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**ABD SHAMAD AL-PALIMBANI'S ISLAMIC  
EDUCATION CONCEPT:  
ANALYSIS OF *KITAB HIDAYAH AL-SĀLIKIN FI SULUK  
MĀSĀLĀK LIL MUTTĀQIN***

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**Abstract**

*This paper is an academic effort to explain some aspects of the concept of Islamic education according to Syaikh Abd al-Samad Palimbani (1714-1782 M). As a descriptive qualitative study, the main data in this study were obtained from a number of his works, especially from book or kitab Hidayah al-Sālikin. It is contrast to the other previous scholars' contemporaries, Hidayah al-Sālikin is unique work of Abd Shamad, especially in his approach. In these works, Abd Shamad attempted to explain jurisprudential aspects using Sufism approach. This research analyses some aspects of Abd Shamad's concept of Islamic education thoughts. According to him, Islamic education aims are to create good human beings and to achieve happiness by getting close to God. Based on the conducted research, some recommendations for further researcher, it is suggested to investigate this issue more specifically and comprehensively.*

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Aims, Abd Shamad.

## A. Introduction

Southeast Asian Islam or Malay Archipelago has a scientific tradition that has passed through a long historical interaction between the clerics and the prosecution of science. Interaction takes place not only on intellectual centers in the archipelago, but also to Haramain, especially after Mecca and Medina had regained its position as a center of learning and scientific center since the seventeenth century (Abdullah 2015: 1). Azra (2007) confirms that the source of the dynamics of Islam in the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth was a network of scholars who mainly centered in Mecca and Medina. The position of these two cities is very important. The holy cities, particularly in relation to the Hajj, encourage a large number of Muslims in the world to come and live there, which in turn, it creates a kind of a network when the science produces a unique scientific discourse. Azra (2007) mentioned three pioneering Islamic reform movements in the archipelago that have contributed to the establishment of a network of scholars in the seventeenth century. They were Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī (11068/1630), ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Sinkilī (1104/1693), and Muhammad Yusuf al-Maqassārī (1037-1111). As scholars in the eighteenth century to the early twelfth nineteenth century, the most important among them are Abd al-Shamad al-Palimbani and the Palembang scholars, Banjar scholars from Kalimantan, and Dawud b Abdullah which were closely associated with the rise of Patani (South Thailand). And Abd Shamad al-Palimbani was one of the most famous writers and thinkers who emerged from Palembang scholars (Abdullah, 2015 and Azra, 2007) .

Al-Palimbani whose full name Abd Shamad al-Palimbani was well known as an intellectual Muslim who had the depth of mystical knowledge, especially Sufism al-Ghazali. We know about it from his thought which was outlined in the books he wrote. One of them was written in 1192 H / 1778 (Abdullah, 2015: 52) titled “*Hidayah al-Sālikin fi Suluk al-Muttāqin*”. This book explains about the rules of Sharia in Sufism. Azra (2007: 342-343) mentioned if this book actually was the adoption of *Bidayah al-Hidayah* because

he made a number of additional topics that were not taken from *Bidayah al-Hidayah* written by al-Ghazali.

*Kasih aku bahawa kubahasakan akan beberapa masalah di dalam kitab dengan bahasa Jawi serta kutambah daripadanya beberapa masalah yang baik-baik tak dapat tiada daripadanya supaya manfaat dengan dia orang yang tidak mengetahui baginya bahasa Arab.*

My dear, I will explain some problems in book with *Jawi* (Malay-Arab) language and I will add something important to help the people who cannot understand Arabic.

The role of Abd Shamad as an expert of al-Ghazali's Sufism, was certainly very prominent. He was recognized as the most influential scholar who spread neo-Sufism in the Malay world and created a strong foundation in Al-Ghazali's Sufism (Fathurahman, n.d.). The majority of scholars said that the ability of Abd Shamad had better abilities than other previous scholars of the seventeenth century who only put al-Ghazali as the reference of their works. In contrast with his predecessor, Abd Shamad referred the works of al-Ghazali as the basic foundation of his works, so that he was respected by historians as the most prominent interpreter of Al-Ghazali's Sufism among the scholars of the Malay-Archipelago (Abdullah, 2015: 100).

