ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Ahmad Levi [ahmadlevi@yahoo.co.id] Methodology of Writing Hadith in the Works of Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani

1Ahmad Levi Fachrul Avivy, 1,2Jawiah Dakir

1Department of Theology and Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Studies, The National University of Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
2Institute of Islam Hadhari, The National University of Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani was one of the Nusantara scholars who produced works covering a variety of Islamic fields of knowledge. The word Nusantara is refers to the Malay regions; Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Nawawi works are still extensively used in Indonesia today. In these works are found many hadith (Prophet's hadith) used as argument but the status of the hadith are not explained whether sahih or otherwise. Thus it is important to determine his methodology of writing the hadith to recognize their status in advance as well as to gauge the extent of his knowledge in the science of hadith. This research discusses the methodology of writing hadith used by Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani in his works. The works researched are Nasa'ih al-'Ibad, Maraq al-'Ubudiyyah and Mirqat Su'ud al-Tasdiq which contain many hadith. The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze the methodology of writing hadith used by Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani. In addition, this research seeks to reveal the extent of his knowledge and stature as a hadith scholar through his methodology of writing hadith. The research methodology used is document analysis by descriptive analysis approach, explaining and analyzing his books as a whole, especially the methodology of writing hadith. This research found that Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani used a variety of methods in writing hadith. The methodologies used are: (i) writing hadith without sanad (support), (ii) not regularly mentioning the names of narrators at the level of the Sahabah (Companions) (iii) not regularly mentioning the scholars who issued the hadith (iv) using the method of riwayat bi al-ikhtisar (abridgment of narration), (v) using the method of riwayat bi al-ma'na (narration of meaning), (vi) using various sighat (formats) of mentioning hadith sources of reference, (vii) using various sighat (formats) of conveying hadith. This research finds that Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani possessed the capability and sound knowledge in the science of hadith.

Key words: Prophet's Hadith, Methodology, Nawawi al-Bantani, Writing hadith

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 had 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. In order to avoid this, a research entitled "Encyclopedia of Scholars and Their Works of Exegesis and Hadith" is being sponsored as a project of Research University, National University of Malaysia (UKM). This research partially focuses on scholars of Nusantara, which includes Malaysia (historically known as Tanah Melayu or Malaya), Indonesia and Thailand. Among these scholars and intellectuals was Nawawi al-Bantani from Indonesia.

His real name was Muhammad bin 'Umar bin 'Arabi bin 'Ali. The name given by his family members to him was Abu 'Abd al-Mu'tiy (Sarkis, 2:1881). Indonesians are more familiar with the title Kyai Haji Nawawi Putera (son of) Banten. Nawawi was born in the year 1230 H/1815 AD in Tenara village, Kota Serang, Banten Province. He died at the age of 84 years on the 23 Syawal 1314 H/1878 AD at his last place of residence in Shi'ib 'Ali, Mecca.

Nawawi al-Bantani was a prominent figure, who was praised by Snouck Hurgronje as a very humble local scholar of his time, and a prolific writer in various disciplines of knowledge. Even today, his many books are studied in pesantren (religious boarding schools) in Indonesia and Nusantara region. According to the records of Martin Van Bruinessen, he wrote not less than 40 books, and 22 of them are still in use as part of pesantren syllabus in Indonesia (Bruinessen, 1995:38). Yusuf Alan Sarkis in his book, Dictionary of Arabic Printed Books from Beginning of 1339 AH/ 1919 AD mentioned that there are 38 works by Syeikh Nawawi(Sarkis,
2:1881-1882) while Wan Saghir Abdullah has included in the Catalogue of Malay Literature, 44 of Syeikh Nawawi’s works (Saghir, 1998:55). All of his works are in Arabic and almost all are in the form of lectures (commentaries).

Nawawi al-Bantani’s eminence is not only acknowledged in his country but also in the Arab world. He was known through his works in Arabic in various disciplines. Through his widely spread works, the name Syeikh Nawawi is included in the category of renowned scholars in the Centuries 14 H/19 AD. His fame earned him the titles: al-Imam al-Mu’llaqqiq wa al-Fahhamah al-Mudaqqiq (The Imam who understands and masters knowledge in-depth) and Sayyid ‘Ulama’ al-Hijaz (the Leader of the Hijaz Scholars). In addition, he was also called Imam Nawawiy Al-Thaniy (Imam Nawawi the Second). The title Imam Nawawiy al-Thaniy was given for his lectures in many books in Arabic language in various disciplines. The first person who was given this title was Syeikh Wan Ahmad bin Muhammad Zayn al-Fatani. The title as expressed by Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani in a poetry he composed was finally copied by all who wrote the biography of this Banten scholar (Saghir, 1999:54).

