

## Al-Bantani's Method of Writing Hadith In *Tanqih Al-Qawl*

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### ABSTRACT

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Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī is one of the renowned Archipelago scholars. One of his greatest book namely *Tanqih al-Qawl*. This book is categorized as a hadith book which explains hadith pertaining to *fadā'il al-'amāl* (the good deeds). It is widely read by academics and the general public. It is one of the reference books available for public use including in several religious institutes in Indonesia. The objectives of this study are to ascertain the methodology or approach of writing hadith by Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī in his *Tanqih al-Qawl*; to explain his method of writing lectures on hadith, and to pay tribute or honour him as one of the Nusantara hadith scholars whose works are of immense value. This is principally a document analysis study. The methodology used is literature review through analysis of Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī's methodology or approach in his *Tanqih al-Qawl*.

#### Kata kunci

Archipelago; Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī;  
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## 1. Introduction

The Nusantara world is rich with scholars and intellectuals in various fields. Their contribution in the field of scholarship is very large among the Muslim ummah in this region. However, part of their contribution not been highlighted and studied as academic contribution and thus this very valuable treasure may become hidden and probably will be lost forever with the passage of time [1].

Writing activity, particularly in the religious field in the Malay Region has been traced to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, even though the books then were brief and few in number. This activity was fully supported by the patronage of the rulers. This intellectual activity become more brilliant in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, when scholars produced works in various Islamic sciences, particularly in fields of tasawuf, fiqh, tawhid or usuluddin (sources of jurisprudence), including hadith [1].

Hadith study is one of the very important and influential fields of study in Islamic teaching. The expertise and superiority of the Nusantara scholars in the field of knowledge had brought an immense change in the Islamic intellectual culture and civilization of the Nusantara. Their greatest

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contribution was their writings or works which enriched the Islamic world treasury of the Nusantara and nourished the atmosphere for pursuit of knowledge in the region.

One of these Nusantara scholars who was the author of numerous leading and excellent works was Shaykh Muhammad Nawawī ibn Umar al-Bantanī al-Jawī. His full name was Abu Abd al-Mu'ti Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn al-'Arabi Ibn Nawawī al-Jawī al-Bantanī al-Tanari, otherwise better known as Muhammad Nawawī al-Bantanī or Shaykh Nawawī. He was born in Tanara village, Tirtayasa district (now Pesisir village, Pedaleman countryside in the Tanara district in front of the Jāmi' Shaykh Nawawī Bantan Mosque), Serang regency, Banten province, in the year 1815 AD corresponding to 1230H [9]. His father was K.H. 'Umar ibn 'Arabi, a scholar who led the mosque and Islamic education in Tanara village [5]. In the family lineage of his father's side, Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī was the 12th generation from Mawlana Sharīf Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunungjati), a descendant of Prince Mawlana Hasanuddin, the first Sultan of Banten [8].

## 2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach designed to obtain complete information relevant to research objectives. The writer uses literature review to obtain qualitative data from documented materials such as manuscripts, scriptures, books, articles, working papers and so on related to the research topic. The writer also elaborates on previous studies related to the topic in order to ascertain which areas have not been studied by past researchers. This study also elaborates on the contents of lectures in *Tanqīh al-Qawl* as well as some of his methods or approaches in writing hadith together with examples. At the end of the study, the writer states the implications of the study findings as well as the conclusions arrived at.

According to Yusuf, I in his book *al-Mu'jam al-Matbu'ah al-'Arābiyyah*, there are in all about 38 works by Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī in all fields of Islamic teaching whether on hadith, fiqh (jurisprudence), tafsir (interpretation), usul (theology), tasawwuf (sufism), or others [11]. Further, Samsul [9] in his work, *Sayyid Ulama Hijaz Biografi Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī*, said that Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī's writings totalled a number of 41 books. One of the most famous of his works on hadith is *Tanqīh al-Qawl*. This book is in the form of lectures based on the *Lubāb al-Hadīth* authored by Imam Jalal al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. The latter book was lectured by Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī in Arabic language. Another lecture based on the same book was written in Malay by Shaykh Wan Ali bin Abd al-Rahman Kutan al-Kelantani and given the title *Al-Jawhar al-Mawhūb*. Both scholars, Shaykh Nawawī and Shaykh Wan Ali, were contemporaries studying in Mecca. On comparison between the two lectures written by these two South-east Asian scholars, it is found that their contents seem vastly different. The significant difference is that Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī's lecture begins in its introduction by emphasis on the importance of "isnād" (chain). Based on this, every hadith contained in *Lubāb al-Hadīth* was rated a value based on the method of "*Muṣṭhalāh al-Hadīth*" (Terminology of Hadith).

