work in the field, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī's (d. 1068/1658) *Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, and, on a more limited scale, in primers on Shāfiʿī-Ashʿarī ritual practice and creed.<sup>32</sup> As far as Malay *khuṭba* manuals are concerned, Maḥmūd Zuhdī's works are the only ones I have encountered so far. Even though others may well come to light, it is sufficiently clear that prayer or marriage manuals were much more popular genres. The Bangkok-born scholar was thus undoubtedly among the pioneers, if not the pioneer, in the field.

Contrastingly, *khuṭba* collections were a more popular genre in the Arabic language sphere. Some of these collections, or at least certain sermons contained therein, acquired a canonical status. Employed as standard sermons across the centuries and in different parts of the Muslim world, they became locally institutionalized. These books were thus, as was clearly also envisioned by Maḥmūd Zuhdī, compiled for practical use by other preachers. In addition, *khuṭba* collections were at times assembled as pedagogical texts to teach the art of oratory.<sup>33</sup> Of particular relevance for the present inquiry are the *khuṭab* of the Syrian/Anatolian Ibn Nubāta (d. 374/984–5), which were widely distributed in the Maghreb and Andalusia way into the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and used not only as model sermons but also as the standard to judge those of later preachers.<sup>34</sup> What is more, Ibn Nubāta's collected sermons are organized according to the months of the Islamic calendar as well as topically. Therefore, they lend themselves very well to recurring

30 Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, *Adab al-khaṭīb*, 86. Even the modern print edition relied upon here advertises the work as the “first stand-alone book on the rules of conduct of the preacher” on its cover.

31 Jones, *Power of Oratory*, 30–31.

32 Nūr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Jaylānī al-Rānīrī, *Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, in the margin of Muḥammad Arshad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Banjārī, *Sabīl al-muhtadīn li-tafaqquh fi amr al-dīn*, 2 vols. (Patani: Maṭbaʿat Ibn Halābī, n.d.), 1: 225–30. Other examples from among general *fiqh* works are Muḥammad Arshad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Banjārī, *Sabīl al-muhtadīn li-tafaqquh fi amr al-dīn*, 2 vols. (Patani: Maṭbaʿat Ibn Halābī, n.d.), 2: 48–51; and Dāʿūd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Faṭānī, *Furūʿ al-masāʾil*, 2 vols. (Patani: Maṭbaʿat Ibn Halābī, n. d.), 1: 120–23. For a primer written at the same time as Maḥmūd Zuhdī's manuals, see Muḥammad ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib al-Khālīdī, *Miftāḥ al-Dīn li-l-Muṭṭadī* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1340/1922), 63–64.

33 Jones, *Power of Oratory*, 201–205, 251–56.

34 Jones, *Power of Oratory*, 207.

use. They were still very popular in South India and Southeast Asia during Maḥmūd Zuhdī's time and continue to be so until today.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Faṭānī's approach to enhancing his *khuṭba* manuals with model sermons appears rather unique and very modern in the Southeast Asian setting and gives his works a very practical orientation. Indeed, not many *khuṭba* collections have been preserved in the region, either from earlier or contemporaneous times.<sup>36</sup> The small number of relevant manuscripts from different parts of Indonesia held in Dutch collections, for instance, which includes at least one larger collection of *khuṭbas* that are explicitly introduced as model sermons, contains hardly any Malay *khuṭbas*.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the only earlier published *khuṭba* collection by a Southeast Asian scholar, the Mecca-based Muḥammad al-Nawawī al-Bantanī (d. 1314/1897), is entirely in Arabic.<sup>38</sup> This overwhelming reliance on Arabic stands in stark contrast to the majority of Maḥmūd Zuhdī's sermons. This brings us to another point of consideration.

## 5 The Practice of Preaching in the Vernacular

It has long been a point of dispute whether it is valid to give a liturgical *khuṭba* in any other language than Arabic. The idea was swiftly rejected by Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, who deemed a Friday sermon in any other language than Arabic to be invalid.<sup>39</sup> Other Shafi'i scholars, including his teacher al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), were more pragmatic as they considered *wa'z* (exhortation) to be the main function of the *khuṭba*, which could be achieved in any language.<sup>40</sup> In the Malay world, Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī (d. 1287/1812) noted already in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that it

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<sup>35</sup> Tellingly, the edition consulted here was an official one, published under the auspices of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān khuṭab Ibn Nubāta*, ed. Yāsir al-Miqdād (Kuwait: al-Wa'ī al-Islāmī, 1433/2012). Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century editions were published in Cairo, Beirut, Tunis, and Bombay, testifying to the lasting importance of his sermons. I am indebted to Mahmood Kooria (Leiden/Delhi) for drawing my attention to the continued relevance of Ibn Nubāta's sermons in South India.

