

# Hadith Writing Methodology in the Book of *Ta'lim Al-Mutaalim* By Shaykh Al-Zarnuji

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**Abstract.** Shaykh al-Zarnuji is an Islamic scholar that well known in the Archipelago especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. His famous work is the book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim*, which is still widely used in some *pesantran* and *pondok* in Indonesia and Malaysia today. In this book, many hadiths are used as arguments (*hujjah*) but the status of the hadith is not explained as *sahih* or otherwise. The purpose of this study is to determine and analyse the methodology of hadith writing used by Shaykh al-Zarnuji and to reveal the extent of his knowledge and status as a scholar of the hadith through his book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*. The research methodology used is document analysis by explaining and analysing the book focusing on the hadith writing methodology. This study found that Shaykh al-Zarnuji used several methods of writing the hadith in his book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*: (i) writing the hadith without *sanad* and the narrator of the hadith, (ii) writing the hadith using *Rawi al-A'la* without narrator of hadith (iii) using the method of *Riwayat Bi al-Ma'na* (narrative of meaning). This study found that Shaykh al-Zarnuji had good skills and knowledge in hadith.

**Keywords:** Shaykh; al-Zarnuji; *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*; Methodology; Writing of Hadith

## 1 Introduction

The Islamic world is rich with scholars and intellectuals in various fields. Their contribution to the world of knowledge is immense for Muslims over time. However, some of their contributions have not been highlighted and studied as academic contributions. Thus, this precious treasure will be hidden and even lost forever. To avoid this, the researcher sought to reopen the scholarly possession of an intellectual scholar named Burhan al-Islam al-Zarnuji better known as Shaykh al-Zarnuji. Al-Zarnuji is from the city of Zarnuj, a city according to al-Qarashi in Turkey. Whereas Yaqut is located in Turkistan on the banks of the Tigris, both cities were once part of Transoxiana.

There is also another opinion that he is from the city of Zarand, a city in the district of Persia which is the capital city of Sidjistan located in South Hera that eventually became a nickname [1]. The exact year of Shaykh al-Zarnuji's death is still unknown, as there are several different records: Al-Ahwani [2] says that Shaykh al-Zarnuji died in 591 H / 1195 M.

While other opinions say: first, he died in 591 H / 1195 M. Second, it is said that al-Zarnuji died in 840 H / 1243 M [3]. While the third opinion states that Shaykh al-Zarnuji died in 591/593 or 597 H [2].

Shaykh al-Zarnuji is a Muslim scholar who has produced works known as *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and to this day is still being studied in Malaysian and Indonesian boarding schools and other archipelago areas. The book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* is the only work of Shaykh al-Zarnuji that remains to this day. But, that doesn't mean any of his other works because the logic of a pious or intelligent man like Shaykh al-Zarnuji who is always in the education world and his whole life is used for education must have a lot of works. Besides, the teachers of Shaykh al-Zarnuji and his people wrote a lot of books. So, the author thinks maybe Shaykh al-Zarnuji wrote another book but only known in Malaysia and Indonesia only one book is *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*.

It is also stated by Plessner [4] in the Encyclopedia that the book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* is the only remain book by Shaykh al-Zarnuji, but we cannot deny that his other works may have been lost or destroyed due to the war fought by the Mongols in his village. According to Haji Khalifah [5] in his book *Kashf al-Zunun 'an Asami' al-Kitab al-Funun* is said to be among the 15,000 literary works published as a work in the 17th century that explained that *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* is the only book of Shaykh al-Zarnuji. This book was recited by Ibrahim bin Isma'il under the title *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Tariq al-Ta'lim* published in 996 H. The book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* was first translated into Latin under the title *Enchiridion Studiosi* by H. Roland in 1709 and by Caspari in 1838. This book is available in most libraries of the world at that time [6]. Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir [1] regarded it as a monumental work in which a pious man like Shaykh al-Zarnuji during his life was involved in education until the end of his life. But other opinions suggest that other works by Shaykh al-Zarnuji's may have been burned by Mongolian invasion by the Mongols led by Genghis Khan (1220-1225 AD) which destroyed and colonized Eastern Persia, Khurasan and Transoxiana which is the richest, most prosperous and cultural Persian region and ruined it [7].