*Hidayah al-Sālikin* book was the first work written in Javanese language that discussed the jurisprudence from the perspective of Sufism (Abdullah, 2015:104). At glance, this book is same with the books of jurisprudence in general, but this book is different from other books of jurisprudence (Fathurahman, 2009). *Hidayah al-Sālikin* not only contains the description of the practice of *whudu'*, but it also includes a discussion on how to obtain the value of perfect *whudu'* on the outer side and inward, as well as including prayers at every movement that is done by a person when he takes the *whudu'*. These activities are certainly considered to be some things new and cannot be found in the jurisprudence books.

Besides that, this manuscript is categorized as a Javanese manuscript book in the field of Islamic religion. The specificity of this book lies not only in its capacity as a translation book and an adaptation of the *Bidayah Hidayah* book written by al-Ghazali, but it also becomes a reference book for the Malay community, and can survive in the long term. The book, which was published in 1871 for the first time, is still widely read and used in many traditional schools, boarding school, Islamic school, and mosques throughout Malay world (Hussin, 2014:72).

Generally, *Hidayah al-Sālikin* book discusses the issues that are related to Sufism. However, another side of this book discusses the topic related to the importance of science and its usefulness. He discussed this issue in the introduction of this book. This aspect leads the author to examine more thinking which is shared by Abd Samad al-Palimbani on education, especially about the purpose of education. The real fact that occurs in today's society describes that most people only study to fulfill their world needs in order to seek a degree, popularity and materials. This case makes most of them ignore the things that should not be done by someone who learns to get better education. This change of orientation causes a lot of smart people have less ethic and manner.

This study is expected to explore how the Islamic educational goals should be formulated. By doing it, it is hoped that education can make a real contribution to the changes and improvements of the nation and religion. The Writer realizes that he is lack of information that is related to the Abd Samad al-Palimbani's thoughts about the concept of Islamic education, which can only be found in the introductory part of the *Hidayah al-Sālikin* book. However, it can be used as the first step to assess the thoughts of Malay Archipelago scholars.

The method by this work attempts to proceed the usual method of commentary and comparison based on the works of Abd Shamad and other scholars. It used library research method and textual studies with qualitative approach. It focuses on analysis

especially in chapter introduction from the book of *Hidayah al-Sālikin*. This section is about the goal of education. After analyzing Abd Shamad's concept of education, the idea are compared to the teaching of the great scholars like al-Ghazali, Syaïd Naquib Al-Attas, Abu Hanifah etc

## **B. Discussion**

Al-Palimbani has full name Abd Shamad al-Palimbani b. Abdur Rahman b. Abdul Jalil b. Abdul Wahhab b. Ahmad al-Mahdani (Abdullah, 2015:16). He was descended from Arab and Palembang. He was born in 1126 H/1714 (Abdullah, 2015: 15). According to Abdullah (2015), this year is the most appropriate estimation to declare his birth. Previously, there are three estimations that are related to the birth of Abd Samad: 1704 (Quzwain, 1986; Azra, 2007), 1714 (Abdullah, 2015), and 1719 (Laffan, 2011).

Abd Shomad underwent his childhood during when Palembang was ruled by the government of Sultan Mahmud Badarudin I (1727-1756). Abdullah (2015:19) mentioned that Palembang at the time was known to have developed into an important center of Islamic learning in the Malay Archipelago. This fact was able to attract scholars from Arabian Peninsula to come, settle, teach and conduct scientific activities. This condition made the emergence of productive Scholars to manage the establishment of an Islamic scholar tradition.

