

The *Hidayat Al-Habib Fi Al-Tarhib Wa Al- Tarhib*: A Pioneer Work Of Hadith In Malay Archipelago By Al-Raniri

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Abstract

This article presents an investigation on a part played by al-Raniri in disseminating Hadith teaching in Malay Region. Special attention is given to his techniques of writing Hadith in order to facilitate a better understanding of the Hadith to Malay readers and also his connections with his teachers and the chains of his teachers with leading Islamic scholars in the Middle East. In the interest of validity and reliability, the study provides multiple sources of evidence including in-depth interviews with expert in the field of seventeenth century education and biographers of the great scholar. Also, from previous documentations and content analysis. The study is qualitative and the approach is hermeneutic. This article upon the earliest Hadith writing in the Malay world would assist in understanding, the importance of Hadith in Malay-Islamic history and its recognition by the devout and how it came to be regarded as part of Islamic Scripture.

Keywords: *Hadith sciences, Malay Archipelago, al-Raniri, compilation, method, text*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji peranan al-Raniri dalam menyebarkan ajaran Hadis di Nusantara. Tumpuan kajian ini diberikan terhadap teknik menulis hadis oleh al-Raniri bagi memudahkan pemahaman kepada pembaca Melayu, dan juga hubungan beliau dengan guru dan rantaian guru-gurunya dengan ulama terkemuka di Timur Tengah. Untuk kesahihan dan kebolehpercayaan, kajian ini menyediakan pelbagai sumber rujukan termasuk mewawancara mendalam dengan tokoh pakar dalam bidang pendidikan abad ke tujuh belas dan pakar biografi para ulama. Juga, menggunakan kaedah analisis dokumen dan analisis kandungan. Kajian ini adalah bersifat kualitatif dan pendekatannya adalah hermeneutik. Hasil dapatan mengenai tulisan Hadis terawal di Nusantara akan membantu memahami akan kepentingan Hadis dalam sejarah Melayu-Islam dan pengiktirafannya oleh masyarakat dan bagaimana ia dianggap sebagai sebahagian daripada Kitab Islam.

Katakunci: *Ilmu Hadis, Nusantara, al-Raniri, pengumpulan, metode, teks*

1. Introduction

Since there is no agreement on the exact date of when Islam was introduced into the Malay region, it is, therefore, almost impossible to ascertain precisely when the indigenous population of the region first became acquainted with written Hadith. Nevertheless, Martin Van Bruinessen believed that some forms of written Hadith were taught to the Malay region simultaneously with the coming of Islam (Van Bruinessen 1999:162). This is mainly because there are two main sources for an understanding of Islam; the Holy Quran and the Hadith. According to Saghir (1990) the prophetic Hadith which was appointed as one of the main sources of Islam is well-established and recognized by almost the entire Muslim community in the world. This recognition covers both formal and informal levels; it was a source of guidance for the rulers as well as for judges and scholars who were dealing with matters of law regarding all aspects of life. There are number of verses of the Quran describe the roles of the Prophet such as: 'He is the authority in the way the Holy Quran has to be recited'; 'he has the final word in the interpretation of the Quran'; 'he is the only source at which the wisdom based on divine guidance can be learned and he is entrusted with the practical training of the people to bring his teachings into practice' (Al-Quran 3:164, 62:2, 2:129) These roles however can never be carried out unless his teachings, both oral and practical are held to be authoritative for his followers who are placed under his training to obey and follow him (Azami n.d:9). For this reason, the Quran clearly expressed specific terms which give Muslims a mandatory order to obey and follow him. Since the Qur'an is

the word of Allah (S.W.T), it must be strictly followed. Similarly in the same way the teachings in the Prophet's Hādith must be observed by all who admit to being Muslims (Y.Dutton 1993: 4), as the Quran says: "And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it)" (Al Quran 59:7) Thus, throughout the Muslim world, Hadith are held to be second in authority and importance to the Qur'an. For Muslims, Hadith are valued as authority sources of legal knowledge and, owing to the sinless nature of the Prophet's conduct, as a model for Muslim piety and social life (Voll 1980: 1)

Researchers such as Mohd Nor (1983), Wan Sabri (2003), and M. Som(2003), Uthman al-Muhammady(2003), and Hasan (2002) have discovered Islamic intellectuals activities from the inception of Islam to the present days through scattered works known as *kita Jawi*. Yet, their studies emphasized only on the contributions of Malay scholars to the development of Islamic studies in the field of *Fiqh*, *Tasawwuf* and jurisprudence only.

I believe that we have to add other aspects of Islamic intellectual activity that are missing in their work, namely Hadith Sciences. It is well known that a hadith science is very significant in the Islamic studies.