<sup>36</sup> Further research is necessary to verify this assumption. For an analysis of more recent Indonesian *khuṭba* collections, see M.B. Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah: Defining a National School of Islamic Law* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), 129–203.

<sup>37</sup> P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands: Second Enlarged Edition* (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1980), 162–63.

<sup>38</sup> Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah*, 134, 187–88.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, *Adab al-Khaṭīb*, 134.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, *Adab al-Khaṭīb*, 134–35 n. 3.

would be permissible to give the *khuṭba* in the vernacular in the absence of anybody who knows Arabic, as long as there has been no possibility to comply with the obligation to learn it.<sup>41</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī, however, evidently had no such reservations, which clearly differentiates his texts from the bulk of earlier Southeast Asian collections. Even though he displayed mastery of Arabic, and it was claimed that even Arabs were impressed by his Arabic poetry,<sup>42</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī clearly privileged the successful exhortation of the audience over the use of the original language of revelation. Thus, he disregarded the rigid Shafi'i position espoused by his forerunner Ibn al-'Aṭṭār.

By explicitly allowing the use of vernacular languages in the *khuṭba* among non-Arab audiences, except for the Qur'anic verses, he also significantly circumscribed the communal duty to learn Arabic. In his view, the entire community would only be sinful—and the Friday prayer consequently invalid—if it failed to educate at least one member to recite the respective verses in their original language.<sup>43</sup> On the practical level, his affirmation that both his Malay as well as his Arabic sermons could be used for every given Friday shows that he envisaged them equally as potentially canonical. Contrastingly, his focus on distributing his manuals and sermons primarily in Malay reflects his conviction of the necessity to reach a broader local audience of scholars and common believers through the vernacular. In this regard, he also consistently translated the standard tripartite introductory formula of the *khuṭba*, consisting of the praise to God (*taḥmīd*), the profession of faith (*shahāda*) and the calling of blessings upon the Prophet (*taṣ-ḥliya*), after first providing them in Arabic.<sup>44</sup>

Whereas the question of the validity of Friday sermons in local languages is still a source of vehement dispute, for instance, among the Muslims of Kerala in South India, where *khuṭbas* in Malayalam are the almost exclusive purview of the reformist and Salafi movements,<sup>45</sup> this is much less so in Southeast Asia. More research is necessary, however, to estimate Maḥmūd Zuhdī's role in this develop-

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41 Al-Banjārī, *Sabīl al-muhtadīn*, 2:49. This closely echoes an earlier legal opinion by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qādirī al-Ṭawīl, Shafi'i Chief Judge of Egypt in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. P.S. van Koningsveld and G.A. Wiegers, "The Islamic Statute of the Mudejars in the Light of a New Source," *Al-Qantara* 17 (1996): 21, 48.

42 Al-Faṭānī, *Ulama Besar*, 278.

43 Al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 5.

44 Al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 14.

45 Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1976), 233–34; Jose Abraham, *Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modernity in India: Socio-Political and Religious Thought of Vakkom Moulavi* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 109–10, 160–61; Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, "Islamism and Social Reform in Kerala, South India," *Modern Asian Studies* 42 (2008): 325, 333.

ment.<sup>46</sup> His straightforward approach to the question, however, suggests that a kind of consensus on the validity of sermons in Malay had been reached among scholars on the Malay peninsula and in Sumatra in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This must have occurred prior to or concomitantly with the emergence of reformist and traditionalist factional identities in the region, commonly known as *kaum muda* (young group) and *kaum tua* (old group), respectively, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> The enhanced status of Malay for identity politics in the face of the Siamese subjugation of Patani and the nascent independence movement in British Malaya may well have influenced this process.

