

Creativity in Malay Commentary Works: A Special Reference to Shaykh Dawud al-Fatani's *Ward al-Zawāhir*

Kreativiti dalam komentari melayu: satu kajian terhadap karya Shaykh Dawud al Fatani, Ward al zawahir

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Abstract

For generations, Dawud al-Fatani's works have been considered among the reputable and reliable references in the literature of the Malay Archipelago. Among his authoritative works are: *Munyat al-Musallī*, *Durr al-Thamīn*, *Furū' al-Masā'il*, *Minhaj al-'Ābidīn* and *al-Manhal al-Safī* which have been praised for their lucid exposition of the issues addressed by al-Fatani in his writing. The hallmark of his scholarship is undoubtedly his creativity and innovation, representing a key characteristic of the Islamic literature of the era and showcasing his gift for elucidating the primary texts of al-Qur'an and al-Hadith. This paper attempts to illustrate al-Fatani's unique approach employed in his magnificent work entitled *Ward al-Zawahir*. The research reveals that among the techniques used by al-Fatani to enhance his writing, and which contributed so much to the Malay classical literature of the times are: Bilingualism, *faedah* (benefit point) and *tanbih* (admonishing point) etc. This paper is an exposure to the works of al-Fatani that will certainly benefit new generations of authors, enabling them to appreciate and draw inspiration from the literary heritage left to them by their predecessors.

Keywords: Malay classical works, Malay regions, scholarship, commentary works.

Abstrak

Selama bertahun-tahun karya Shaykh Dawud al-Faṭānī telah dianggap sebagai rujukan yang paling penting dan amat disegani dalam kesusasteraan Melayu Jawi di alam Melayu. Antara karya-karyanya yang paling berwibawa ialah: *Munyat al-Muṣallī*, *Durr al-Thamīn*, *Furū al-Masā'il*, *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn* dan *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī* yang telah diangkat tinggi oleh para ilmuwan kerana perbincangan dan huraian yang tertera dalamnya amat jelas dan mendalam. Keistimewaan yang terdapat dalam karya-karya be-

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liau dari segi keilmuwan dan kreativiti menepati ciri-ciri kesusasteraan Islam yang utama dan mempamerkan kedalaman ilmu beliau dalam menjelaskan perbendaharaan ilmu yang bersumberkan al-Qur'an dan al-Hadith. Makalah ini cuba untuk membawa pembaca meneliti beberapa pendekatan unik al-Fatāni yang digunakan dalam karya agungnya yang berjudul *Ward al-Zawāhir*. Ia juga mendedahkan bahawa antara teknik yang digunakan oleh al-Fatāni dalam penulisannya dan sekaligus menyumbang kepada kesusasteraan klasik Melayu pada masa itu ialah: *dwibahasa*, *faedah* dan *tanbih* dan lain-lain. Pendedahan pendekatan yang digunakan dalam karya-karya al-Fatāni pasti akan memberikan manfaat kepada generasi baru dengan harapan agar membolehkan mereka menghargai warisan kusasteraan Jawi yang ditinggalkan oleh generasi yang terdahulu.

Kata Kunci: Karya klasik, daerah kepulauan Melayu, kesarjanaan, karya karya syarahan.

Introduction

The study on commentary works in Malay classical works known as *kitab kuning* or *kitab Jawi* is a perpetual effort to reintroduce the works of the earlier Malay scholars which at one time reached its peak of popularity, used by many and helped a great deal in shaping the Malay scholarship.¹ Definitely, there must have been certain creative methodologies that were used by Malay scholars in producing their works. Thus, this paper attempts to spell out some aspects of the creativity employed by Shaykh Dawud al-Fatani (shall hereinafter be referred to as SDF) in producing his commentary works so that the reader may see the uniqueness of a prolific author like SDF.

The Nature of Malay Commentary Works

What is a commentary work at the first place? Generally, a commentary connotes explanation or elaboration. The key elements of a commentary are explanation, elaboration and expansion of something. A commentary does not exist if there is nothing to be commented on or in other words a commentary plays its vital role after knowledge is imparted. A commentary could be either oral or written. We will not be dealing with oral commentary at this juncture. As for written commentary it is of

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¹Hassan Madmarn, *The Pondok and Madrasah in Patani* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2002).

four parts: The original author (*mu'allif*), the text (*matan*), the commentator (*shāriḥ* pl. *shurrāḥ*), the commentary (*sharḥ*) and the reader.

The spirit of commentary is best seen in reference to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in conveying the teaching of Islam whereby his utterances became the texts which later on were narrated and recorded in *hadith* books. The same applied to his actions and his tacit approvals which were all narrated and recorded in *hadith* books. The only thing that distinguished his sayings or his words (*aqwāl*) from his actions (*af'āl*) and tacit approvals (*takrīr*) is that his sayings involved two senses i.e. visual (witnessing the scene occurred) and audio by which they listened to the voice of the Prophet. But, as for the actions and approval, the companions only witnessed what had happened to the Prophet, and then they narrated based on that and no auditory communication was involved. This signifies that there are a few parties that we need to consider when dealing with conveying message *vis-a-vis* the written one, i.e. the messenger or the writer, the message or the text, the recipient or the reader of the message and the community affected by the message. The need for the verification of the source of knowledge became greater after the final revelation. This was so because no one would know the truth of the status of the messenger as well as the message that the latter wanted to convey.