Abd Shomad learned first time about the basics of Islam from his father Abd Rahman b Abdul Jalil, who was a religious teacher and quite well known in Palembang. After his father's return to do his duty as mufti in the Kedah country, he got education from his mother. Later, he learned to Kedah and Patani. In Patani, Abd Shamad and his brothers learned Islamic sciences in some Islamic boarding schools, such as Pondok Bendang Gucil in Kerisik, and Pondok Kuala Berkah or Pondok Semala. This islamic boarding school system was famous with its way to memorize Arabiyah science content (matan) and its specificity was **tool twelve**. In the

field of Sharia, the students were taught about jurisprudence of madzhab Syafi'i, and tawhid with memorizing book of madzhab al-Asy'ari and al-Maturidi (Ningsih, 1998). Among teachers that taught Abd Shamad when he studied in Patani was Syaikh Abd Rahman bin Abdul Mubin Pauh Bok.

Abd Samad's parents then accompanied him to Arabia such as Mecca and Medina. He, along with his half-brother Wan Abduul Qadir, went to Mecca to perform Hajj. After doing his hajj, Abd Shamad did not immediately return to their homeland like his half-brother who returned to Kedah. In this new country, he joined Javanese community and became collegiate with other Archipelago scholars, such as Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Abdul Wahab Bugis, Abd Rahman Al-Batawi, and Daud al-Fatani. His involvement in Javanese community kept them responsive to the development of socio-religious and political archipelago. In this Arab country, Abd Shamad underwent major changes related to his intellect and spirituality. This achievement could occur because of the roles of his famous teachers: Syaikh Muhammad al-Sammani al-Madani, founder Tarekat al-Samaniyah al-Khalwatiyah. After Abd Shamad studied with him in a very long time, he was finally trusted to teach some students of Syaikh Sammani. Abd Shamad also got a certificate from the teacher to legally introduce and spread the teachings of Tarekat Sammaniyah in archipelago.

After nearly five years of study with Syaikh Samman, Abd Shamad felt he was still lack of science. After Syaikh Sammani advised and encouraged him, Abd Shamad continued his study to Syaikh Abd Rahman bin Abd Aziz al-Magribi, he learned about Sufism and philosophy. In addition to the two great scholars, there are many more big names who are listed as the teachers of Abd Shamad al-Palimbani, such as: Muhammad bin Sulaiman al-Kurdi, Ibrahim al-Rais, Muhammad Marad, Muhammad al-Jauhari, Atha'illah bin Mashhri, and Ahmad bin Abd al-Mun'in al-Damanhuri, a great scholar of Al-Azhar Egypt.

No less debate for the date of Abd Shamad's death than of his birth. There are several opinions about it. According to *Tarikh Salasilah*, it is mentioned quite explicitly that he passed away in a war between Kedah in 1243H/1828 M. Azra (2007) noted that this assertion is correct for two reasons. Firstly, there is no evidence in other sources to prove that Abd Shamad ever returned to the archipelago. Secondly, Abd Shamad would have been about 124 years old-which is ridiculously too old to fight in battlefield. Another opinion which is widely accepted is that Abd Shamad probably passed away in 1203 H / 1788 M, the same year or shortly after his completed work of *Sayr al-Salikin ila ibadat Rabb al-Alamin*. Based on the evidence presented above, we believe that he passed away in 1203 H/1788 M.

Abd Shamad was a Sufi cleric whose very high intelligence. Using his much knowledge, he managed to create several works to the benefit of the Islamic development in the archipelago at that time. Among his works are as follows.