Even though circles rejecting the validity of non-Arabic sermons have survived in the region until today, the language question was, in contrast to similar conflicts in Kerala, not generally part of the repertoire of emblematic contested issues between the local factions in Southeast Asia at that time.<sup>48</sup> By the 1920s, even the newly founded traditionalist Nahdlatul *Ulama* (NU) organization, which had its power base on Java, while prescribing the use of Arabic, advocated this to be accompanied by a summary in the vernacular.<sup>49</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī and even the NU were more open in this regard than some of the Arab key figures confronting the growing reformist trend in the Middle East. Yūsuf al-Dijwī (d. 1365/1946), a vocal Egyptian critic of the latter current from Cairo's al-Azhar,<sup>50</sup> responded to a question sent from a Shafi'i mosque in Bombay in 1350/1931 with the more rigid of the school's positions. He stated unequivocally that only an Arabic *khutba* would be valid and that its translation could be provided after but not before the prayers following the sermon.<sup>51</sup>

Even though Maḥmūd Zuhdī's propagation of Malay as a liturgical language in addition to Arabic tallied with the demands of the reformist *kaum muda* move-

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46 Malay sermons by Mecca-based scholars of Patani background, perhaps including Maḥmūd Zuhdī, were still circulated and copied in manuscript form in Islamic schools in Patani in the 1910s and 1920s. Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, 123, 128–29.

47 Mohammad Redzuan Othman and Abu Hanifah Haris, "The Role of Egyptian Influences on the Religious Dynamics and the Idea of Progress of Malaya's *Kaum Muda* (Young Faction) before the Second World War," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42 (2015): 465–480.

48 Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*, 297.

49 Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah*, 129–30. This was already the position of al-Nawawī al-Bantani, the teacher of the NU's founder, Hasyim Asyari (d. 1366/1947). See Alex Soesilo Wijoyo, "Shaykh Nawawi of Banten: Texts, Authority, and the Gloss Tradition" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997), 285.

50 Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 117.

51 Yūsuf al-Dijwī, *Maqālāt wa-Fatāwā* (Cairo: Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya, 1401/1981–1402/1982), 2: 422–424.

ment, he showed himself to be an ardent defender of the local expression of the Shafi'i school and the traditional ritual practices associated with it. Indeed, both the dating and contents of his *khuṭba* texts, as well as some of his other writings, strongly suggest that their composition was related to the challenge posed to traditional forms of religious authority and practice by emerging reformist thought.

## 6 Standardization and Preservation of a Scholarly Tradition

Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī's Malay *khuṭba* texts were in many ways "translations," if not in the literal, then in the broad sense of the word. This is not meant to belittle either his scholarly contribution or his originality. After all, at their time of publication, his texts on the subject most probably represented the most encompassing, if not the only, specialized guidebooks to the *khuṭba* in all its different facets ever produced in the Malay language and for Southeast Asian audiences.<sup>52</sup> As part of this effort, he transmitted and translated Arabic normative writings from the Shafi'i tradition as well as *khuṭbas* into Malay and the Southeast Asian context. In this regard, not only the format but also the contents of his *khuṭbas* closely follow established patterns: exhorting believers to fulfill their religious obligations, world renunciation, fear of judgment, the merits of particular days and months; the relevance of fasting and *zakāt al-ḥiṭr* in the *ʿid al-ḥiṭr* sermon; Ibrāhīm's story and instructions for ritual sacrifices (*qurbān*) for *ʿid al-aḍḥā*, etc.

Whereas al-Faṭānī's 1321/1903 *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, with its exclusive focus on the *khuṭba*, was most likely still exclusively intended to provide Southeast Asian readers with a *khuṭba* manual and ready-to-use sermons in the regional *lingua franca*, his two later works, with their inclusion of ritual formulas for practices such as *talqīn al-mayyit* and *kenduri*, seem to reflect the broader goal of expanding, and perhaps defending, a larger scholarly and ritual edifice. By 1920, Maḥmūd Zuhdī had clearly positioned himself within the *kaum tua* traditionalist camp. This is most conspicuous in *Tazkiyyat al-anzār*, his refutation of two fatwas on the role of intent (*niyya*) in prayer by the former mufti of Kelantan, Wān Mūsā

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<sup>52</sup> The earlier *khuṭba* collection of al-Nawawī al-Bantani is, with 52 sermons, much more encompassing than any of Maḥmūd Zuhdī's works. Yet, apart from the fact that it was only translated into Indonesian in 1988, it could clearly not function as a *khuṭba* manual. Cf. Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah*, 187.