Previous studies conclude that al-Raniri and al-Sinkili are the pioneers in compiling of the hadith among Malays. al-Raniri's and al-Sinkili's methodology in writing hadith text have stimulate hadith writing and detail analysis on *hadith* sciences in Malay Region. Their book that is *Hidayat al-habib fi al-tarhib wa al-tarhib* and *Syarh latif^cala arba^cin hadithan li al-Imam an-Nawawi* were written down in the course of Malay community in 17th century to understand *hadith*.

As far as I am aware, no comprehensive work, e.g. historically, has been done on Hadith Sciences written by the intellectual Malays. Nevertheless, little attempt has been made to provide a critical analysis of the development of hadith writing in the Malay region between sixteenth towards twentieth centuries. Regarding with this phenomenon, thus, it is crucial for this study to evaluate relevance research regarding Hadith discipline in Malay Region.

2. Brief background of Al-Raniri

Al-Raniri full name is Nur al-Din Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hasanji al-Hamid (or al-Humayd) al-Shafi'iy al-Ash'ari al-Aydarusi. He was born in Ranir (modern Randir) an old harbor on the Gujarat coast (1966). In the first half of the sixteenth century, Ranir was an important and busy harbour that attracted Arabs, Persian, Turks and Malays to trade or settle there. His father is a Hadrami immigrant with a long tradition of migrating to South and South East Asia and his mother is Malay.

Al-Raniri acquired his early education in Ranir, and later continued his study with the prominent scholars in the Hadramawt region. Among al-Raniri's well-known teacher was Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allah Ba Shayban al-Tarimi al-Hadrami (d.1066/1656), who initiated him into the *Rifa'iyyah* order, an old Arab *tariqah*. Ba Shayban appointed al-Raniri as his *khalifah* of the *tariqah* and he was therefore responsible for spreading it in the Malay region. *Rifa'iyyah* was not the only one order al-Raniri affiliated with. He had chains of initiation with the Aydarusiyyah and Qadiriyyah orders. Ba Shayban had studied in Arabia, then settled in India where he was initiated into the *Rifa'iyyah* order by Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah al-Aydarus at Surat. Among the important scholars in Tarim were 'Abd Allah ibn Shaykh al-Aydarus, a disciple of Ahmad al-Qushahi who also al-Sinkili's a teacher, and 'Abd al-Aziz al-Zamzami his son, Zayn al-'Abidin; Qadi 'Abd al-Rahman bin Shihab al-Din al-Saqqaf (945-1014/1538-1605), and Abu Bakr ibn Shihab (d. 1061/1651).

Al-Raniri who was prolific writer, involved in spreading hadith knowledge and compiling hadith texts into Malay language. According to Azra, al-Raniri's work (the *Sirat al-Mustakim* (the true path), a treatise on the pillars of Islam, which became a textbook for religious schools and it has been lithographed several times in Singapore) is the pioneer in the field of Islamic intellectual thought in the Malay region. According to various sources he wrote no fewer than 29 works and mainly deal with *tasawwuf*, *kalam*, *fiqh*, *hadith*, history and comparative religion. Most of al-Raniri works use standard books and leading authorities. He was certainly an enthusiastic reader. On *kalam* and *tasawwuf*; he quotes from al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, al-Qunyawi, al-Qashani, al-Firuzabadi, Abd al-Rahman al-Jami and other leading scholars. As for his *fiqh*, he based himself on the standard Shafii books, including *Hidayat al-muhtaj sharh al-Mukhtasar* of Ibn Hajar, *Minhaj al-talibin* of al-Nawawi, and *Fath al-Wahhab bi sharh Minhaj al-Tullab* of Zakariya al-Ansari.

Considering al-Raniri's work and their sources, it is clear that he was a zealous man as *Syaikh al-*

Islam and he was a primarily *sufi*, theologian and a *faqih*. As far as of hadith sciences work is concern, the spectacular work of al-Raniri's works is *Hidayat al-habib fi al-tarhib wa al- tarhib* which I will discuss in this article.

Al-Raniri claims that Islam in Malay region had been corrupted by misunderstanding of the Sufi doctrine. Therefore, he has been spending much of his energy in refuting the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*. In order to refute the interpretation of wujudiyah, he had written a short treatise entitled *Shifa' al-qulub*. Nevertheless, all his works on the subject are mainly devoted to refuting Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani. However, this study is not going to describe in detail of this doctrine and the controversies between Hamzah al-Fansuri and al-Raniri.

