

Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih and His Involvement in the Field of Knowledge

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Abstract

The involvement of Malay scholars from Malaysia in the field of Qur'anic interpretation is relatively limited compared to scholars from the Arab world, Turkey, India, and Pakistan. One possible factor contributing to this limitation is language, which may serve as a primary barrier preventing Malay scholars from actively engaging in this field. The Qur'an, revealed by Allah (S.W.T.), possesses an unparalleled linguistic artistry, and its sophisticated literary style necessitates mastery of a broad range of fundamental knowledges for proper comprehension. Prominent figures in the Malay-speaking region, such as al-Shaikh Abdul Rauf Fansuri and Haji Muhammad Sa'id Umar, were esteemed interpreters in the region. However, with the rapid evolution of the Malay language, Classical Malay has gradually been abandoned. As a result, the younger generation is no longer able to fully grasp the language in its original form, leading to a decline in the use of the interpretative works of these great scholars. In response to the increasing demand for Qur'anic understanding among the Malay Muslim community, a transformative figure in the field of Tafsir emerged, which is Shaikh Abdullah Basmeih. He took the initiative to produce a complete translation of the Qur'an, encompassing all thirty juz'. His seminal work, *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Qur'an*, has since become a primary reference for Malay-speaking Muslims in Malaysia and is widely accepted by the Muslim community across the country. Given the profound impact of this work, scholarly research on this distinguished figure is essential to introduce his contributions to future generations. This article aims to highlight the remarkable legacy of an esteemed scholar who has rendered invaluable service to the Muslim community in Malaysia. This study uses a qualitative methodology, gathering and analyzing relevant data. The findings

indicate that Shaikh Abdullah Basmeih was not only involved in the field of Qur'anic interpretation but also made significant contributions to the disciplines of Hadith and Fiqh.

Keywords: Basmeih, Knowledge, Contribution, Scholar, Malaysia

Introduction

It is undeniable that the Qur'an is the noblest of all scriptures revealed by Allah to the Prophet (PBUH). Reciting, studying, teaching, understanding, and practicing it are among the greatest acts of devotion that bring one closer to Allah and constitute the most perfect form of obedience. Both worldly and eternal happiness await those who comprehend, implement, and dedicate themselves to disseminating the knowledge of the Qur'an. With this in mind, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

عن عثمان رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه

(Al-Bukhariy. 1986)

Meaning:

From Uthman r.a, the Prophet (PBUH) said: 'The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it'.

Good news for the people of the Qur'an. They are the chosen ones of Allah who comprehend its teachings. Their lives are always guided by the Qur'an, and they seek no guidance other than from it. Allah says:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّيْ هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُنَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

(Al-Isra': 17: 9)

Meaning:

Surely this Quran guides to what is most upright, and gives good news to the believers—who do good—that they will have a mighty reward.

The most noble of all Qur'anic knowledges is the knowledge of Tafsir (interpretation). It enables one to grasp the purpose and intent behind the revelation of the Qur'an—namely, to act upon Allah's commands and refrain from His prohibitions. The emergence of Tafsir is inherently tied to the revelation of the Qur'an itself. The Prophet (PBUH) was the greatest of all exegetes, entrusted by Allah with the responsibility of explaining the Qur'an to the ummah, as stated in His divine words:

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

(Al-Qur'an. Al-Nahl: 16: 44)

Meaning

(We sent them) with clear proofs and divine Books. And We have sent down to you (O Prophet) the Reminder, so that you may explain to people what has been revealed for them, and perhaps they will reflect.

After the passing of the Prophet (PBUH), the legacy of Qur'anic interpretation was carried on by his Companions r.a. They were the generation with the deepest understanding of the Qur'an after the Prophet (PBUH), as they witnessed its revelation firsthand and were aware

of the chronological context and circumstances behind the revelation of various verses. The methodology upheld by the Companions in interpreting the Qur'an was to rely primarily on the Qur'an itself, followed by the Sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Additionally, they exercised *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) when the interpretation of a verse was not explicitly found in either the Qur'an or the Sunnah.