With reference to the Malay commentary works, generally it could be divided into two; first, works which were produced in Arabic, and second, works that were written in other languages including Malay. We do not have the exact number of both types of works to date, but as far as the research is concerned at least 300 titles² carried the term "commentary (*sharḥ*)" either at the beginning of the title or in the middle,³ and 300 titles carrying the term "glosses" (*hāshiyah*) were published in Egypt in the 19th century onwards.⁴

Among the large number of *sharḥ* works in the history of Islamic literature which were predominantly written in Arabic as well as in Malay and have been reproduced till today, the Malay commentary is apparently an offshoot of both kinds. Any work which falls under the category of *sharḥ* follows the methodology of the original work on one hand, but

² Ayidah Ibrahim Nasir, *Al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah allati nushirat fi Misr fi al-Qarn al-Tasi' 'Ashr* (Qism al-Nashr bi al-Jami'ah al-Amarikiyah bi al-Qahirah: Al-Qahirah, 1990), 352-357.

³ Muhammad Ahmad al-Kharbutali, *Usaydah al-Shahadah Sharḥ Qasidah al-Burdah* (Qahirah in 1271H).

⁴ Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books*, 334-341.

on the other hand it follows the *sharḥ* works in general. In other words, we may see a lot of similarities between those works which were written in the original language with the works that have been translated into another language. For example, in the case of *Ward al-Zawāhir* that happens to be an adaptation of the commentary on *Jawharāt* which applied almost the same methodology in *Tuḥfat al-Murīd li Jawharāt* by Ibrāhīm al-Bājuri (d.1860).

With regard to the aspect of typology in Malay commentary works, it is important for a reader to know the appropriateness of the *kitāb* that he or she wants to study in order to avoid unnecessary problems with regard to the selection of works for a particular level of study. Malay scholars have arranged the *kitāb* in such a way that it would hinder the wrong selection of *kitāb* accordingly. In some occasions when highly knowledgeable people opted for a lesser degree of work then it could lead to futility, likewise when the high level *kitāb* is being referred to by people with low intellect they would be incapable of comprehending the meanings that lie in the *kitāb*. Worst than that they could misinterpret the meanings in the *kitāb*.

Basically, there are at least two types of Malay commentary works that have been produced; first: Direct and continual commentary and second: Indirect and open commentary. The first type means a commentary which is either composed by the same author or others in which the text is either to be explained in a simple, general or in detail, attached or detached to the original work. One of the major works produced following this type is *Durrat al-Farā'id bi sharḥ al-'aqā'id* by Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī (d.1068) in which he wrote a commentary on Imām 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's masterpiece *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyah*. The same goes with Shaykh Muhammad Zayn al-Āshī (d. circa 18th century) and his major work *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* in which he commented on the great work of Shaykh 'Abdullah bin Muhammad Yūsuf al-Sanūsi's (d. 1490) *Umm al-Barāhin*. Similar to this is Shaykh Muhammad Azhari al-Falimbani (d. circa at the end of 19th century) and his *Aṭīyyāt al-Raḥmān* and many others.

As for the second type, it means a commentator has the privilege to comment and to elaborate (*sharḥ*), to annotate (*ḥāshiyah*), to elucidate (*bayān wa taqrīb*), to emend (*tahdhīb*), to complete (*takmilah*), to abridge and summarize (*ikhtisār*), to correct (*taṣḥīḥ*), to revise and edit

(*tahrīr*), to add (*ziyādāt*), to extract (*takhrīj*) and to refute (*naqd*) the text but within the scope of the discussion therein.

There are many works that fall under the rubric of this commentary. For instance, the work of Shaykh Dāwūd entitled *Durr al-Thamin*, Shaykh Zayn al-Ābidīn al-Faṭānī's (d. circa early 19th century) *'Aqidat al-Najin*, Shaykh Wan 'Ali Kutan's (d. circa early 19th century) *Zahrat al-Murīd fī 'Aqā'id al-Tawhīd*, Shaykh Ahmad Fatani's (d.1908) *Farīdat al-Farā'id*, and so on.

Shaykh Dawud Al-Fatani and His Commentary Works

As far as the research is concerned, thus far there are no other scholars who supersede this learned scholar when it comes to Malay classical works. He is a renowned Malay scholar who received so much attention from intellectuals, researchers, historians, biographers and seekers of knowledge due to his great legacy in writing. His full name is Shaykh Wan Dawud bin Wan 'Abd Allāh bin Wan Idrīs bin Wan Abū Bakar bin Wan Ismā'īl.⁵ Nevertheless, in most of his writings he kept on referring to himself as Shaykh Dawud bin 'Abdullah bin Idris al-Jāwī al-Fatānī al-Malāyūwī.⁶ He was also known as al-Shaykh Dāwūd bin 'Abdullāh bin Senik Faṭānī and for the Malays he was referred to as Tok Shaykh Dawud Fatani or Shayh Dawud Patani.⁷ He was born in Kerisik, Patani in 1133/1719 from the noble family of Fakeh Ali.⁸ He was the eldest of five siblings but there is no account of his family life. It is believed that the Shaykh spent most of his time abroad such as in Aceh, Makkah, Madinah and Taif.⁹ He only came back to Patani for a few years

⁵ Wan Mohd Saghir Wan Abdullah, *Syeikh Daud bin 'Abdullah al-Fatani: Ulama dan Pengarang Terulung Asia Tenggara* (Shah Alam: Hizbi, 1998), 24, Also see 'Abdullah Haji Said, "Kajian (Tahqiq) Secara Perbandingan beberapa Manuskrip Lama Tulisan Shaykh Dawud (1769-1847)" (Master's thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1998).