1. *Zuhrah al-Murid fil Bayan Kalimah at-Tauhid*. He wrote this book in the Malay language when he was in Mecca in 1178 H/ 1764 M. This book describes about *mantiq* and *ushuluddin*.
2. *Risalah fi Bayan Asbab Muharromah li al Nikah, Wa Ma Yudzkar Ma'ah min Dhabth al-Radha' wa Ghairih*. This book talks about every cause that is forbidden in marriage and the items mentioned with that marriage than reality *Dhabth al-Radha'* etc. This is the second work of Abd Samad and it was written in 1179H/1765M.
3. *Risalah Mi'raj*. About Isra' dan Mi'raj that was experienced by Rasulullah Saw, and the lessons that were acquired from the trip. This book was written in 1181 H/1767 M.
4. *Zad al-Muttaqin fi Tawhid Rabb al-Alamin*. This book is a collection of teaching al-Samman in Madinah about *wahdat al-Wujud*.
5. *Al-Risalah fi Kayfiyyat ar-Ratib Laylat al-Jumu'ah*. Minutes of manuscripts which were stored in the form of a

KAS collection which is same with *al-Urwat al-Wutsqa* collection.

6. *Hidayah al-Sālikin fi Suluk Māsālāk lil Muttāqin*, A Malay manuscript which was completed in 1192/1778. This book has been printed in Mecca and some countries in Southeast Asia. According to al-Palimbani, this book was the translation of the Book *Bidayah Hidayah* written by al-Ghazali, but its translation was not true in meaning. Al-Palimbani added some problems that do not exist in the book of *bidayah Hidayah*.
7. *Sayr al-Salikin ila ibadat Rabb al-Alamin*. This book consists of four volumes. The first volume was written in Mecca in 1193/1779, and the fourth volume finished in Taif on Sunday evening 20<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan 1203/1789. This book has been reprinted in many places, and the latest version is also available in a form that has been transliterated into Latin letters.
8. *Fadha'il al ihya' li al-Ghazali*. This paper is always referred by Arabic sources, and so far it becomes the most well-known Abd Shamad's writing in the Middle East (Abdullah, 2015: 94). Based on its popularity, this book becomes the masterpiece of Abd Samad's mysticism in Arabic.

There are other works known have been written by Abd Shamad. These works are still widely used for studying in various Surau, Islamic Boarding School especially in the Malay Archipelago.

The meaning and purpose of education are two interrelated elements. They have attracted the attention of philosophers and educators since ancient time. The big difference in the conceptualization of explanation of the two elements is caused by the differences in the understanding of the essence, the role and purpose of human life in a world that turned out to be strongly related to a series of questions about the nature of science and the absolute reality. Therefore, it is not surprising if we find differences in the opinion among philosophers and educators,

especially in the west. In kitab *Hidayah al-Salikin*, Abd Shamad said the purpose of education by quoting Imam Al-Ghazali about the ultimate goal of education, he said:

*Tujuan dari pendidikan adalah mendekatkan diri kepada Allah, bukan pangkat dan bermegah-megahan dan janganlah hendak, seorang pelajar itu belajar untuk mencari pangkat, harta, menipu orang bodoh atau bermegah-megahan dengan kawan.*

The purpose of education is to draw closer to God, not the rank and overindulgence and a student should not learn to find the power, wealth, lie the fool or exultant with friends.

Currently, education becomes a tool of socio-economic mobilization. The dominance of this attitude in the world of education has spawned psycho-social pathology, especially among students and parents. Education is considered to an effort to get the degree. Education is not for the purpose of education itself but for the value of the social-economic. The purpose of this kind of education was heavily criticized by K.H.Imam Zarkasy. In briefing of rihlah *iqtisadiyah* of sixth graders, he said:

*Akhir-akhir ini orang berlomba -lomba untuk mencapai titel dalam belajar, sebagai pengganti titel Raden, Raden Mas Gusti dan lain sebagainya. Salahnya setelah mencapai titel titel itu, betul - betul bersikap ningrat, minta dihargai dan tidak mau bekerja keras. Sekarang dapat pula dikatakan sebagai berikut: tidak ada gunanya ilmu setinggi langit dengan segala titel di kantongnya apabila tidak berjasa bagi umatnya. Orang yang hanya seperti di atas kerap kali untuk dirinya sendiri tidak bisa berjasa, apalagi kepada familinya, keluarganya, bangsanya dan umatnya. Dengan demikian individunya yang kuat, akan sangat mudah menjual diri kepada musuh (Zarkasi, I & Sahal, A. tt: 16-17).*