After the passing of the generation of the Companions, the responsibility of interpreting the Qur'an was continued by the Tabi'in, who were the students of the Companions. They received direct knowledge from the Companions. However, the level of interpretation by the Tabi'in did not match that of the Companions. During the time of the Companions, there was no division or differences in legal schools (*madhhab*). However, during the time of the Tabi'in, division began to arise with the emergence of differing *madhhabs* and political ideologies.

The knowledge of Tafsir continued to develop and evolve until the era of compilation during the later Umayyad period and the early Abbasid period. Scholars of this time began efforts to organize and compile the Tafsir according to the arrangement of the Mushaf. At this stage, the scholars of Tafsir not only collected reports from the Companions, Tabi'in, and Atba' al-Tabi'in, but they also conducted research and critically examined the works of earlier scholars. As a result, various interpretations emerged, influenced by the specific disciplines of knowledge held by each *mufassir* (interpreter). (Nazri & Najib. 2004)

The knowledge of Tafsir continued to experience rapid development, producing many scholars proficient in this field. Scholars in the Malay-speaking region were no exception, contributing outstanding works in the field of Tafsir. Prominent figures in Tafsir, such as Shaikh Nawawi Banten, Abdul Rauf Singkel, and Professor Hamka, have shaped the interpretation of the Qur'an for the Indonesian community. Similarly, Malaysia was not left behind with the emergence of a leading scholar in Tafsir, Haji Muhammad Sa'id bin Umar bin Aminuddin bin Abdul Karim, who produced the work "*Tafsir Nurul Ihsan*". This Tafsir is the first complete Malay interpretation covering all thirty juz'. The work took two years and nine months to complete, a remarkably short period considering the difficulty in accessing reference materials and writing tools during that time.

Subsequently, a prominent Malay scholar in the field of Tafsir emerged—Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih. He was a distinguished figure in Tafsir who made significant contributions to the development of Tafsir writing in the Malay Peninsula. This is evident in the existence of *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*, a 20th-century work that has become one of the key references for Muslims in Malaysia to this day. There are various perspectives regarding the methodology of this Tafsir. According to Ikbal (2010), the interpretation used follows the *Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur* method, while Halim (2018) argues that it is merely a translation. Hasan (2019) explains that this book translates all the verses of the Qur'an using the *macnawiyah* translation method and provides interpretations for verses that require further explanation through *tafsiriyyah* translation. In reality, this Tafsir belongs to the category of simplified interpretation, comparable to works like *Tafsir* written by Dr. 'A'id al-Qarni and others.

The significance of this article is to raise awareness among the public regarding the substantial contributions made by Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih, a Qur'anic exegete in Malaysia.

In addition, this article offers valuable insights and new knowledge to contemporary society, particularly as Classical Malay is increasingly fading due to the passage of time. Through this research, society can gain a more in-depth understanding of the discipline of Qur'anic exegesis within the Malay world, which has evolved into a modern and accessible form to meet the needs of the present generation. The scarcity of article focusing on Qur'anic exegete paved the way for further research for the author to highlight the contributions of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih and to ensure that his legacy gains wider recognition, both locally and globally. This article not only serves as an important reference for academics and researchers, also offers considerable benefit to the general public by introducing them to notable Islamic scholars from the Malay region. Therefore, this article will explore the biography of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih, his contributions, and his works.