⁶ For more details on Shaykh Dawud's background please refer some of the previous research on him. Those works are such as; al-Qari, *Pujangga* (1967), 131-138; *al-Fatani* (1983), p.183; Wan Mohd Saghir Abdullah (1977), "Dakwah Islamiah Ulama-Ulama Besar Fatani", *Pengasuh* (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, No. 421, 1977), p. 183, Ismail, *Tokoh Ulama* (2001), 17-65; Wan Mohd, *Ulama dan Pengarang* (1990); Wan Mohd, *Nadwah* (1991); Abdul Aziz, *Pengaruh* (1994); Fauzi, *Kedudukan Hadith* (1997); Mohd Zain, *al-Manhal* (2000); Azra, *Jaringan* (2004) . 327-325 on his biography, . 337-341 on his writings; *Sheikh Daud* (2005)

⁷ Matheson and Hooker, *Jawi Literature* 30 (1998).

⁸ Wan Mohd, 1990.

⁹ Mokhtar, 2005

to teach but had to leave after the war broke between Patani Dar al-Salam and Siam. He died at his residence in Tā'if on 22 Rajab 1263/1847H.¹⁰

With regard to his writing activity, it is notably extraordinary that he produced works nearly at the last stage of his life. His first work was *Kifāyat al-Muhtaj* which was completed on 27th Muharram 1224/14th March 1809 and many biographers deliberately considered this work as the turning point for the Shaykh to immerse himself in the realm of authorship (at the age of 90). Being a prominent teacher and a great writer it seems strange to start at that age. Notwithstanding this opinion, Tuan Guru Wan Mohd Saghir opined that Shaykh Dawud had started writing even much earlier—at the age of 59 precisely. This is evident by the manuscript entitled *Sharah Hikam Ibn Raslan al-Dimasyqi* which the Shaykh completed in 1192/1778.¹¹ However, even though he owned the fragments of the manuscript, unfortunately until his last breath he could not complete the work to its entirety.

Several studies on Shaykh Dawud's works revealed that the researchers are of different opinions with regard to the total number of his works. Wan Mohd for example had listed 58 works in his first exposition but then added three more after that,¹² while Virginia Matheson and Hooker proposed only 21 by which they found the works to be in printed form.¹³ Martin Van Bruinessan who focused on the available *kitab* Jawi during his research project managed to get 14 works of the Shaykh that were reprinted and still in high demand from the public.¹⁴ Besides that, Ismail Che Daud on one hand proposed 41¹⁵ works but on the other hand did not deny the possibility that the number could even reach 120 works

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Wan Mohd, *Pengarang Terulung*, 87.

¹² Wan Mohd, believes that Shaykh Dawud's works are achieved 99 altogether because he believed what his mother used to inform him that the total number of 99 is a kind of reflection of the 99 names of Allah.

See also Wan Mohd Saghir 'Abdullah, *Munyat al-Musalli Syeikh Daud al-Fatani: Pengetahuan*

Sembahyang Masyhur (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1991), 22-23.

¹³ For Shaykh Dawud detail list of works, See Matheson and Hooker, *Jawi literature*, 39-40.

¹⁴ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning Pesantren and Tarikat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung : Pustaka Mizan , 1995), 131-171.

¹⁵ See Ismail. *Tokoh Ulama*, 17-65.

if there is sufficient proof for that.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Nicholas Heer listed a total of 35 works of the Shaykh, yet he managed to mention some of which are not listed by the above biographers.¹⁷ Furthermore, in a quite recent write-up by Francis R. Bradley on a concise summary of the National Library of Malaysia's collection of Shaykh Dawud's writings, he had listed altogether 41 titles from which 33 bared completion dates while remaining did not disclose any dates.¹⁸ Hence, based on those writings plus what have been discovered by looking at the works without further analysis, the total number of works by Shaykh Dawud can be listed up to 65.

Shaykh Dawud as a Commentator

Dealing with commentary works or *sharḥ*¹⁹ which is a by-product of the *shāriḥ* (commentator) is probably like a novel which is composed by a novelist and a poem which is written by a poet.²⁰ Thus, in written commentary, an author is not necessarily a commentator yet a commentator is subsumed as an author. It is quite unusual for an eminent scholar like Shaykh Dawud to be referred to as a commentator since for centuries he was rather known as a productive scholar, prolific author and creative writer. Without a doubt, he was as many people would regard him, yet based on what we have explained in the foregoing chapter that a commentator (*shāriḥ*) connotes an expositor, explainer or interpreter of a book or the like, and then probably nothing is seen awkward to highlight Shaykh Dawud with that title. As a matter of fact, to relinquish him from a total authorship is an attempt to put him at the rightful position so that justice for him is served. So, when we refer to him with

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 36. Professor Haron Din also believed that the Shaykh had written more than 100 works. Please refer *Minyat*.

¹⁷ Heer, *Concise Handlist*, 27-31.

¹⁸ Francis R. Bradley, "Sheikh Daud bin 'Abdullah al-Fatani's Writings contained in the national Library of Malaysia," *Jurnal Filologi Melayu* 15 (2007).

¹⁹ Dimitri Gutas, "Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical works," in Charles Burnett ed. *Glosses and commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts, The Syriac, Arabic and Medieval*

Latin Traditions (London: The Warburg Institute University of London 1993), 28-64

²⁰ C.L. Gilliot, "Sharḥ" in M.Th.Houtsma et al. eds. *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-1936*.