Materials and Methods

As proof of Nawawi al-Bantani’s fame, his name and personality have been listed together with the names of world-renowned figures in several biographies, such as the dictionary al-Munjid compiled by Louis Ma’luf (581), Mu’jam al-A’lam compiled by Bassam Abdul Wahhab al-Jabi, Mu’jam al-Matbu’at al-‘Arabiyyah wa al-Mu’arrabah by Yusuf Aliyan Sarkis, First Encyclopedia of Islam by E.J. Brill’s and even more detailed, in Mecca in the Later Part of the Nineteenth Century by C.S. Hurgronje.

Through his works, he became known as mufassir (exegete), theologian, and faqih (jurist). His scholarship did not only cover knowledge of tafsir (exegesis), tauhid (monotheism), fiqh (jurisprudence) and tasawuf (mysticism). He was also a hadith scholar, and had written a specific work on hadith entitled ‘Tanqih al-Qawl al-Hathith Sharh Lubab al-Hadith’. In addition, in his other works he had also used hadith as references and to reinforce the law in debates and discussions.

The research methodology used in this article is literature review with analytical approach, that is, analysis of Nawawi al-Bantani’s books, especially in the aspect of his methodology in writing hadith, and followed by review and comments.

Data collection is the most common method to obtain data or facts related to the subject of research. The first source is the books written by Nawawi al-Bantani himself. The second source is the books, journals, magazines, written papers and other suitable materials. Assessment of the status of a hadith is also applied in this article to determine the extent of suitability between the methodology of writing hadith and the value of the hadith.

In this article, research is focused on three books by Nawawi al-Bantani: Nasa’ih al-‘Ibad Sharh al-Munabbihat ‘ala al-Isti’dad li Yawm al-Ma’ad, Maraq al-‘Ubudiyyah Sharh Bidayat al-Hidayah and Mirqat Su’ud al-Tasdiq. These three books are selected for the Prophet’s (pbuh) hadith content. The book Nasa’ih al-‘Ibad contains as many as 325 hadith. The book Maraq al-‘Ubudiyyah contains 218 hadith. And the book Mirqat Su’ud al-Tasdiq contains 219 hadith. The purpose of selecting books containing many hadith is to obtain comprehensive information on the variety of methods used in the writing of hadith by Nawawi al-Bantani.

Results and Discussion

In his writings on hadith, Nawawi al-Bantani used the following methods: not mentioning the hadith sanad, not regularly mentioning the narrator of the hadith at the level of the sahabah, not regularly mentioning the narrator or scholar from whom the hadith was cited, use of the method riwayat bi al-ikhtisar (abridgement of narration), use of the method riwayat bi al-ma’na, use of various sighat (formats) in mentioning hadith sources of reference, and various sighat (formats) of conveying hadith.

Not mentioning hadith sanad:

Research outcome shows that in his works, Nawawi al-Bantani did not mention sanad for the hadith. This was done not without due consideration. His not mentioning the sanad does not mean ignoring it, rather, the narration was abridged (li al-ikhtisar) to shorten it for discussion or debate. Many writers deliberately leave out the sanad to abridge and focus more on discussion or debate.

Not mentioning the name of narrator at the level of the Sahabah:

Nawawi al-Bantani did not regularly mention the name of the narrator at the level of the Sahabah (Companions) for each of the hadith cited.
Not regularly mentioning the name of the narrator or the scholar from whom it was cited:

Nawawi al-Bantani did not regularly mention the name of the narrator who issued the hadith or the scholar from whom it was cited. At times he did mention the name, such as: al-Bukhariy, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhiy, and others. And at other times he did not do so.

Using the method riwayat bi al-ikhtisar:

Nawawi al-Bantani used in his books the method *riwayat bi al-ikhtisar* (abridgment of narration) in writing hadith. He took part of the hadith *matn* (text) which was considered important and suitable for discussion or debate and left out the rest.