Background of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih

Recognizing scholars of Tafsir from the region is a form of appreciation for their contributions in elevating the significance of the works they produced in Malaysia. Many people are unaware of the individuals who dedicated their efforts to producing Qur'anic interpretations that continue to be referenced today. This lack of awareness raises concerns that the current generation is losing interest in learning about Tafsir scholars, leading to their contributions being overlooked due to insufficient exposure to their intellectual legacy. Understanding the biography of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih is an essential effort in honoring this distinguished figure in the field of Qur'anic interpretation. His full name was Abdullah Basmeih bin Muhammad Basmeih. The title *Basmeih*—originally pronounced *Basumayh*—was traditionally associated with merchants from Hadhramaut, a historically significant valley in Yemen, located in the Arabian Peninsula. His father, Sheikh Muhammad Basmeih bin Salleh Basmeih, was also of Hadhrami descent. The family migrated to Makkah, where they settled after his grandfather, Salleh, relocated there. His mother, Aisyah binti Abdullah bin Hammad, was also of Arab lineage, hailing from the Bishah region. Bishah is a city in the southwestern province of 'Asir, Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was born on December 29, 1913 (Hasan, 2019).

When he was two years old, his mother, Aisyah, passed away, and he was cared for by his paternal aunt, Khadijah Hammadah. She took on the responsibility of raising him while his father frequently traveled between Makkah and the Malay Peninsula to accompany Hajj pilgrims. Khadijah Hammadah never married and eventually adopted Abdullah Basmeih as her own son after his father brought him to Melaka. She remained his guardian until her passing in 1982. However, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih only learned of her death during a visit to Makkah in 1990 (Hasan, 2019). He was deeply moved by the news, as he had not been able to reunite with the woman who had shown him immense love and raised him as her own child.

Muhammad Basmeih, the father of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih, was previously married to a Malay woman before marrying Aisyah, the mother of Abdullah Basmeih. From his first marriage, he was blessed with a daughter. However, both his first wife and their child passed away due to a severe fever upon their return to Makkah. Following this loss, he married Aisyah, the mother of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih. After Aisyah's passing, Muhammad Basmeih remarried while serving as a guide for Hajj pilgrims, this time to a Malay woman named Yang Chik binti Haji Kesah. From this third marriage, he had two sons, Sheikh Said and Sheikh Salim.

The age gap between Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih and his paternal half-brothers was only about three to four years (Hasan, 2019).

Education of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih

Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was born and raised in Ma'abadah, an area near Masjid al-Haram. As the only child of Muhammad Basmeih and Aisyah, he received his early religious education at *Suq al-Layl* (Ravi, 2011 & Hasan, 2019). Through his studies there, he successfully learned to read and write and completed the recitation of the Qur'an. This early education laid a strong foundation for his future scholarly pursuits, shaping him into a distinguished figure in Qur'anic interpretation. Additionally, his mastery of the Arabic language was firmly established from these formative years (Hasan, 2019).

At the age of 12, in 1927, Abdullah Basmeih was brought by his father to the Malay Peninsula. They settled in Pengkalan Balak, Melaka, where he continued his education at *Sekolah Melayu Pengkalan Balak* with the support of Cikgu Tamby Chik bin Abdul Karim, the school's headmaster. He later transferred to *Sekolah Melayu Bukit Cina* but returned to *Sekolah Melayu Pengkalan Balak* when his father fell ill and eventually passed away. Despite becoming an orphan, he persevered and continued living with his stepmother and two younger half-brothers in Pengkalan Balak. To support his family, he took on various jobs while still attending school, including selling *nasi lemak*, tapping rubber, working in rice fields, and selling fruits and fish (Hasan, 2019). His sense of responsibility was evident through his sacrifices in ensuring his family's survival. Ultimately, he completed his primary education, finishing fifth standard (*darjah lima*) in 1931.

However, he did not pursue further education due to financial constraints. From a different perspective, despite not continuing his studies, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's proficiency in the Malay language remained strong. His immersion in a predominantly Malay-speaking community played a significant role in his mastery of the language. Another key factor was his frequent visits to the home of Tuan Haji Abdul Jalil bin Abdullah, the foster father of his own father, where he had access to a wide range of books. Tuan Haji Abdul Jalil was a former headmaster of *Maktab Melayu Melaka*. Among Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's favorite readings were *Majalah Guru* and the works of the renowned scholar Pendeta Za'ba (Wan Ramizah Hasan, 2019). His extensive and diverse reading habits significantly contributed to his ability to produce various written works. His dedication to acquiring knowledge and his continuous efforts to utilize every available opportunity for writing eventually produce results, culminating in his greatest work—*Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*.