Vol.VII (Leiden: E.J Brill 1987), 317-320.

that title of commentator, this is to show that besides his audacity in authorship, he played a vital role in producing, rendering, commenting, explaining, translating works that were in need by the society at his time as he clarified in *Kashf al-Ghummah*:

[...] I was asked by some of whom dearest to me for the sake of Allah, having enthusiasm on Hereafter (*akhirah*) that at many times they wanted to have a translation on works that deal with the matters of eschatology in the graveyard and the chaos of the Day of Judgment.²¹

In view of his writings we would rather consider him of being more of a commentator rather than the author of his own texts. The basis of this argument simply lies on his works whereby, out of 65 or probably more titles which have been gathered and collected by researchers and scholars thus far, nearly all are believed to be written based on earlier works, so basically he elucidated, elaborated, explained, translated or commented on earlier texts. In sum, to highlight Shaykh Dawud as a commentator shall simultaneously expose his works, the significant aspects that were applied in them and the creativity undertaken by him in producing his works.

The Creativity in Shaykh Dawud's Commentary

There is no traceable record about the creativity used by Shaykh Dawud in his entire corpus because there is no research done thus far on that aspect. Nevertheless, from some relevant works that were analyzed throughout this research we came to the conclusion that Shaykh Dāwūd had few standard methods employed throughout his writings.

Of all the writings of Shaykh Dawud, only a few are deliberately written outrightly as *sharḥ* works as per the title given. Nevertheless, nearly all of those works can be categorized under the umbrella of *sharḥ*. This is because the works of the Shaykh were dedicated to his countrymen who did not have sufficient knowledge to go to the primary sources mainly Arabic. Having such a vast knowledge in various fields of knowledge, the Shaykh dealt with the diverse topics in 'Aqīdah, fiqh and tasawwuf.

²¹ Dawud al-Fatani. *Kashf al-Ghummah*. (Bangkok: Maktabah Muhammad nahdi wa awladahu (n.d)). 1.

Since Shaykh Dawud was among the pioneers in producing Malay-Jawi works at the end of the 18th century and early 19th century, many of his works perhaps were developed by his own method—without doubt he followed Arabic works as well—as can be seen in the next discussion. Usually right at the very beginning of his writing he provided praises and greetings to the Creator and His Messenger, and he would notify the reader that he composed the writing due to the request of the beloved people around him who wanted to have easy reading materials in Malay language, as he mentioned in *Kashf al-Ghummah*, *al-Bahjat al-Saniyyah* and others. In many of his works the languages that he used were both Arabic and Malay or “bilingual.” It is probably the common approach practiced by most Malay-Jawi authors to show the adherence of both languages in transmitting knowledge.

Other than that, the Shaykh was straightforward and transparent in his work. He did not hesitate to state boldly the nature of the works that he embarked on by referring them with the term *terjamah*. He mentioned this term in his works such as *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah* on page three, *Al-Durr al-Thamīn* at the bottom of page two, *Ward al-Zawāhir* at the top of page three etc. Moreover, the Shaykh also gave acknowledgment to the original sources. None of his works that were categorized as *terjamah* or *sharḥ* to the original Arabic texts left out the primary explanation of the sources from where those works were based on. For instance in *Kashf al-Ghummah* he cited outrightly the original sources of those works that he referred to such as Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī’s *Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr*, and to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī’s work for his abridged *Tadhkirat al-Qurṭubī*.

Another feature that is apparent to the works of the Shaykh was his humility. Humility was part of the distinctive characters of this great scholar; he never claimed himself as an expert on what he was going to say in his works, thus indicating that he was not boastful but he would rather regard himself as an illustrator of the works of other writers when dealing with their ideas and thoughts rather than claiming their ideas to be his own brainchild.

On *Ward al-Zawāhir*

As the aim of the paper is to focus on the “creativity used by Shaykh Dawud by looking into the Chapter of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* of *Ward al-Zawāhir*”, thus, it is pertinent to have a brief description of the *Ward al-Zawāhir* itself. *Ward al-Zawāhir* was completed in Makkah in 1245/1829. The attached work to it is *‘Aqd* or *‘Aqdāt* which was com-

pleted in 1245/1830. Many biographers regarded that this work stands on its own, separate from any other works written by Shaykh Dawud. Actually, this poetic writing on theology is a Malay translation of the text (*matn*) *Jawharāt* by Ibrahim al-Laḡani. It seems rather odd for the *Ward al-Zawāhir* to be completed earlier than the *ʿAqd al-Jawāhir* since the former is the commentary for the latter, yet the answer is possible if we considered that both works are the translation for the original Arabic version. Thus, either one is possible because the *Ward al-Zawāhir* is not truly bound to *ʿAqd al-Jawāhir* since the latter only requires translation unlike the former which is not only a translation but also blended with Shaykh Dawud's own thoughts.

A. On the Structural Analysis of the Chapter of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* of *Ward al-Zawāhir*

From the previous discussions, it is noted that Shaykh Dawud was a prolific author and dedicated writer who spent most of his lifetime to write and produce works in diverse fields. It is believed that he had his own approach and method of writing which he applied in all of his works. The analysis is based on what have been found in the *al-Ilāhiyyāt* chapter of *Ward al-Zawāhir*.