b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad.<sup>53</sup> The book was printed together with endorsements (*taqārīz*) by eight other scholars based in Mecca and the Malay world. These *taqārīz* provide a clear perspective on the factionalism that was underway at that time, the related quest for scholarly authority, and the transnational character of the debates. Thus, they describe Wān Mūsā and his community as a deviant group that agrees with the views of the Cairo-based reformist figurehead Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935), “a journalist who does not belong to a specific *madhhab*.” In contrast, Maḥmūd Zuhdī is commended for his effort to defend common Malays from the likes of Riḍā and Wān Mūsā.<sup>54</sup>

Besides the specific questions related to Shafi'i doctrine about sustaining the *niyya* during particular stages of prayer, another major bone of contention was the ritual verbalization of the *niyya*. Indeed, the verbal expression of intent was regarded as a sunna by the traditional Shafi'i scholars but labeled as a blameworthy innovation by the *kaum muda*. Hġ. Abū Bakr al-Mu'arī (d. 1357/1938), the chief *qāḍī* of Muar in the sultanate of Johor, for instance, was engaged in an exchange of diverging views on this point with Rashīd Riḍā.<sup>55</sup> Maḥmūd Zuhdī himself consistently included the appropriate *niyya* formulas in his expositions of the different canonical rituals that preceded his model sermons and supplications, thereby leaving no doubt about his affirmation of the validity of the practice.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from *niyya*-related practices, Wān Mūsā and other Southeast Asian reformists, including prominently the *kaum muda* of West Sumatra whose influence was also felt on the Malay peninsula, vehemently denounced *talqīn al-mayyit* and the commemorative feasts for the dead as *bid'a*.<sup>57</sup> In 1914, Wān Mūsā even sent a fatwa request to Rashīd Riḍā on the validity of *talqīn*. In the resulting fatwa, Riḍā

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53 On Wān Mūsā and his role as a representative of the *kaum muda*, see Muhammad Salleh b. Wan Musa (with S. Othman Kelantan), “Theological Debates: Wan Musa b. Haji Abdul Samad and His Family,” in *Kelantan: Religion, Society, and Politics in a Malay State*, ed. William R. Roff (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 153–70; Philipp Bruckmayr, *Cambodia's Muslims and the Malay World: Malay Language, Jawi Script, and Islamic Factionalism from the 19th Century to the Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 203–209.

54 Al-Faṭānī, *Tazkiyyat al-anzār*, 43–47 (quotation from p. 46).

55 Hġ. Wan Mohd. Shaghīr Abdullah, *Koleksi Ulama Nusantara*, 2 vols. (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2009), 1: 10–13.

56 See, for example, al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 38, 102, 118, 140.

57 On these topics as featuring among emblematic debates between the two factions in Minangkabau, see HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* (Jakarta: Penerbit Widjaya, 1958), 79–80. For a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century defense of *kenduri* by a scholar from Patani, see Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Kalābāwī, *Cermin Suluhan* (Patani: Dār al-Ṭībā'a al-Islāmiyya, 1381/1961).

fully confirmed the Malay scholar's reservations towards the practice.<sup>58</sup> Against this background it is certainly not coincidental that Maḥmūd Zuhdī's two later works on the *khuṭba* reserved such a prominent place to ritual formulas relative to increasingly contested practices such as *talqīn*, *khatm al-qur'ān/kenduri* or supererogatory devotions in the middle of the month of Shaḥān.<sup>59</sup> It is also noteworthy that, whereas his earlier *Dua Khutbah* merely introduces a *talqīn* text, the later *Thimār al-khuṭab* includes an introductory discussion that connects the practice and specific expressions in the following *talqīn* and *du'ā'* to several prophetic traditions.<sup>60</sup>