The Marriage of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih

In 1939, at the age of 26, he married after migrating to Singapore for work. As he had no family there, Haji Ali bin Mohd Tahir, a businessman on Geylang Road, took him in as an adopted son and invited him to live in his home. His wife was Hajah Hawa Puteh, the 16-year-old daughter of the said businessman. Hajah Hawa was known for her intelligence in managing the household and her skill in making various types of Malay delicacies. They were blessed with 23 children, though only 14 survived, including six sons and eight daughters. Some of their children were Badariah, Khadijah, Aisyah, Fatimah, Azizah, Ali, Abdul, Rahman, Mansur, Ahmad, Fauziah, Faisal, Habsah, and Mustafa (Hasan, 2019).

Their 49 years of marriage came to an end with the passing of Hajah Hawa binti Haji Mohd Ali at the age of 49 on July 19, 1987. Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was deeply affected by the loss of his beloved wife, who had always cared for him. A few months later, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih met a woman named Hajah Rahmah binti Abu Taib, who was working at the Department of Islamic Affairs of the Federal Territory (JAWI) in the Amar Makruf section (Wan Ramizah Hasan, 2019). Within three months, they were married on February 8, 1988. Hajah Rahmah continued her career at JAWI until she retired on April 4, 1996. Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's second marriage to Hajah Rahmah did not bless them with children.

The Passing of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih

On July 14, 1996, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih breathed his last while on the way to the hospital after feeling unwell at his home. The doctor confirmed that he passed away due to heart failure. His son-in-law, Sheikh Abdullah Kadir Barakbah, verified the news (Wan Ramizah Hasan, 2019). Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was 84 years old at the time. His body was laid to rest at the Islamic Cemetery in Taman Keramat. The country lost a prominent figure in Tafsir, a scholar who contributed immensely to the nation and its people. His work, *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*, stands as a testament to his ability and knowledge in promoting Quranic knowledge in the region. His dedication to translating the Quran was no easy task and required great commitment to complete.

As a sign of appreciation for Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's sacrifices and contributions, he was awarded the *Ahli Mangku Negara (AMN)* medal in 1973 by His Majesty the late Tunku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah ibn al-Marhum Sultan Badlishah, the fifth Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Additionally, in 1989, he was bestowed with the *Kesatria Mangku Negara (KMN)* medal by Sultan Iskandar ibni al-Marhum Sultan Ismail al-Khalidi, the Sultan of Johor. Furthermore, he received the *Johan Mangku Negara (JMN)* award from the late Tuanku Ja'afar ibni Tuanku Abdul Rahman at the National Palace (Nur Ain Hakimi et.al 2023). Lastly, he was honored as *Tokoh Maal Hijrah 1415* at the Federal Territory level. His contributions in the field of Tafsir cannot be repaid with mere awards, but they should continue through the recognition of his stature and knowledge via the works he left behind. Truly, his many sacrifices in producing this Tafsir should serve as an example for the younger generation to always strive for the expansion of Islamic studies.

Contributions of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih in the Field of Writing

Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih, of Arab descent and having studied religious knowledge in the city of Makkah, found it easy to understand the Arabic language. His deep interest in writing led to the creation of numerous works in the field of religion. His dedication to acquiring knowledge should serve as an example for the current generation in their efforts to deepen their understanding of Islam. His profound understanding of religious knowledge enabled him to master various fields of religious studies, not only as a prominent figure in Tafsir.