*Riwayat bi al-ikhtisar* (abridgment of narration) is drawing part of hadith from the *matn* (text) and leaving the other part, or narrating something from the hadith *matn* that which is considered necessary and suitable for discussion or debate. Such a narration is not allowed by some scholars who prohibit narration of hadith through meaning. However, *jumhur* al-ulama (majority of the scholars), both past and present, allow it, and this is a *sahih* (valid) opinion. Narration through meaning is allowed on condition that the part of hadith left out is different and unrelated to the part conveyed, so that explanation of the part cited is not crippled. In other words, the hadith left out and the hadith cited are not related (*Itr*, 1423H: 231).

Abridgment of hadith was frequently practised by al-Bukhariy and other hadith scholars, because they frequently narrated hadith in several places. Thus it was necessary to suit the needs and law taken from it, as well as to suit each place to the *matn* of the hadith abridged. (*Itr*, 1424H: 231). An example of *riwayat bi al-ikhtisar* by Nawawi al-Bantani in his book *Nasa‘i’ih al-‘Ibad*. (al-Bantani:39) is as follows:

Nawawi abridged the hadith from its original *matn* (text), as was narrated by al-Imam Ibn Majah in his *Sunan, kitab al-zuhd, bab al-war’a wa al-taqwa* (4,1998:518) as follows:

>قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لأبي هريرة: كن ورعا لكل أحد

Nawawi al-Bantani may be categorized as an *‘alim* (knowledgeable) in Arabic language and he did write several books relating to Arabic language. He also understood the *wajh al-ikhhtab* (direction of the speech) of a hadith and the meanings covered by it. This may be proven in his works in which he used his personal views in preaching several hadith.

Nawawi al-Bantani used the method of *riwayat bi al-ma’na* in writing hadith in *kitab Nasa‘i’ih al-‘Ibad*. An example is when he preached the *matn* (text) on abandonment of worldly desires (al-Bantani:28):

>يجب أن ترك الشهوة وتوجه إلى مشقة العبادات فإن الجنة حلفت بالمكاره
The above text shows that Syeikh Nawawi wrote hadith through its meaning (riwayat bi al-ma'na). This can be proven when referring to the original text, as narrated by al-Imam Muslim in his Sahih Muslim (Muslim, 2001:1087) as follows:

\[\text{عن آس بن مالك قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:} \quad \text{خلق الناس للعمل والعمل للجنة والجنة للالْه.} \]

Use of various sighat in mentioning sources of hadith reference:

When writing hadith, he used various sighat (formats) in mentioning sources of hadith reference. The sighat used are akhrajahu, rawahu, dhakarahu, hakahu, naqala.

By the rule of takhrij al-hadith (the verification and classification of hadith based on the sanad), the mentioning of a sighat has its own meaning and reflects the level of understanding of a person in the science of takhrij al-hadith.

Sighat akhrajahu (verified by) and rawahu (narrated by) are used specifically for books of original sources (masadir asliyyah), that is, books in which the hadith narrated are based on the writer’s sanad (Abu al-Layth, 2008:20), such as al-Kutub al-Tis’ah, al-Umm al-Imam al-Shafi’iy, Tafsir al-Tabariy, al-Risalah al-Imam al-Shafi’iy; kitab al-Imam ibn Mandah, Tariikh Baghdad, and so on.

Sighat dhakarahu, awradahu and the like are used specifically for reference books which resemble the original (masadir shibh al-asliyyah), and non-original (masadir ghayr al-asliyyah). Books which resemble the original (masadir shibh al-asliyyah) means books in which the hadith and its purpose are supported by the writer by citing from original books, such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tuhfah al-Ashraf al-Mizziy, Nasb al-Rayah al-Zayla’iy, al-La’ili al-Masnu’ah fi Ahadith al-Mawdu’ah al-Suyutiy by citing from original books, such as Riyad al-Salihin, Bulugh al-Maram, al-Jami’ al-Saghir. Thus if a hadith referred to is not in a book of original reference (masadir al-asliyyah) or from a book which resembles a book of original reference (masadir shibh al-asliyyah), the sighat akhrajahu (verified by) should not be used, such as akhrajahu Ibn Hajar, akhrajahu al-Suyuti or rawahu (narrated by) Ibn Kathir, rawahu al-Zayla’iy. A more suitable sighat to use would be awradahu (cited by), dhakarahu (mentioned by) or the like.