What is more, by the late 1900s the conventions and contents of *khuṭbas* had become a serious bone of contention as well. Thus, in 1327/1909, two fatwa requests (sg. *istiftā'*) from Singapore were submitted to Riḍā in Cairo. Both were concerned with the permissibility of a *khuṭba* given at the local congregational mosque by the young preacher Hj. 'Abbās b. Muḥammad Ṭaha (d. 1370/1950), who had been involved in the publication of *al-Imām* (1906–1908), a Singaporean journal modelled after Riḍā's *al-Manār*.<sup>61</sup> The reformist scholar's sermon, ostentatiously delivered in Arabic, had stirred wide controversy. In a break with traditional norms of content, it criticized the state of contemporary Muslim society and its perceived backwardness vis-à-vis the West. One of the two *istiftā'*s complained that Hj. 'Abbās had denigrated the actions of the Muslims and praised the ways of the unbelievers. In addition, it asserted that the '*ulamā'* had forbidden Friday sermons like this.<sup>62</sup> Contrastingly, the other, which clearly sympathized with the *khaṭīb's* approach, lamented that nowadays Muslims would "hear nothing else in their mosques but the sermons of Ibn Nubāta or the like, so that they are only used to hearing about the merits of the months, the nearing of the hour and calls to renounce the world."<sup>63</sup>

58 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Fatāwā al-imām Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid and Yūsuf Q. Khūrī, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1970–1971), 4: 1270–1275. Cf. Bruckmayr, *Cambodia's Muslims*, 206–207.

59 Just as Maḥmūd Zuhdī provides the appropriate *du'ā'* and brief instructions on how to ritually mark this date, the Minangkabau *kaum tua* and Sufi leader Khaṭīb 'Alī (d. 1355/1936) included similar pointers and even a Malay translation of the supplication into his primer on ritual and doctrine. Cf. al-Faṭānī, *Dua Khutbah*, 34–35; al-Khālīdī, *Miftāḥ*, 95–96.

60 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 156–57.

61 Alijah Gordon, *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh al-Hadi* (Kuala Lumpur: MSRI, 1999), 75–79; Azyumardi Azra, "The Transmission of *al-Manār's* Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World," in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, eds. Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (London: Routledge, 2006), 145–53; Othman and Haris, "Role of Egyptian Influences," 468–71.

62 Riḍā, *Fatāwā al-Imām*, 2: 782.

63 Riḍā, *Fatāwā al-Imām*, 2: 779.

This second inquirer also submitted a long extract from the incriminated *khuṭba*, which decried increasing superstition among Muslims and called for comprehensive reform in religious and worldly affairs.<sup>64</sup>

Against this background, it is tempting to see al-Faṭānī's later collections, *Dua Khutbah* and *Thimār al-khuṭab*, as scholarly responses to such challenges by providing local preachers with authoritative model sermons as tools to guard against the intrusion of this new style of *khuṭba* and the critical views on local Muslim tradition which they—as in the example from Singapore—routinely conveyed. In the face of this challenge, liturgical sermons acquired a new urgency, which went beyond the already enhanced function of congregational and festive prayers as manifestations of communal identity in the context of Siamese occupation and British colonialism. Thus, it seems perfectly reasonable to rely on Malay, a language readily understood by the audience, in the quest for listeners and followers. Moreover, this defense against both Islamic reformist influence and Siamese/British encroachment on Malay religious life also entailed efforts to perpetuate—now contested—practices such as *talqin* and *kenduri* as integral to the ritual tradition.

This is not to say that al-Faṭānī's writings in the field were exclusively apologetic in nature. After all, being among the small circle of Southeast Asians permitted to teach at the Masjid al-Ḥarām, he was part of a Malay scholarly elite, and his *khuṭba* guides were certainly responding to a popular demand in an era of a substantial increase in mosques in his home region. Similarly, the expansion of Islamic schooling on the Malay peninsula and the greatly enhanced outreach of religious literature, prominently including primers and ritual manuals, which was propelled by the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century full-scale appropriation of print culture, was still underway and led by figures such as Maḥmūd Zuhdī and other Malay scholars.<sup>65</sup> In addition, providing preachers with standardized ready-to-use sermons was, arguably, a strong claim to scholarly authority. On a practical level, this meant that not only his descriptions of the rules, conventions, elements, and conditions of liturgical *khuṭbas* were to be put into practice by the users of his

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64 Riḍā, *Fatāwā al-imām*, 2: 780–781. Other aspects of these two *istiftā's* are discussed in Jajat Burhanudin, "Aspiring for Islamic Reform: Southeast Asian Requests for *Fatwās* in *al-Manār*," *Islamic Law and Society* 12 (2005): 24–25.