First Published Work in Malacca (1937)

His first writing occurred while he was in Malacca in 1937. The main content of his writing was an article that criticized the attitude of some Malay students who frequently failed the Junior Cambridge exams. The article was submitted to the *Warta Malaya* newspaper under the pseudonym "*Penulis Melaka*." This writing was produced during his time working as an assistant cook at the Malay students' dormitory at Malacca High School (Hasan 2019).

The Works Produced at the Warung Rojak Baghdad

At this time, he and his wife opened the Baghdad Rojak Stall in Singapore, where he also managed to produce book translations. The first book he translated in Singapore was titled *Salahuddin al-Ayyubi*. This book was completed in four installments by one of the branches of Qalam Publishing, Kenari Publishers. Following that, he wrote an article titled "*Teguran Cara Berwuduk*" (Critique of the Ablution Process). This article addressed mistakes made by the Malay community when performing ablution. The article was submitted to *Warta Malaya* and was published. As a result, several parties became interested in hiring his translation services for various articles from Arabic magazines into Malay. His writing skills were admired by Haji Mohammad Dahlan Masood (Hamdan), a writer for *Utusan Melayu* newspaper, who asked Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih to translate religious articles about women from the magazine *al-Musawwar*. Ibn Mohammad Azzhari was the pen name he used when the translated articles were published (Wan Ramizah Hasan 2019).

Works at Qalam Press Company (1950-1962)

He translated more than 30 books that contained the biographies of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his wives, daughters, and companions. Among them are:

Sejarah Hidup Siti Aishah (1950)

Sejarah Hidup Sayyidina Ali (1950)

Sejarah Hidup Abu Bakar al-Siddiq (1951)

Sejarah Hidup Nabi Muhammad SAW (1952-1953)

Tariq bin Ziyad (1952)

Berjihad pada Jalan Allah (1953)

Sejarah Hidup Bilal (1955)

Sejarah Hidup Khalid al-Walid (1957)

Works as a Freelance Writer (1962-1964)

Among his works produced after leaving Qalam Press is *Panduan Kanak-Kanak Sembahyang*, later retitled *Muslim Kecil* by Sinar Hidayah Publishers. Additionally, he authored *Muqaddam al-Quran*, published by Sulaiman Marie Publications, Singapore, in 1963. Both books were highly successful in sales. Finally, he wrote a collection of Malay literary works titled *Taman Cerita-Cerita Melayu* in ten volumes, which was published by Pustaka Nasional, Singapore, in 1963.

Works at Utusan Melayu Company (1965-1968)

At this time, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was offered a position as an editor for the Religious Section at Utusan Melayu in 1964. Among the writings he was assigned to and the works he produced were:

- Writing articles on religious matters in the *Mimbar Islam* column.
- Translating articles from Arabic literary magazines and writing about Islamic literature in *Utusan Zaman*.
- Authoring a historical book titled *Sejarah Islam*, published in three volumes.
- *Badan Fatwa al-Azhar dan Masalah Pemindahan Mata* (*Utusan Melayu*, August 6, 1967, page 6).
- *Kebenaran Islam Menawan Hati Sarjana Barat: Kisah Paderi Besar Birmingham Menyembunyikan Keislamannya*.

- Religious Q&A section—"Ahli al-Sunnah yang terpesong daripada al-Quran dan Sunnah" (*Utusan Melayu*, 1964).
- *Masalah Palestin dan Propaganda Yahudi Zionis di Amerika* (1966).

Works at the Prime Minister's Department

There are several well-received works produced during Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's tenure at the Islamic Affairs Division. According to Wan Ramizah Hasan (2019), the number of works he produced during this period was relatively fewer compared to his time at Qalam Press and Utusan Melayu. However, most of the books published were his original writings, even though his translations referenced various classical tafsir sources. Among his notable works are *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*, the *Mastika Hadis* series (1973), *Panduan Mengurus Jenazah* (1978), *Khutbah Haji Wida'*, *Khutbah Rasulullah SAW* (1976), *Kedudukan Masjid dalam Islam* (1977), and *Panduan Zakat dan Khairat* (1985).