In this regard, Nawawi al-Bantani had applied this rule in writing his hadith. He used sighat akhrajahu (verified by) or rawahu (narrated by) when referring to an original source of reference (masadir al-asliyyah). An example is in kitab Nasa’i’t al-Ibad (al-Bantani: 33):

\[\text{قل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أصل أنباء الله الواردة من الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم.} \]

As for reference to non-original source of reference or which resembles the original (masadir shibh al-asliyyah), he used sighat dhakarahu (mentioned), hakahu (told by) or naqala (transmission). An example of this is in the kitab Mirqat Su’ud al-Tasdiq (al-Bantani: 63):

\[\text{قل على هذا القول: أصل أنباء الله وصل العامة إلى الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم.} \]

From the statements above, Syeikh Nawawi used sighat akhrajahu (verified by) or rawahu (narrated by) when referring to books of original sources (masadir al-asliyyah). And he had used sighat dhakarahu (mentioned by), hakahu (told by), naqala (transmission) and the like when referring to books of non-original sources (masadir ghayr al-asliyyah) and which resemble the original (masadir shibh al-asliyyah). What he had done by this method of mentioning hadith source accorded with the guidelines agreed upon by the scholars. He did not indiscriminately use sighat in mentioning hadith sources. This reflects his knowledge in the science of takhrij al-hadith based on the sighat used.

Use of various sighat in conveying hadith:

In writing hadith, Syeikh Nawawi used a variety of sighat in conveying hadith. The sighat used by him are qala (said) s.a.w., qawlulu (said by), rawa (narrated), li khabar (informed) al-Bukhariy, roviya (narrated), fi (in) al-hadith, fi al-khabar (in the reporting), warada (stated).

In the science of hadith, sighat in mentioning hadith represents the legal status of a hadith. If the hadith mentioned is sahih (valid) or hasan (good), then the sighat used is sighat jazam (assertive format). Examples are: qala (said) Nabi s.a.w., fa’ala (did) Nabi s.a.w., amara (commanded) Nabi s.a.w., naha (prohibited) Nabi s.a.w., qawlulu (his saying) s.a.w., or similar types which show jazam. And for hadith which is doubtful as to the authenticity of its narration, or da’if (weak) in its narration, the sighat used is sighat tamrid (nursing format). Examples are: roviya (narrated), yurwa (it has been narrated), warada (mentioned), yuuki (it has been told), yungal (it has been quoted), or similar types which show doubt in its narration (Itr, 1424H: 296-297).

In mentioning hadith, Nawawi al-Bantani used various sighat which can be grouped into the two types above, whether it is sighat jazam (assertive format) or sighat tamrid (nursing format). With the use of both sighat in writing hadith, he definitely have known the maximum legal status of the hadith he wrote.
Thus, to determine the extent of correlation between a sighat used by him and the legal status of the hadith, the writer gives several examples of hadith and sighat used by Nawawi al-Bantani as well as a brief assessment of the hadith.

The sighat used by Nawawi al-Bantani in the three books in this research may be categorized as sighat jazam such as: gama Nabi s.a.w., gawluhu s.a.w., li khabar al-bukhariy, li khabar al-muslim, rawa..., naha s.a.w. The writer mentions below several hadith using sighat jazam, together with a brief assessment of the hadith:

An example of a hadith using sighat jazam in the kitab Maraq al-’Ubdiyah (al-Bantani: 55):

This hadith was narrated by al-Bukhariy in al-Sahih, (1:191) by Muslim in al-Sahih (1:363), by Abu Dawud in al-Sunan (1:449), al-Tirmidhii in al-Sunan (1:210-211), al-Nasa’iy in al-Sunan (2:66), Ahmad in al-Musnad (4:169), Malik in al-Muwatta (1:154), and Abu ’Uwanah in al-Musnad with sanad from Abu Jahl. (2:44).

The writer does not give an assessment of the hadith more than this as one of the narrators of this hadith was al-Bukhariy.

An example of hadith using sighat jazam in kitab Mirqat Su’ud al-Tasdiq (al-Bantani: 19):

This hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud, Ahmad (4:226) and al-Baghawiyi (1983, 13:161), all of whom were from ‘Atiyah al-Sa’di through Abu Wa’il al-Qas.