B. The Creativity Employed in the Chapter of *al-Ilāhiyyāt*

As we know, *Ward al-Zawāhir* is both poetic and prosaic. Among the methods applied by the Shaykh in this chapter are:

1. Bilingual

Being a scholar whose works and writings greatly demanded by laymen during his time and with his ability to foresee the needs of the masses for simple and easy language in religious texts probably geared him to prepare his texts in bilingual form, i.e. Malay and Arabic. In the introduction of *Ward* for instance, the Shaykh had written *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim* and other praises and prayers in Arabic which was then followed with words in Malay as he said:

Alhamdulillah alladhi takarrama 'ala 'ibadihi bini'amihi al-wafirah, all praises is due to Allah Lord who honored His servants with His abundant bounties [...].²²

It was quite common for the Shaykh to write in both Arabic and Malay especially at the beginning of his work because the recitation of prayers and supplications are of great traditions which shows that anything we do must be connected to Allah and His Messenger and so that we are not regarded as being forgetful but always in the mood of remembrance of Almighty Allah. The prayers and supplication here are in Arabic and the Shaykh had translated them into Malay.²³ The Shaykh used Arabic and Malay interchangeably whereby in his writings sometimes he started with Arabic and then followed by Malay while in some other works he started with Malay followed by Arabic. Unquestionably, Shaykh Dawud the master of both Arabic and Malay had used his language skills vigorously by producing a number of works for the sake of helping people in his time to understand the teachings of Islam.

2. Systematic Presentation

Shaykh Dawud was a very systematic writer because he stated clearly the method of work that he dealt with, for example in *Ward al-Zawāhir* he mentioned about which method he used in explaining the text of *'Aqdāt* as he said:

[...] (Know) whenever I say *qawluhu* it means the phrase of the treatise that is similar to the text [...].²⁴

What he meant here was that when he mentioned "*qawluhu*" in the text of *Ward al-Zawāhir* it refers to the very text of *'Aqdāt*. As a result, the Shaykh repeatedly mentioned *qawluhu* in every text of *'Aqdāt* but with some exceptions where he mentioned only one *qawluhu* for two different phrases of *'Aqdāt*.

²² See the Malay-Jawi version of *Ward Zawahir* prepared in this research on page 1, line 2 of PT (Printed), and page 8, line 2 of M1 (manuscript). Hereinafter all the quotations shall be referred as PT: Page and line, likewise MT: page and line.

²³ Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, *Towards al-Raniri's Technical Terms: An Observation on al-Raniri's Concept of Arabic-Malay Translation* (AFKAR, No. 4 Rabi' al-Awwal 1424, 2003), 145-168.

²⁴ PT: 2, MT: 8.

3. Transparency

Another method emphasized by the Shaykh in his writing is transparency whereby when he wrote his work he unveiled himself modestly and some of the instances could be found at the beginning of the *Ward al-Zawāhir* as he introduced himself humbly and stated his intention clearly:

[...] and then, so the lowly servant who's having burden and mischievous namely Dawud bin 'Abdullah Fatani has come upon a great idea that he wanted to write a short and precise commentary on the discussion of '*ilmu tawhid* [...].²⁵

He then continued further by explaining that what he was trying to do was to comment on a small treatise of his own namely the '*Iqdat* which happened to be a kind of translation of a few polemics from the *Jawharāt*:

[...] I am commenting whilst translating from several problems of the work of *Jawhar[āt] al-Tawhid* in Jawi [...].²⁶

The commentary that he embarked on was solely to explain the meanings of what were written earlier and his work of gathering some beautiful insights of the issues discussed were nonetheless for the benefit of those who are interested to dwell in the realm of knowing God especially amongst the beginners, as he said:

[...] A commentary which elaborates its words and opens up its meaning together with what I have collected from several amicable issues by which supposedly not keeping the book from it as to take benefit unto it the beginner who loves for the knowledge of faith [...].²⁷

4. Modesty

As a humble scholar, the Shaykh modestly clarified that he was not the expert in that field, but the task of spreading knowledge about God is guided by Him and is regarded as a good deed, then getting on it

²⁵ PT: 3, MT: 9

²⁶ PT: 4, MT: 10

²⁷ PT: 4, MT: 10

after all is in accordance with the spirit of *Ahl al-Sunnat wa al-Jama'ah*, as he said:

[...] And, if I were not an expert member to that but then I am holding on to Allah the Most Gracious so much so rendering guidance to us actually and in accordance with the methodology of *Ahl alSunnah wa alJama'ah* [...].²⁸

Similarly, he showed humility when it came to the stage where he named his work and the origin of which he referred to, as he said:

[...] and I named it *Ward* for commenting the words of '*Iqd al-Jawāhir* and I hope from Allah *Subḥanahu wa Ta'alā* that Muslims would benefit from it and He is the Most Powerful to allow the very real. And sufficient is God to me and He is the Best Disposer of affairs for me and there is no power and strength except from Allah the Most High [...].²⁹

From this point onwards, the Shaykh began his commentary by citing the selective words and phrases from the original work as he said:

[...] (here, the time) has come into the intention of asking for Allah's help as he (the original author) says *bismillahirrahmanirrahim*) already he started translation with it [...].³⁰

It is commonly practised in most of the *sharḥ* works that the elucidation on the praising phrase of *Bismillah* was done in such a way. The elaboration on *bismillah* which was backed up with the famous Hadith on the importance of *bismillah* could be found not only in his '*aqīdah* works but also in *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, *tafsīr* etc. The peculiar aspect of the tradition of commentary as practised by Muslim scholars obviously lies in this particular instance whereby readers could see clearly how the Muslim scholars began their work by applying this Hadith. The Shaykh said:

[...] because according to the Book of Allah and to practice the words of the Prophet (s.a.w) that every job which necessitates

²⁸ PT: 4, MT: 10

²⁹ PT: 5, MT: 11

³⁰ PT: 5, MT: 11

balin which means a thing that in accordance with *Shara'* had not been started by *bismillahirrahim* then it will turn *ajdham* and in another narration a thing which is not begun by *bismillahirrahmanirrahim* so then it becomes *aqta'* and in another narration is *abtar*, by which all of the mentioned terms signified poor blessings [...].³¹