Based on the researcher's survey of literature such as journals, books, theses, newspapers and so on, there are some discussions of *Tanqīh al-Qawl* or that related to the *manhaj* (method) of Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī in various studies, whether regarding the contents of the book or of the intricacies in writing it or of the hadith *takhrīj* (evaluation or verification) in the book. However, such discussions in these studies are limited to only one or two chapters, such as in a Master's thesis, "The contribution of Nawawī in the field of Hadith: Study of *Tanqīh al-Qawl*" written by Agus [2].

In his study, Agus [2] studied the *manhaj* (method) of Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī on hadith narration. According to him, Shaykh Nawawī had more vast experience in compilation of Sunnah in comparison to other scholars of his time. This is shown by his more organized, interesting and

systematic methodology of writing of *Tanqīh al-Qawl*. His capability is more evident in collecting information from various sources and in compiling the data collected.

Agus [2] also explained how Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī wrote the hadith in chapters, with each chapter containing hadith related to the main topic and relevant to his lecture. The division into chapters in the arrangement of the book made it easy to be understood by the reader. He also commented that the writing of Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī, more frequently than not, excluded the *sanad* (support) and ruling of the hadith because these hadith were already very popular among the students of the Traditional Islamic school in their efforts to apply the preaching approach [2].

In his working paper Evaluation of Hadith in *kitab Tanqīh al-Qawl: an analytical study of sanad*, Asep, N studied that the *takhrij* (evaluation) of hadith contained only in the chapter on marriage. The hadith evaluated encompassed hadith contained in *kitab Lubāb al-Hadīth* and in the lecture of *kitab Tanqīh al-Qawl*, whether narrated by Bukhari and Muslim or others. In his study, Asep [4] still uses the method of *takhrij* (evaluation) by ascertaining the *awal lafaz* (early pronouncement) of hadith *matn* (text) followed by the full utterance of the *matn* (text) and hadith, studying the hadith *sanad* (support) from the scholars of *jarh wa al-tādīl* (Wounding and making good of the reporter's reputation), as well as including the *shawāhid* (witnesses) in ascertaining the value of a hadith. According to Asep [4], he is still at the chapter of *Fadīlah al-Nikāh* according to the views and criteria of *mutaqaddimin* (early) scholars and has not yet touched on the study of hadith *sanad* (support) according to the views and criteria of the *mu'asirin* (contemporary) scholars such as Shaykh al-Albānī, Ahmad Muhammad Shākir and others [4].

### 3. Result and Discussion

*Tanqīh al-Qawl* is a book on hadith lectures based on the *Lubab al-Hadith* authored by al-Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūti. *Lubab al-Hadith* was lectured by Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani in Arabic language. There is a version in Malay language by Shaykh Wan Ali bin 'Abd al-Rahman Kutani al-Kalantani entitled *al-Jawhar al-Mawhub*. Both scholars were contemporaries who lived in Mecca.

Comparison between the two lectures written by these two South-east Asian scholars shows that their contents vastly differ. A significant difference is that in Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani's lecture, he begins his introduction with emphasis on the importance of "*isnad*" (chain of support), thus each hadith contained in *kitab Lubab al-Hadith* is evaluated according to the rule "*Mustalah al-Hadith*" (Terminology of Hadith). In contrast, the lecture by Shaykh Wan Ali Kutani al-Kelantani places more importance on moral refinement and application to daily practice.

In terms of modern academic studies, Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani's lecture is more acceptable, but does not however reach the target of the wider community. In his lecture, he mentions the names of the hadith narrators, the *sanad* (support), and the status of the hadith as *sahih* (correct) or *da'if* (weak) and so on. In contrast, in Shaykh Wan Ali Kelantani's lecture, all these are minimally or not discussed, because his target was to educate and to preach.