Now I will turn our focus to the real study which is analysing al-Raniri's methodology in writing hadith text which has stimulating hadith writing and detail analysis on *hadith* sciences in Malay Region. Methodology of hadith text writing means representing how scholars of hadith structure their work and how they disseminate hadith to Malay community. Accordingly, certain particular aspect of the methodology of Malay's *hadith* text writing will be illustrated. This includes examination on al-Raniri's method in writing chapters' heading, the contents and features of the books and the concept of '*muqaddimah*' (introduction) in those texts as an interpretation of the structure of their works.

3. Analysis of Hadith Texts: Significant Findings

According to Voll (1980), one of the major linkage points in the developments of hadith studies in Malay region is the role of scholarly community in Mecca and Medina. The popular and influential teachers in these two cities formed a cosmopolitan core for the developments of hadith studies. Voll points out that 17th century was a time of important developments in hadith studies and in the evolution of an activist style of Sufism which is called 'Neo-Sufism' (1980). According to him, the development of hadith sciences in the century before nineteenth century is;

'... there was a tendency within the various regions of the Islamic world to develop distinctive scholarly emphases in the different disciplines, including hadith studies. The core of the hadith literature, especially the six great collections, provided a common starting point, but regions developed their own later medieval 'standard authorities'. This can be seen by examining *ijazahs* the certificates of scholarly authorization, for scholars from the various regions. Regionally distinctive lines of transmission of the basic hadith literature are common'.

The existence of writing activities especially in the field of religious literature in Malay region has been identified since the 12th century, although it in small amounts. These scholarly activities were fully support by the government, whether in Perlak in the early stages, and so were the days of Mallaca, Aceh, Riau and other state in the Malay region. These activities reached their peak of glory in the 17th century when scholars were so keen to produce works in various fields especially in the field of Islam. According to Saghir (interviewed Dec 2007), the developments of Hadith commentary extended from Middle East on to other parts of the Islamic world. In this, Saghir (interviewed Dec 2007), who describes the introduction and the developments of Hadith commentary outside Middle East to the Malay world as the most important event in the history of Hadith written in the region, asserts that written Hadith has played the most important role in transforming Prophetic Hadith to the Malay Muslim community. He also states that the nature of travelling of Hadith scholars from centres of the Muslim world to peripheral regions had carried Islamic beliefs and ideas across language frontiers, and thus accelerated the spread of the Hadith. As a result, a number of commentaries were written. Saghir concludes that the commentary on the development of the Hadith had been moved from the Middle East to the Malay region, though it less certain where it came from. He suggests that it probably came from or via India (due to the Islamization of the Malay region) and from there it reached North Sumatra, and was then disseminated to all over the Malay region. As far as the evidence permits, the earliest documentation of Hadith works by Malay scholars in the Malay world was produced by an Acheh scholar al-Raniri, entitled *Hidayat al-Habib fi al-Tarhib wa al- Tarhib*".

The Content and Method of *Hidayat al-Habib fi al-Tarhib wa al- Tarhib*

In the mid seventeen century, in realising the need of this kind of text (and at the same time highly aware that

Arabic language was hard for the Malays in general to understand), al-Raniri purposely prepared his Malay translation which he entitled *Hidayat al-Habib fi al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib*. By writing this text, Al-Raniri's not only introducing the importance of hadith in the life of Muslims, but also compiled numerous particular hadith of the Prophet s.a.w which he translated into Malay language. Each chapter were entitled by a specific heading which clearly associated with its contents.

Accordingly, the Muslim population in Malay region would be able to understand them correctly. In this concise compendium, al-Raniri interpolates hadith with citations of the Quranic verses in order to support the arguments attached to the hadith. Because of the application of the *shari'ah* could not be intensified without a deeper knowledge of the hadith of the Prophet s.a.w therefore, he compiled in his *Hidayat al-habib* some hadith of the Prophet s.a.w. This work contains 831 hadith which include in 46 chapters in Arabic and translate into Malay. It was written in Pahang in 1635 and brought to Aceh (Yahya: 1994). One of the manuscript were belongs to PNM (National Library of Malaysia), Malaysia and class number MS 1042 (Belongs to Malay Manuscript Centre of National Library of Malaysia or *Pusat Manuskrip Melayu Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia.*, (PNM), class number MS 1042).

More importantly, a hundred years later, this work was printed by Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad Zain al-Fatani commonly known as *al-Fawa'idul bahiyah fi al-Ahadithin Nabawiyyah* and appeared on the margin of the great book *Hassiyah Jam 'ul Fawa'id* of Shaykh Dawud al-Fatani. Although, it is not an exhaustive work in the subject but it provided a set of guidelines on methods of reconciliation and preference of hadith in Malay region. The fact, that the *Hidayat al-Habib* was published by later scholars reflects the importance of the work as well as the intellectual stature of al-Raniri. However, it should be stressed here that the *Hidayat al-habib* is no longer used in the archipelago today, though it was widely circulate in the past. It is believe because of the young generation does not fully understand the writing script and the classical language as well.