5. Additional Notes and Emphasis

There are other methods which were applied in this work besides those which are mainly concerned with the introductory part of the text as above. There are several terms which were used to render different types of additional notes as used by the Shaykh. Those terms are *fā'idah*, *tanbīh*, *mas'alah* and *khāṭimah*. Phrases such as eight *fā'idah*, five *tanbīh*, one *mas'alah*, one *khāṭimah* are found throughout the whole chapter.

a. *Fā'idah*

We might come across this term frequently in Malay Jawi works. *Fā'idah* is an Arabic loan word in Malay language and it connotes benefit, advantage, profit etc. What could be implied here is that the *fā'idah* is a kind of a pause to stop a reader from continuing the main text for a while by looking into another angle that could enrich one's knowledge. First time the word *fā'idah* appeared in *Ward al-Zawahir* is on the saying of Imam Shanawāni on the genesis of *al-basmalah* as Shaykh Dawud wrote:

A benefit (*fā'idah*), Shaykh Shanawāni had said that the Prophet (s.a.w) asked Muslims to write *bibismikallahumma* in the beginning of one's work, the verse *bismillahi majraha wa mursaha* was then revealed asking to write *bismillah* at the very beginning. So when the verse *Qul ad'u Allah awid'u aw al-Rahman* the Prophet has asked to write down *bismillahirrahman* at the beginning of letters, but when the verse of the Chapter *al-Naml* was revealed he commanded to write *bismillahirrahmanirrahim* instead. And the Prophet (s.a.w) said "whoever read *bismillahirrahmanirrahim* will be recorded for him for each word four thousand rewards and will be cast out from him four thousand vices and he will be uplifted to four thousand levels, this Hadith was narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd. (And again) the Prophet (s.a.w) said that anyone who recites

³¹ PT: 5, MT: 11

bismillahirrahmanirrahim the angel shall say to him *labbayka wa sa'dayka wa alkhayra kullahu ladayka* and anyone whose prayer of the angel is dedicated to him surely will be pardoned by Allah. (And *warid* narrated that anyone who reads *bismillahirrahmanirrahim* forty one times then he makes it as a gift to the people of council member, means those who are having rotation and is said "o member of council, may you get secured from every vices and be preserved from anything that he is afraid of."³²

Fā'idah also indicates that the author did not determine the one who deposited the opinion as he said:

A benefit (*fā'idah*), the scholars of *al-muhaqqiqūn* said that for the action is of three levels; first (*pertama*) you worship Allah for the sake of rewards (*menuntut bagi pahala*) and fearing from his punishment (*dan takut daripada siksanya*) and that is the lowest level since the truth behind the worship is for the rewards; second (*kedua*) that you worship Him because you would get dignity (*kemuliaan*) in return by the act of worship by which establishing the right of servitude and this is a high level but lacking of sincerity because his prime intention by his essence is other than Allah the Almighty; third (*ketiga*) that you worship Allah because He is the Lord and you are just His servant and this is the highest level because there is no other intention except due to His Essence and due to discharging his necessary thankfulness upon it and to see in him in the state of neediness and fear of not knowing whether his obedience is accepted or rejected.³³

In the light of this paragraph, we could see how the Shaykh explained the meaning of *'amal* or action whereby he added the term *fā'idah* as to elaborate on the typology of the issue discussed as he deliberately said as above "according to the true scholars, action is of three types... till the end." After he mentioned on the typology of *'amal*, he then explained further by bringing up stories or narration as he cited the stories of Sufyan al-Thawri and Rabi'at al-'Adawiyah, two renowned figures in the Islamic history especially in the field of *tasawwuf*. The Shaykh then concluded his argument with the Hadith of the Prophet which being the strongest than the saying of the people of truth as well as the story by which both were mentioned earlier on. Moreover, in order to explain the difference between two closely related terms, Shaykh had been using the heading *fā'idah* as he states:

³² PT: 6, MT: 12

³³ PT: 7, MT: 16

A benefit (*fā'idah*), the difference between pronouncement of *tanzīh* and *taqdīs* is that *tanzīh* has nothing but to notify the weaknesses of Allah and *taqdīs* has nothing but to let know the perfect and beauty attributes of Allah and disclose the weaknesses which were in the thinking so that become more perfect on the side of a servant from it.³⁴

b. *Tanbīh*

“Be alert” or *tanbīh* is another important intermittence which is used in this text. One important criterion in *tanbīh* is that it refers to the most authentic opinion that he wanted to convey as he said:

Be alert (*tanbih*), the most authentic opinion states that it is discouraged (*makrūh*) to send salutations (*ṣalawāt*) upon whom other than the prophets and angels of *Istiqlāl* which are alien by itself, nor following by the prayer because this was the innovation by *Rawāfid* and *Ahl alShī'ah* who suggested it to their king because to have similarities with the people of innovation is disapproved and we are obliged to be different from them.³⁵

He also said in another occasion:

Be alert (*tanbīh*), as for the most authentic opinion held that iman is created (*makhlūq*) because it is not free in which sometimes it turns into affirmation (*taṣdīq*) by the heart or establishment (*iqrār*) by the tongue.³⁶

In another example, the Shaykh said:

Be alert (*tanbīh*), the conditions of approval for a non-Muslim (*kāfir*) to be Muslim are ten; First (*pertama*) puberty (*bāligh*) so it is not accepted for children in contradiction with the opinion of Abu Hanifah; second (*kedua*) intellect (*'aql*) so it is not regarded as well for a person of unsound mind and an apostate (*murtad*); and third (*dan ketiga*) proclaiming the article of faith (*mengucap dua kalimah shahadah*) in the language that he knew (*dengan*