Works in the Field of Hadith

The emergence of hadith studies in the region was relatively late compared to Quranic interpretation, but it spread through the dedication of hadith scholars who actively engaged in the writing of hadith compilations. Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was among the earliest scholars in the region to venture into the field of hadith writing (Mohd Taufiq & Ahmad Mahyuddin, 2021). Tun Abdul Razak, who was the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the time, instructed Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih along with other writers to compile a hadith book, which resulted in the publication of *Mastika Hadis*. In the preface of the book, it was stated that this work serves as a continuation of *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*, but in the form of translated hadiths of the Prophet (Basmeih, Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2007).

This book consists of four volumes and was written in Jawi script. Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih completed the first three volumes, while the final volume, which included hadiths related to Hajj, was left unfinished (Abdullah, 2013). The book was published in 1973 in conjunction with the National and International Quran Recitation Assembly. Two other individuals were tasked with assisting Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih in completing this work: Dato' Haji Muhammad Nor Haji Ibrahim and Tuan Haji Ismail bin Haji Yusuf, who contributed to the preface and the first volume (Hasan, 2019). The book begins with a list of references from various hadith collections, with a total of 30 sources cited. It then continues with an explanation of the definition and classification of hadith, followed by ten chapters that include 42 hadiths (Abdullah, 2013).

Next, in the first volume, which covers the chapter on faith (*iman*), it begins by listing the references used in collecting these hadiths. A total of 46 hadith collections were used as sources. The theme of faith in this volume includes hadiths related to the six pillars of iman: belief in Allah, belief in the messengers, belief in the scriptures of Allah, belief in the angels, belief in the Day of Judgment, and belief in qada' and qadar. The following sections explain hadiths related to preserving faith and the wisdom of understanding aqidah (Basmeih, Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2007). A total of 143 hadiths related to iman are listed and include their meanings and explanations, while an additional 40 hadiths are provided with just their meanings. Each hadith is explained, with its authenticity (whether sahih or hasan) mentioned, and various verses of the Quran are used as primary legal references. These hadiths were compiled, translated, and elaborated upon with reference to hadith commentary books, and

the opinions of scholars are also cited at relevant points. The first print was completed in 1974 and consisted of 300 pages (Hasan, 2019).

Furthermore, the second volume continued after the positive reception of the introduction and the first volume. The second volume was completed in December 1983 and printed in January 1984. This indicates that it took 10 years to complete the next volume. This work was completed by Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih himself without assistance from other individuals. It was reviewed and verified by Tan Sri Datuk Sheikh Abdul Muhsin al-Haj Saleh, the Mufti of the Federal Territories at the time. In the foreword to the book, YAB Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister at the time, stated that the Muslim community needed this book to deepen their understanding of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This volume discusses hadiths related to worship and legal matters, particularly concerning prayer (salat). Several issues are elaborated in this book based on the understanding of the Shafi'i scholars, except for a few matters where opinions from other schools of thought are taken into account (Abdullah Basmeih, 2007). A total of 260 hadiths were compiled in this volume. The authenticity of each hadith is also explained, whether sahih, hasan, or da'if.

Finally, the third volume was completed in June 1995 and printed in Romanized script in 1997. This volume comprises 191 hadiths, each explained with its meaning and commentary. As with the previous volumes, the status of each hadith is provided along with its source references. A total of 39 reference books were used in compiling this third volume. The discussions in this volume focus on the rulings related to fasting in Ramadan, zakat, charity, and endowments. The first chapter of this volume delves into fasting in the month of Ramadan, the virtues of Ramadan, the pillars and conditions of fasting, recommended acts of fasting, actions that invalidate fasting, days on which fasting is prohibited, fasting for the sick and travelers, voluntary fasts, the establishment of Tarawih prayers, the significance of Laylat al-Qadr, and Eid al-Fitr. The second chapter explains zakat, its importance, the types of wealth subject to zakat, zakat al-fitr, and the virtues of charity and endowments (Basmeih, 2007).