Lately, people compete to achieve the title of the study, as a substitute for the title Raden, Gusti Raden Mas and others. The mistake is they asked to be appreciated and do not want to work hard after reaching the title and being nobles (*ningrat*). Now it can be said as follows: no use of science to the skies with all the titles when not meritorious for his people. People who are mentioned above usually do everything for himself and could often not be meritorious for his family, nation and society. Thus the strong individual would be very easy to sell themselves to the enemy

A goal is something expected to be achieved after an operation or activity is completed. The purpose of education is not fixed and static, but it is a whole of a person's personality which contains all aspects of his life (Darajat, 2001: 29). That person's personality makes him become a "perfect man. It means the whole human's spirit and physic can live and develop naturally and normally because of his politeness. It implies that Islamic education is expected to create human who are useful for themselves and their communities and like to practice and develop the teaching of Islam in order to get touch from God and fellow human beings, and also can take benefit from the universe, which is gradually developing for today and after the life is over. This goal seems too ideal and so difficult to achieve. But by doing hard work which is done by conducting a planned framework - basic conceptual framework, the achievement of this goal is not impossible.

Integral on Islamic education related mean with the purpose of life to achieve happiness by getting close to God either in the world or hereafter. In the first world conference on Muslim Education held in Jeddah-Mecca (1393/1977), the aim of education in Islam is to create a good man. It aims at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through of the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses.

the meaning of education is totality in the context of Islam is internet in the connotations of the terms tarbiyah, Ta'lim and ta'dib taken together. What each of these terms convey concerning man and his society and enviroment in relation to God is related to others and together they represent the scope of education in islam, both formal and non formal.....education should aim at the balance growth of the total personality through the training of man spirit, intellect, rational self feelings and bodily senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that infused into the whole of this personality and creates in him and emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he may proceed to realization of this status as khalifatullah to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe.

The aim of education is creating perfect man which is close to God and happy in the world and hereafter. Those who diligently follow the delights of education will gain knowledge that he learned, and the delights of this also will take him to the formation of perfect man (*insan kamil*). Imam Abu Hanifah (in Fananie, 2003: 7) said that education means understanding of what makes or mars a soul; and learning something without putting it in to practice is meaningless. Therefore, one should know how to distinguish between right and wrong ones in regard to both this world and hereafter, and should choose the right conduct, so that misguided intellect may not lead astray and consequently Allah's wrath may fall on him. So according to Abu Hanifah, the aim of education is to teach the right way of thinking and living. And modern scholar such as al-Attas (1978:1) said that the aim of education is creating a good man by inculcating *adab* because it includes the spiritual and material life of a man that in still the quality of goodness that it sought after. The concept of educational objectives proposed by Abd Samad was in line with national education goals enshrined in law no.20 year 2003 on the national education system.

However, related to issue of faith, Abd Shamad explains the importance of faith as the foundation or pillars before studying other science. In addition, faith is the first thing that needs to be completed before the implementation of statutes and other acts of worship. In this respect, Abd Shamad more likely to present the concept of faith is supported by Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. According to Abd Shamad conception, It includes knowledge of the divine essence (*dzhat*), attributes (*sifat*), and act (*af'al*); knowledge of the Prophet of Islam and the other Messengers including their teaching as well as having faith in them.

### **C. Conclusion**

Being one of scholars, Abd Shamad indubitably had tremendous contribution to the propagation of Islam and the

spread of Sufism in the region, in the manner taught by al-Ghazali. According to Abd Shamad thought of Islamic education aim is to produce a good human being by getting close to God. And faith or *Tauhid* is the foundation before studying other sciences. This study represents the first undertaking of such as task. The researcher hopes that from this research, people can study more about Abd Shamad al-Palimbani and can get more benefit from his rich knowledge.

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