65 On the expansion of Islamic schooling and religious book printing on the Malay peninsula, see Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, 119–37; V. Matheson and M.B. Hooker, "Jawi Literature in Patani: The Maintenance of a Tradition," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 61 (1988): 1–86; Abdullah Alwi Haji Hassan, "The Development of Islamic Education in Kelantan," in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, ed. Khoo Kay Kim (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), 190–227.

manuals, but also that his own words were—in the form of his sermons—to literally resonate among the believers.

## 7 Maḥmūd Zuhdī's *khuṭba* Manuals Between Theory and Practice

Maḥmūd Zuhdī's *khuṭba* manuals not only function as codes of practice through their delineation of the conventions of sermons. Rather, if we take a closer look at the *khuṭab* themselves, it becomes evident that they are also replete with practical implications and, at times, even detailed instructions. In contrast to the much more expansive collections of classical orators, such as Ibn Nubāta, or of Maḥmūd Zuhdī's Southeast Asian forerunner al-Nawawī al-Bantanī, his small selection of sermons consists exclusively of *khuṭbas* designed and selected for practical use. Their potential for direct reuse by other preachers is frequently emphasized. This is not only reflected in the headings introducing the following sermons as appropriate "for every Friday." Indeed, the most striking and, arguably, highly innovative feature of this practical orientation is the simultaneous structuring of the sermons in *Thimār al-khuṭab* in extended (or full) and shortened versions. Thus, on the book's title page, the author gives instructions "for those who want to shorten all of the *khuṭbas* contained herein." This option of using either the longer and more detailed or the shorter version of the same sermon is provided through a specific lithographic device: Passages of a given sermon which may be skipped are indicated by a bracketed letter *bā'* at the beginning. What follows can be skipped over until a bracketed *mīm* highlights the return to the necessary core of the *khuṭba*.<sup>66</sup>

Especially Maḥmūd Zuhdī's Eid sermons are rich in practical instructions to the believers, thereby strongly bringing out the pedagogical orientation of his *khuṭbas*. Whereas the famous Ibn Nubāta, for instance, refers only briefly and generically to the giving of *zakāt al-ḥiṭr* in his *khuṭba* for *ʿīd al-ḥiṭr*, the Malay scholar's sermons include detailed instructions on why, how, and when to perform this obligatory act of almsgiving.<sup>67</sup> Subsequently, the rules and merits of the six days of supererogatory fasting in the following month of Shawwal are discussed.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, his *ʿīd al-aḍḥā* sermon in *Thimār al-khuṭab* reviews the elements of the pil-

<sup>66</sup> Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn Nubāta, *Diwān khuṭab*, 317–323; al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-khuṭab*, 51–53, 70–73.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 53, 75.

grimage ritual and provides detailed instructions on the ritual sacrifice (*qurbān*).<sup>69</sup> More importantly, given Maḥmūd Zuhdī's purported return from Mecca due to the looming Saudi/Wahhabi threat as well as his strong opposition to the *kaum muda* challenge, he also presents the visitation of the Prophet's tomb and of the graves of his family members and his companions in Medina as an inextricable part of the pilgrimage.<sup>70</sup> Not only was the debate about the legitimacy of visits to tombs among the key issues debated between the *kaum muda* and the *kaum tua* in South-east Asia and their representatives in Mecca and Cairo when Maḥmūd Zuhdī wrote his work,<sup>71</sup> but the far-ranging destruction of tombs and mausoleums during the first Saudi/Wahhabi occupation of the Hejaz was also deeply engrained in the collective memory of Southeast Asian Muslims.<sup>72</sup> It is against this background that the author's seemingly casual remark about the tradition of ritual visitation, embedded between strings of *takbīrs*, is to be understood.

Of practical importance were also Maḥmūd Zuhdī's clear descriptions of the rules and conventions of individual and congregational prayers and liturgical *khuṭbas*. It has already been noted, for example, that the second sermon for the *ṣalāt al-istisqā'* is interrupted to indicate the points at which the *khaṭīb* should face either the *qibla* or the audience and at which to turn his cloak inside out.<sup>73</sup> This is naturally aimed at the preacher reusing his *khuṭba*, just as is his admonition that the *khaṭīb* may not turn right or left during preaching, something already discouraged as misplaced theatrical conduct by his forerunner Ibn al-'Aṭṭār.<sup>74</sup> Contrastingly, the instructions for the appropriate formulas of intent for different situations, something to be estimated against the backdrop of the reformist critique of the verbalized *niyya*, were directed at both religious leaders and common believers. The same goes for the inclusion of the *talqīn* texts. While there is a multiplicity of quasi-canonical texts for the purpose, the availability of a written (or printed) version is of utmost importance for the believers, as they are commonly read rather than recited from memory to guard against any mistakes.<sup>75</sup> With his inclusion of—notably gender-specific—*talqīn* texts in his manuals, Maḥmūd Zuhdī thus provided his readers with an essential tool to guarantee the safe passage of their dead into the next world, in accordance with their traditions.