In *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani explains that *Lubab al-Hadith* contained many alterations and some of the pronouncements were erased due to an absence of reference to it in previous lectures even though *Lubab al-Hadith* was the reference for the society in Java then. Some people also regard it lightly and degrade its contents because it contains hadith which are *da'if* (weak). Thus, he wrote the book with the hope that *Lubab al-Hadith* would not be abandoned and would remain as reference and reading material for the reason that *da'if* (weak) hadith, according to the majority of scholars, may still be used in argument in *fadail al-a'mal* (the good deeds) as explained by Ibn Hajar in *Tanbih al-Akhyar* and by Imam Nawawi in *Sharh al-Muhadhab*. (al-Bantani n.d).

In writing hadith, Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani used several methods. In the introduction of *kitab Tanqīh al-Qawl*, the researcher finds several methods of writing hadith used by him such as the following:

- Method of using only *rawi al-a'la* (the first narrator or Companion) (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

"عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ( يغفر الله ليلة الجمعة لأهل الإسلام اجمعين "

The first narrator on this hadith is Ibn Abbas.

- Method of using *rawi al-a'la* and the compiler of the hadith (*mukhrij al-hadith*). (al-Bantani n.d), for example :

"عن أنس ابن مالك قال قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ( لا يرد الدعاء بين الأذان والإقامة ) رواه النسائي"

- Sometimes, using the method of *rawi al-a'la*, hadith narrator and hadith ruling (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

"عن جابر رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لبلال: " إذا أذنت فترسل وإذا أقمت فأحرز واجعل بين أذانك وإقامتك قدر ما يفرغ الأكل من أكله ) رواه الترمذي وضعفه".

- Method of using only the compiler of hadith (*mukhrij al-hadith*) (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم " إن الله يقبل توبة العبد ما لم يغرغر " رواه الترمذي وابن ماجه

- Method of using part of the hadith *sanad* (support) (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

قال سيدي الشيخ عبد القادر الجيلاني وأخبرنا أبو نصر عن والده بإسناد عن ثابت البناني عن أنس ابن مالك رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال " إن لله ستمائة الف عتيق من النار في كل يوم وليلة الجمعة ويوم الجمعة أربع وعشرون ساعة في كل ساعة ستمائة الف عتيق من النار كلهم قد استوجبوا النار".

- Method of mentioning the *kitab* (book) and *rawi al-a'la* (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

قال النووي في الاذكار رويانا عن أنس ابن مالك قال قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم " لا يرد الدعاء بين الأذان والإقامة " رواه النسائي

- Method of not mentioning the hadith *sanad* (support), *rawi* (narrator), ruling and book source of hadith by mentioning only (al-Bantani n.d), for example:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم " ما اجتمع قوم في مجلس ولم يصل عليّ فيه الا تفرقوا عن ميت ولم يغسلوه"

- Most of his hadith are quoted without mentioning the ruling and *sanad* (support). This may be due to the hadith being so well-known in society at that time and for the application of the preaching approach [2].
- In the explanation of a hadith, Shaykh Nawawī sometimes includes Quranic verses or scholars' opinions to reinforce his lecture.

After an analysis of the contents of *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, the researcher finds that Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī used several different methods in the writing of hadith. Thus it is evident that he had the expertise and vast knowledge in the field of hadith. In addition, he also gave the result of hadith evaluation or verification such as *sahih* (sound, correct or authentic), *hasan* (good), *da'īf* (weak) or *mawdū'c* (fabricated or forged) Furthermore, the researcher finds that Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī, more frequently than not, did not mention the ruling of the hadith.

## 5. Conclusion

Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī 's method of writing hadith in *kitab Tanqīh al-Qawl* without fully mentioning the *sanad* (support) and even by mentioning only the hadith, may confuse the reader, and make the hadith appear as not yet authenticated or verified or evaluated as to whether the ruling is *sahih* (correct or sound or authentic), *hasan* (good), *da'īf* (weak) or even *mawdū'c* (fabricated or forged). This study on his method of writing hadith shows that the hadith were written in the book without mentioning the *sanad* (support) because at that time they were already well-known among society. Muhammad [7] In writing *Tanqīh al-Qawl*, he used different methods as in order to explain a hadith he did not need to mention the complete *sanad* (support).

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