The total number of hadiths in this book is 636, systematically arranged according to chapters and topics. The first volume focuses on faith, the second on Islamic rulings, and the third on fasting, zakat, charity, and endowments. The existence of the *Siri Mastika Hadith* serves as evidence of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's expertise in the field of hadith, with some volumes authored individually. This series took 20 years to complete, consisting of three volumes, with its writing beginning in the early 1970s and continuing until the later years of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's life (Azman Ariffin et al., 2018). His ability to systematically compile hadiths made it easier for the public to refer to this work. One of the key aspects of his approach was explaining hadiths in language that was simple and accessible. Additionally, he provided commentary on hadiths by relating them to contemporary societal issues. The status and classification of each hadith were also clearly stated.

In explaining a hadith, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih referenced relevant Quranic verses and other hadiths while also citing the opinions of scholars. This work has greatly benefited the Muslim community in Malaysia as a reference for understanding religious teachings. The *Mastika Hadith* series has been used in hadith studies at mosques in Selangor (Mohd Norzi Nasir et al., 2020). Among the mosques that have adopted this book as a reference is Masjid

Sentosa, Teras Jernang, Bandar Baru Bangi. According to Hasan (2019), the *Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia* (YaPEIM) has sponsored a special edition of *Mastika Hadith* for endowment, making it accessible to mosques and prayer halls across Malaysia. This shows the widespread acceptance of Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's work within the community. The structured content of *Mastika Hadith* is well-suited for a diverse audience, presented in a language that is easy to understand.

Works in the Field of Fiqh

Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was also involved in writing on fiqh, particularly in discussing current issues published in local newspapers. One of the books he authored was *Panduan Mengurus Jenazah*, which was completed in June 1978 (Wan Ramizah Hassan, 2019). The first edition was published in 1988 and was reviewed and endorsed by Tan Sri Datuk Sheikh Abdul Mohsien Haji Salleh, who was the Mufti of the Federal Territory at the time. One of the key factors that motivated him to write this book was the growing awareness among the public regarding the proper Islamic procedures for funeral rites (Basmeih, 2015). The primary objective of this book was to educate the public on the correct procedures for handling the deceased, covering aspects such as bathing, shrouding, performing funeral prayers, and burial.

This book elaborates on four essential methods in funeral management: the procedure for bathing the deceased, performing the funeral prayer, transporting the body, and the proper way of lowering the deceased into the grave, along with a detailed explanation of the burial process. These aspects are presented in clear and simple language, with all explanations based primarily on the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This structured approach reflects Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih's effort to provide a well-organized and accessible guide for the Muslim community.

Introduction to Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman to the Meaning of the Quran

The study of the Quran and its interpretation has been conducted for a long time, whether formally or informally, in places such as religious schools, and mosques. In 1909, the field of Quranic interpretation began to develop further, continuing to progress to the present day (Ismail Yusoff, 1995). This is evident from the existence of 39 identified and recorded works of Quranic commentary from 1901 to 2000 (Hussin et al., 2012).

The continuous efforts of past scholars have yielded significant benefits, allowing society to gain valuable knowledge through their works. Public understanding of the Quran has deepened with the production of various writings, including Quranic translations and interpretations based on different approaches such as analytical interpretation, thematic interpretation, summary interpretation, and comparative interpretation. *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran* is one of the earliest complete 30-juz translations and commentaries of the Quran in the Malay language. Published in 1968, it gained widespread recognition following *Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan*, written by Tuan Haji Muhammad Said in 1934. This work also marked the Malaysian government's first official effort in translating the Quran into Malay.

