

# Abstract

The village of Cikoang, situated on the south coast of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, is home to a community of Sayyid whose members trace their genealogical descent back to the Prophet Muhammad through their home in the Hadhramaut in southernmost Arabia. This is a study of how their identity is maintained both through kinship and marriage and through systems of belief and religious practices. The distinctiveness of the Sayyid of Cikoang is emphasised not only in their home village but also in places to which they have migrated, such as Kelurahan Penjaringan in Jakarta. This study explores the continuing strength of such an identity in contemporary Indonesia.

Kinship and marriage systems sustain the conviction of a bloodline that differentiates the Sayyid from other residents of Cikoang. Although marriages do occur between Sayyid and non-Sayyid, these are most usually between a Sayyid male and non-Sayyid female on the principle that children will inherit the descent status of their father. Sayyid women are compelled to marry only within the Sayyid community or to remain unmarried. A complex system of titles and status categories marks out different marriage arrangements entered into in the region.

Cikoang beliefs and religious practices, as enunciated by the Sayyid, persist despite the criticism of modernist Muslim groups in Indonesia, which are discussed in this study. Cikoang village members trace these practices to the words and actions of their founder, Sayyid Jalaluddin al-'Aidid, although they tend to justify them by reference to the Islamic scriptures of the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The Sayyid of Cikoang affirm the absolute oneness of God and strive to reach unity with Him within the gnosis of *ma'rifatullah*. The oneness of humanity and Allah, best exemplified in the persons of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, is enacted in Cikoang by the Sayyid through the celebration of the occasion of Maudu' or Maulid Nabi (Ar. the birth of the Prophet) and through

Pattumateang (Mak. the purification of deceased souls). These two rituals form the critical practices of the faith of the Sayyid. As well, the veneration of the Prophet and of later holy persons informs the theosophical doctrine of Bahr ul-Nur (Ar. The Sea of Light), the mystical order which they espouse. This is an order so far seldom treated in the study of Indonesian Sufism.

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