Chapter's arrangement

As mentioned above, the work of compilation of hadith among the Malay initiated during the 17th century. Starting at about the middle of the 17th, hadith belonging to particular themes, which are some of them, were classified under separate titles and chapters for instance al-Raniri's work.

As far as al-Raniri's work in hadith is concerned, discussion contents only limited to several topics in Islamic teaching. Al-Raniri's begins with the discussion on the role of intention, Islam, *iman* and *ihsan* topics, and completed with funeral respectively.

Thus, through this period it is safe to assume that this book, which was in circulation in the seventeenth century, was not arranged chapter wise.

The abbreviation of *isnad*

To the extent that methodology is concerned, al-Raniri translated the *matn* (text) of the hadith only, and ignored the *sanad* (chain of transmitters). His focus was on explanation and elaboration of hadith. It is argued that his interest was the content of the hadith, not the chain of transmitter of the hadith.

Throughout of al-Raniri's work witness that he stripped hadith from *isnad* for the sake of brevity. Clearly he omitted the *isnad* because it easier to reader to learn by heart or memorize it.

In this period al-Raniri did not abandon the pursuits of such men as al-Bukhary or Muslim or Ibn Hanbal; rather they adhered to this path with greater care and attention to the new sophisticated criteria of authorship. According to al-Raniri methodology's work on his book, he compiled from *al-Sihah al-Sittah* (based on *al-Sihah al-Sittah*), summarizing and rearranging the hadith. However, al-Raniri's styles sometimes also put down the hadith from other narrators such as al-Tirmidhi.

Malay translation and *Jawi* script

Al-Raniri wrote the *hadith work* using handwriting in *Jawi* script. His style of writing was applied in *Jawi* script without punctuation mark, comma, semi-colon or paragraph. He for example quoting the hadith or Qur'anic verses without any marked or signs and did not mention the number and the name of the verses. Thus, it compilations quite difficult to reader or user distinguish between hadith *qudsi* and qur'anic verses.

One of the techniques has been used by him is writing down and combining the *matn* ahadith with translation and discussion. Therefore, as for readers, this compilation is complicated for them to identify the *matn* and to memorize the hadith as well. Also, in the lines of hadiths science teaching al-Raniri's methodology is difficult for the common people to grasp.

He named his book as *Hidayat al-habib fi al-tarhib wa al- tarhib*; to attract the readers. Yet, its contents are in Malay language. Al-Raniri begins his work with: "*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, and Most Merciful*" and at the end, he asks the readers to correct any mistakes and beg forgiveness from Allah.

Hence, as a conclusion from this method, the present study considers that the *Hidayat al-habib fi al-tarhib wa al- tarhib* by al-Raniri was brilliant techniques because he systemized them according into the chapters.

Tasawwuf terminology

Al-Raniri occasionally presents some *tasawwuf* terms and gives the meaning of the difficult words. For example *Nur Muhammad* (the Light of Muhammad) *Jawhar* and *zarrah*, *Nur*, *Aqal*, *Qalam*, *Malak Kurubiyi* and others.

4. Summary

The development in the science of hadith in this period continues to grow. Beginning of 18th century onwards, for once again, the study of science of hadith sciences received the attention of later scholars. Facing with new challenges of secularism, orientalism (the trend of questioning and in fact denying the authenticity of hadith was already discussed during the second half of the nineteenth century in the works of prominent Western scholars such as Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, A.J. Wensick, William Muir, Alois Sprenger, Alfred von Kremer and Theodore Noeldeke), and anti-hadith group, Malay hadith scholars involve deeply in serious hard work in this period. Hence, it is also crucial here to the present study to reveal how the methodology and system of hadith sciences compilation were transmitted into Malaysia by the early Malay scholars (pre-19th century).

Thus, based on the discussion above, the present study believes that al-Raniri had set-up an example for later Malay scholars to undertake works on small collections of the hadith. In other words, his works on hadith has great influence on similar other scholarly works in Malaysia in the nineteenth century.

To sum up the compilations of hadith scholarly in this period, the documentation were not arranged subject wise, and some of them have arranged the hadith under subject headings. Also, the compilations received sufism influences. The book contains hadith, explanations and commentaries of the Qur'an. This was a regular book written on a particular subject which appeared in this century.

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