History of the Writing of Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran

The writing process of *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran* went through several phases. Initially, it was undertaken after the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj, took responsibility for carrying out the translation of the Quran, following a decision made during the Conference of Rulers in October 1963. The translation was initially handled by Ustaz Faisal bin Haji Othman but could not be completed. Subsequently, on 16 February, 1968, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was entrusted with the task of completing the translation (Wan Ramizah Hasan 2019). He reorganized what had been done by Ustaz Faisal and rewrote several sections using his own linguistic style.

"The manuscript was then reviewed by Dato' Haji Mohd Noor, the Mufti of Kelantan at the time, for verification. Once it was approved, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih retyped the manuscript to finalize it. He completed the first volume, which contained the first ten sections (*juzuk*), by the end of 1968. The translation process took less than a year, and due to high demand, the first volume was reprinted in 1969. Subsequently, the second volume, also covering ten *juzuk*, was published in 1970 and reprinted in 1972. The third and final volume, containing the last ten *juzuk*, was completed in 1972. This volume included translations of 80 surahs, each accompanied by an introduction. With this, *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran* was fully completed, covering all 30 *juzuk* of the Quran in Malay, written in Jawi script. The overwhelming response from the public was evident as the book underwent multiple reprints (Abdullah 2015).

Subsequently, Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was entrusted with the task of rewriting the text in Rumi script, which he successfully completed in February 1980. This version was compiled into a single volume consisting of 1,756 pages. The content was thoroughly reviewed with the cooperation of the Mufti of the Federal Territory at the time, Datuk Sheikh Abdul Mohsein bin Haji Salleh, and Ustaz Abu Hassan Din al-Hafiz, who was then serving as the Acting Grand Imam of the National Mosque. Additionally, *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman kepada Pengertian al-Quran*, which was originally published in Jawi across three separate volumes, was compiled into a single volume in 1983, comprising 1,463 pages. Meanwhile, the *Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam* (BAHEIS) replaced the original Quranic text, which was written in *Rasm Baghdadi*, with *Rasm Uthmani*—a script style that follows the recitation of Hafz from Asim. This change took place in 1988. By then, the Jawi edition had been reprinted nine times, while the Rumi edition had undergone four reprints. BAHEIS also introduced improvements, such as adding explanations for *waqf* symbols and fully vocalizing the Quranic text to align with the *Rasm Uthmani* script (Hasan 2019).

As a result, a committee known as Lujnah al-Tashih, responsible for refining the translation of the Quran, was established to review the manuscript. It was led by Ustaz Salahuddin and comprised 14 members. In 1996, the tafsir underwent further revisions, incorporating verse indicators and specialized terminology markers. At the final stage, BAHEIS entrusted the publication of both Jawi and Rumi editions to the Malaysian Qura' Association in 1996, under the leadership of its president at the time, Tuan Haji Che Min bin Che Ahmad. Later on, the publishing company Darul Fikri was appointed to manage the printing and distribution of the work. All printing matters remained under the supervision and authorization of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), based at the Islamic Center in Kuala Lumpur (Hasan, 2019). Various enhancements were introduced by Darul Fikri, and Tafsir

Pimpinan al-Rahman underwent significant transformations, including a refreshed design to attract greater public interest in reading it.

On September 9, 2022, JAKIM, in collaboration with Rimbunan Islamik Media, revitalized *Tafsir Pimpinan al-Rahman* by publishing an updated edition. This new edition was officially launched by His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah ibn Almarhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah, during a working visit with Her Majesty, the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah, to Darul Quran under the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). In a joint statement, both organizations emphasized that this is the only comprehensive tafsir published by JAKIM, written by a recognized and authoritative local scholar. It has been printed in a larger format and elevated as the national tafsir, serving as a primary reference for the Malaysian public. The production of a tafsir is not a short-term attempt; rather, it has undergone multiple refinements and updates from the 1960s to the present. The entire process reflects the collaborative efforts of various parties to ensure the tafsir remains engaging and continues to benefit the wider community. Ongoing research on this work remains relevant due to its widespread use and the ability to expand its reach through diverse platforms.

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