³⁴ PT : 37

³⁵ PT: 4

³⁶ PT: 30

lughah yang diketahuinya); fourth (*keempat*) that he knows it's meaning ...till the end.³⁷

c. *Mas'alah*

On the usage of *mas'alah*, it seems that the Shaykh used the term when he had already discussed the issue in the past but there were still other perspectives that he wanted to share as he went along with the text as he said:

Situation (*Mas'alah*), as you already know that faith (*imān*) increases and decreases [so] does disbelief increase and decrease the same way or not? So it is answered that it happens, as described by the author (*sāhib*) of *Man'ul Mawāni'*, disbelief (*kufur*) as what has been mentioned in the Hadith (*wayatafawut alnāsa fī alimān 'ala qadri tafawutihim fī mahabbati wa yatafawutun fī alkufri 'ala qadri tafawutihim fī ba'dī*) and people are distinguished (*tafawutlah manusia*) in their faith based on how much they love me and they are distinguished in their disbelief based on how much they hate me.³⁸

d. *Bermula*

Another important intermittence is *bermula*. It basically means starting point or beginning note or 'as for'. The size of the caption for *bermula* depends on the issue discussed. The first *bermula* in this chapter written by the Shaykh is:

To begin with (*bermula*), the prayer upon the Prophet has a lot more advantages, thus it is sufficient what has been narrated by Sayyidina Zainal, the son of Husin son of 'Ali that the sign of *ahl al-Sunnat wa alJamā'ah* is to increase the greetings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.³⁹

Another method that the Shaykh employed *bermula* when he put on arguments that he started with on certain issues, and then followed by *kata qīla*, as he said:

³⁷ PT : 23

³⁸ PT: 29-30

³⁹ PT: 8, MT: 17

As for the message (*risālah*) it is superior (*afḍal*) than the prophecy (*nubuwwah*) because its benefit is longstanding (*mutta'id*) than to the latter and the benefit of prophecy is lesser. And the number of Prophets (*anbiyā'*) is hundred twenty-four thousand and the messenger (*rasūl*) is three hundred and thirteen. And it is said (*Dan kata qīl*) fourteen and it is said (*dan kata qil*) it is fourteen and it is said (*kata qīla*) it is fifteen. And those who have been mentioned [their names] in the Qur'an are twenty five, the earliest is Adam and the last is Sayyidina Muhammad (s.a.w).⁴⁰

e. *Shahdan*

As for this term the first instance is on the saying of Shaykh 'Abd al-Mu'ti on the prayer to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) as the author said:

Notify (*shahdan*), Shaykh 'Abd al-Mu'ti said that the greeting upon the Prophet (s.a.w) is accepted from every believer by the evidence as reported that our master (*Sayyidinā*) Jibril 'alayhissalām said that every action is accepted and rejected except the greetings upon you, so that is accepted. (And actually) there is a Hadith narrated that supplication is obstructed between the sky and the earth except when it starts and ends with salutations upon the prophet.⁴¹

4. Establishing proof of arguments

In order to reinforce the points of discussion the Shaykh employed various methods such as the Qur'anic verses, the traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w), the opinions of the scholars, etc.

a. *Firman Allah Ta'ala*

The strongest and the most valid proof is the word of Allah as he said:

[...] so the people of whom the mission (*khabar*) of the Prophet did not reach them are not accountable [of being burdened with *taklīf*] based on the most authoritative opinion and they shall not be punished and they shall enter the paradise because Allah has said: (*wamā kunnā mu'adhdhibīna ḥatta nab'atha rasūla*).⁴²

⁴⁰ PT: 10, MT: 19

⁴¹ PT: 7, MT: 16

⁴² Al-Isra', 15; *Ward*, PT: 30, MT: 38

b. *Sabda Nabi (s.a.w.)*

Second is the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad as he said:

The Prophet (s.a.w) said any one who wants to see Allah in the state of His blessings bestowed upon him, is to increase the greetings (*salawāt*) upon him (s.a.w).

Besides al-Qur'an and al-Hadith as above there are other distinct methods which were used by the Shaykh to support his arguments such as quoting directly from an authentic and renowned scholar and subsequently mentioning the name of the scholar and his work, as he said:

c. *Kata ['ulama']*

Hafiz Ibn Hajar 'Asqalāni said in his *Isābah fi Manāqib al-Ṣahābah* that there have been some Hadith narrations on the right of the elderly (*haq shaykh dan orang yang haram yang sangat tuha*) and the dead people during the time of *fatrah* and those who were born *akmah* which means that there is no difference between the blind and the deaf and who is born insane or becomes insane prior to puberty or non-Muslim who died in infancy [...].⁴³

However, sometimes he quoted from an authentic and renowned scholar but did not mention the name of his work as he said:

Abi Yūsuf Asbāt narrated that one day I met Sufiān Thawrī, and he cried throughout the night and he said he was crying due to his sins and as he was holding a stalk of wheat he said that the sin was easier upon Allah from this, actually I fear that Allah will take away Islam from me as we asked Allah to let us and our beloved ones to die as Muslims in the religion of Islam.⁴⁴

Apart from that, Shaykh Dawud had utilized some other terms such as *kata setengah 'ulama*, *kata muhaqqiqun*, *dan setengah*, *kata setengah*, *dan warid*, *dan setengah daripada qawm*, *kata qil*, *maka jika engkau kata*, *maka jawab*, *dan ma'na* and *dan dikehendak*.