69 Ibid., 88–93.

70 Ibid., 78.

71 HAMKA, *Ayahku*, 81.

72 Ondřej Beránek and Pavel Ťupek, *The Temptation of the Graves in Salafī Islam: Iconoclasm, Destruction and Idolatry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 98–114.

73 Al-Faṭānī, *Thimār al-Khuṭab*, 136–37.

74 Al-Faṭānī, *al-Farīda al-saniyya*, 6; Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, *Adab al-khaṭīb*, 115.

75 Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*, 255.

## 8 Conclusion

Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī was apparently the first Malay scholar to write extensively on the conventions of the *khutba* in Malay and to include sermons in that language in his respective works. His *khutbas* are therefore early testimonies to two significant developments in the region: 1) the emergence of a specialized literature on the *khutba*, which indicates an increased importance attached to this central element of communal ritual; and 2) the gradual shift from Arabic to Malay/Indonesian and other vernaculars as the preferred medium of the liturgical *khutba*. It is especially through a closer look at the specific content of his model sermons as well as at the additional materials of his manuals, many of them related to traditional mortuary/commemorative practices, that it becomes obvious that the transmission and expansion of the established, albeit—as seen in the important changes in the field of language use—in no way stagnant *madhhab* tradition, was not the only driving force behind his efforts. Indeed, the content and shape of his *khutba* manuals was just as much influenced by the intensifying intra-Muslim contestation between the defenders and opponents of the *madhhab* as a frame of reference and of the ritual tradition—simultaneously local and global in nature—associated with it.

Generally, Maḥmūd Zuhdī's manuals exhibit a strong practical orientation, which is most strongly reflected in mechanisms designed to provide future preachers relying on his *khutbas* with the option to choose between extended and shortened versions of his sermons as well as between Arabic and Malay ones. This tendency is also perceptible in his clear instructions for various religious obligations and ritual practices, and—more strikingly—in the content of some of his sermons. In this regard, the promotion of the vernacular as the preferred language for liturgical sermons broadened their function to a significant degree. It was only due to this change that the *khutba*'s aspect of exhortation and of instructing the believers on religious and social affairs could acquire practical relevance.

The reception of Maḥmūd Zuhdī's manuals is unfortunately hard to gauge. Anecdotal evidence, however, indicates that the practice of using model sermons was widespread on the Malay peninsula.<sup>76</sup> The fact that *Thimār al-khuṭab* witnessed a local re-edition in Penang testifies to a lasting demand for the work, just as its author's growing fame is reflected in his invitation to Kelantan by the state's prime minister to partake in local debates about the verbalized *niyya* in the

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<sup>76</sup> Personal communication with Nik Abdul Aziz Bin Haji Nik Hassan and Wan Jumanatun Naliah binti Wan Mohd Shaghir, Kuala Lumpur, February 19 and 21, 2023.

1920s.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, in his capacity as teacher and advisor to Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Sulaymān Shāh of Selangor, Maḥmūd Zuhdī also wielded outstanding influence on a Malay ruler and his religious and educational policies. Under his tutelage, the sultan became a scholar and, most notably, a *khaṭīb* in his own right, with three works to his credit. All three, two of which were designed as textbooks for new state Islamic schools, were written under the supervision of Maḥmūd Zuhdī.<sup>78</sup> What is more, the sultan regularly read the Friday and Eid sermons in the congregational mosque of Kuala Langat in Selangor.<sup>79</sup> It is thus not unlikely that even the sultan was among those putting Maḥmūd Zuhdī al-Faṭānī’s *khuṭba* manuals, and perhaps even his model sermons themselves, to practical use.

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78 Abdullah, *Ulama-ulama di Serambi*, 6–12.

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