Al-Suyutiy classified this hadith as hasan (good), Ibn Hajar mentioned this hadith in Fath al-Bariy without giving any comments (Ibn Hajar, 10:467). Among the hadith scholars, this hadith was known by the terminology ‘min ma sakata alayhi al-hafiz’ (where the al-hafiz is silent on the hadith), and al-hafiz Ibn Hajar’s silence or refrain from classifying this hadith can be interpreted as placing it in the category of hasan. Likewise with al-Munawwi who also classified it as hasan. Al-Albaniy classified this hadith as da’if (weak) on the ground of its weak sanad (al-Albaniy, 3:635). Shu’ayb al-Arna’ut however classified it as hasan (al-Arna’ut, 13:161).

The narrator criticized in this hadith was Abu Wa’il whose real name was ‘Abd Allah b. Bahir al-San’aniy. According to Ibn Hibban he was da’if (weak). But Ibn Ma’in stated him to be thiqah (trustworthy). His hadith were narrated by Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhii and Ibn Majah (al-Dhahabiy, 2:395).

Trust by Ibn Ma’in is strong, stronger than Ibn Hibban’s finding of weakness. Thus, the writer agrees with the opinions of al-Suyutiy, Ibn Hajar and al-Arna’ut who found this hadith as good. Walalahu a’lam (Allah knows best).

The writer mentions below several hadith which used sighat tamrid together with a brief assessment of the hadith.

Hadith using sighat tamrid روى أني صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: ﷺ.

This hadith was narrated by al-Tirmidhii, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, al-Darimi, al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqiyy. All of whom through ‘Ali b. Mas’adah from Qatadah from Anas.

This hadith was ruled as sahih (valid) by al-Suyutiy in al-Jami’ al-Saghir (2:234). However, most of the scholars ruled it as da’if (weak). Even though this hadith was narrated by many narrators, all of their sanad (support) ended with ‘Ali b. Mas’adah. ‘Ali b. Mas’adah, according to Ibn Ma’in, was sahih (righteous). According to Abu Hatim he was acceptable (la ba sa bith). But al-Bukhariy opined he was of a different point of view (fihi nazar). Ibn ‘Adiy stated that his hadith were unimportant. Al-Nasa’iy described it as not strong (layasa bi al-qawiyy), (al-Munawwi, 5:15-16) Therefore he was da’if (weak). This hadith was ruled as da’if (weak) by al-Tirmidhii, al-Dhahabiy, al-Iraqyi, al-Munawwi and others.

From the few examples of hadith together with their assessment, it is found that there is a relation between sighat (format) of writing hadith used and the legal status of the hadith. For hadith with the status sahih (valid) or hasan (good), the sighat used is sighat jazam, and for da’if (weak) hadith, the sighat used is sighat tamrid. This shows that Nawawi al-Bantani knew the status of the hadith used in his works.

Conclusion:

Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani had established his name as a Nusantara scholar with an international reputation. His name is stated in several biographies compiled by international writers. His scholarliness is not only acknowledged by Nusantara scholars, but also by scholars in the Arab world.

He was a scholar who was a prolific writer, covering various disciplines of Islamic sciences. His works are still extensively used in Indonesia and remain as references even today.

In this research, the writer has uncovered the methodology of writing hadith used by Nawawi al-Bantani in his works represented in three books: Nasa’ih al-’Ibad, Maraq al-’Ubdiyah and Mirqat Su’ud al-Tasdiq. The methodology he used are mentioning hadith without sanad (support), not regularly mentioning the name of the narrator at the level of the Sahabah (Companions), not regularly mentioning the names of the narrators or the
scholars of the hadith referred to by him, use of the method *riwayat bi al-ikhtisar* (abridgment of narration), use of the method *riwayat bi al-ma’na* (narration by meaning), use of various *sighat* (formats) of mentioning the sources of hadith, and use of various *sighat* (formats) of conveying hadith.

The use of these methodologies by Nawawi al-Bantani shows that he had expertise in the science of hadith. Most people appraise the expertise of someone by the amount of works written in the relevant field. However, Nawawi al-Bantani had produced only one specific work in the science of hadith, *Tanqih al-qawl*. This does not mean that he did not have expertise in the science of hadith. On the contrary, this research has to some extent displayed his knowledge and expertise in the science of hadith.

References