⁴³ PT: 17, MT: 26

⁴⁴ PT: 15, MT: 24

d. *Kata setengah*

[...] Some scholars said (*kata setengah 'ulama*) that sadness is of three things; things that are aimed but not achieved; secondly love to vices that is not forgiven; third, love to gnosis that is lost.⁴⁵

e. *Kata muhaqqiqun*

People of truth had said (*kata muhaqqiqun*) that the purpose is one which aims to gnosis is leaving and every other sadness is little because there was its previous time.⁴⁶

In some occasions, Shaykh deliberately mentioned those people whom he referred to as *muhaqqiqun* as he said:

[...] And if he is a sinner because he is not taking evidence, so the preferred opinion of what is chosen by those people of truth (*al-muhaqqiqun*) like Qushairi and the Proof of Islam alGhazzali and Ibn Abi Jamrah and others is suffice only with *'aqad* which means the correct and confirm faith (*i'tiqād yang sahlah lagi jazam*) [...].⁴⁷

And many other methods which have been employed by Shaykh Dawud.

5. Classification and typology

The Shaykh frequently used the method of classification by which the issue that he wanted to convey was explained in an extensive way as he said:

[...] Know thyself (*Ketahui olehmu*) that the accountable people are of four divisions; first (*pertama*) the group of people whom their servitude is rendered and they will enter the paradise like the Prophets (peace be upon them), Saints, Believers and Muslims; second (*kedua*) the group of people who entered paradise without first rendering their service to Allah and they were non-believers yet at the end they believed in Allah or they had lived uselessly and sunk deeply in the vices but then they repent to Allah prior to death and doing good deeds just like the thirty thousand magi-

⁴⁵ PT: 14, MT: 23

⁴⁶ PT: 14, MT: 23

⁴⁷ PT: 18, MT: 27

cians (*sahirah*) of Pharaoh who were killed on that very day when they turned themselves to Allah; third (*ketiga*) the group of people whom Allah received not their services neither He bestowed them paradise and they were infidel and is forbidden for them the blessed faith and in the hereafter they will suffer penalty and disgrace permanently. Fourth (*keempat*) the group which rendered their service to Allah not for paradise while they are doing good deeds to Allah but they had been tempted at the end and, were rejected from God's door like what had happened to Bal'am bin Ba'ura.⁴⁸

6. Enlightening the linking words

The Shaykh was deeply conscious on the importance to explain certain technical terms unlike certain commentators who only probably see the linking words but the Shaykh took a different initiative by explaining the terms extensively. Such terms like *waba'du* as he said clearly:

[...] And the word *waba'du* is used to emulate the Prophet as he cited in his correspondence, speech and in his books of *marāsil* which were narrated by forty companions. Also *waba'du* is applied in order to move from a conversation to another conversation or from a piece of news to another piece of news; that is why it is not utilized except in the midst of conversation nor at the beginning. (And there is disagreement) among scholars as to who was the first to cite it, some said Sayyidinā Dāwud and some said Sayyidinā Ya'qūb and some said Qis ibn Sa'ādah al-'Iyadī and some said Ka'ab ibn Lu'ayy and some said Yu'rab ibn Qaḥṭan and some said Saḥbān ibn Wā'il [...].⁴⁹

7. Connecting between one prime issue with another

In the very chapter of *Ilāhiyyāt*, the Shaykh by all means tried to connect between one prime issue that was discussed in one particular jewel with subsequent issue discussed after it. For example in Jewel five, he talked about the tenets of religion and the necessity for its elucidation, however prior to the end of jewel five he emphasized the next issue that he intended to convey in Jewel six. By doing so, one could see the lucidity of his elaboration on both prime issues.

⁴⁸ PT: 8, MT: 17

⁴⁹ PT: 8, MT: 17

8. Sufficient elaboration with only primary sources

In Jewel 44, in the discussion on the probability of Allah, the Shaykh substantiated his comments on the phrase with Qur'anic verses as he quoted the relevant verses of the Qur'an and translated them into Malay, as he said:

[...] Allah the Almighty says "It is We who portion out between them their livelihood in the life in this world." We have made some of them rich and some others poor and we have uplifted some of them by richness and some others by few degrees which means we have determined amongst them more and less in bounties [...].⁵⁰

9. Venturing into scientific commentary

Shaykh Dawud did not only explain the issues based on the religious perspectives but he also ventured into the scientific aspects as well, as he said:

[...] you observe the human body, you would see that it is composed of four elements and they are soil, water, air and fire. Then from the state of semen fluid and *'alaqah* which is a blood composite transformed into bone and brain and blood vessels. And the large blood vessels and blood cells and skin and nail and feather and each and every one of it because of its wisdom. If not because of wisdom surely there is no sound body as people normally have [...].⁵¹

Conclusion

The emergence of the Malay-Jawi commentaries of the 18th century and beyond enhanced the study of Islam in the Malay archipelago creating a plethora of studies, resulting greater enrolment of students in both formal and informal traditional educational institutions in Patani, Aceh, Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu. These institutions were responsible for initiating the *talaqqi* method that applied the 'commentary approach' used by Shaykh Dāwūd, one of the most prolific and erudite scholars of Malay-Jawi literature. His *Ward al-Zawāhir* being the major

⁵⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 605.

⁵¹ PT: 31, MT: 38

and most famous work. Whilst it could be argued that Shaykh Dāwūd's style may have varied considerably over the period of his career, he was meticulous in his presentation of arguments. His writing was well arranged, rational and deliberate. These characteristics show that the Malay method of commentary was an effective approach displaying richness and creativity of composition. It is arguably said that the perpetuation of the tradition of commentary, also known as the '*talaqqi* system' was particularly common in traditional educational institutions such as the pondoks, pesantren and dayah. This is the main reason for the survival of Malay-Jawi literature until today.

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