Shaykh al-Zarnuji's work of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* was written in Arabic. His ability to speak Arabic not show that he is an Arab descent. Several references have been researched by the author and no findings proved that al-Zarnuji was an Arab. But it can be because at the time, many Arabs spread Islam throughout the country and then they settled (residing) in where they spread the religion of Islam. It is not exaggerated to say that Shaykh al-Zarnuji is a philosopher because other than *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim's* ethical (moral) book, this book also contains philosophical values and philosophical thinking closer to Imam al-Ghazali. We can even see the footsteps of Imam al-Ghazali in his book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*.

Plessner [4] also says in the Encyclopedia that Shaykh al-Zarnuji besides of a *faqih*, he is also known as an Arab Philosopher. Some say that he lived in the time of Rida al-Din al-Naysaburi who lived between 500-600 H [3]. At that time, even though the political situation of the *Daulah al-Islamiyah* was weakening, but the knowledge was advancing and modern as it was depicted by Ahmad Amin (if politic considered weak, then the knowledge was not weak in that era (467-656 H / 1075-1261 AD) and the Islamic State at that time had higher prestige in knowledge compared to the previous century. Indeed, the power of politics is beginning to decline, but the glow of knowledge is shining) [8]. Thus, Shaykh al-Zarnuji lived during the success of knowledge until the fourteenth century. It should be noted that knowledge at that time was not considered a branch of knowledge itself, but was classified as a field of civilization.

## 2 Methodology

The research methodology used in this article is a literature review with an analytical approach that analyzes Shaykh al-Zarnuji's book especially on his methodology in writing hadith and followed by reviews and comments. Analysis document is the most common method of obtaining data or facts related to the subject of this study. The main source is the *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* book written by Shaykh al-Zarnuji, and the second source are books, journals, magazines, papers and other relevant sources. The status assessment of a hadith is also used in this study to determine the relevance of the methodology of the hadith and the hadith itself. In this study, the research is focused on the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* by Shaykh al-Zarnuji. This book contains 40 hadiths, the purpose of choosing this book is because it contains many hadiths that are not yet clearly defined. It also provides information on the method of writing the hadith in the book.

## 3 Results and Discussion

In the writing of the hadith, Shaykh al-Zarnuji uses the following methods: i) write hadith without *sanad* or narrator of hadith, ii) write hadith using *Rawi al-A'la* without narrator of hadith and iii) use the method of *Riwayah Bi al-Ma'na* (narration of meaning).

### 3.1 Not Mentioning *Sanad* or Narrator of Hadith

The results show that the hadiths in *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* are not mentioned the *sanad* and narrator of hadith by Shaykh al-Zarnuji. For example [9]:

روي عنه صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال (خير الأبياء من علمك)

It is understood whether he knows the meaning of *sanad* or not, but a scholar like him is impossible to know what *sanad* is. But, sometimes they write hadiths without *sanad* and *rawi* hadiths aim to shorten their writings and many authors of the book intentionally write hadiths without *sanad* and *rawi*. The effect is very difficult for later writers and readers to determine the status of the hadith in the book since the status of the hadith in the writing of the hadith is very important in determining the status of a hadith whether it is *marfu'*, *mawquf* or *maqtu'*, and whether it is *sahih*, *da'if* or *mawdu'*.

*Sanad* or *tariq* is a series of *riwayah* that connect the *matan* of the hadith to the Prophet [10]. *Sanad* is a special privilege of the Muslims who did not exist in the past. Concern for *sanad* in delivering the news (hadith) is a very demanding sunnah and is a *syiar* of this *ummah*. Thus, every *Muslim* must rely on *sanad* in delivering the hadith as well as writing the hadith. Ibn al-Mubarak once said: *Sanad* is a part of the religion, if it were not for *sanad* then people would say whatever they want and that separates us from the unreliable group of *riwayah* is *sanad* [11]. Imam Nawawi [12] while commenting on Ibn al-Mubarak's statement above said that if *sanad* had a good *sahih* hadith then it was acceptable whereas if it was not *sahih* it should be abandoned. He points out that the relationship between hadith and *sanad* is like the relationship between the animal and its foot. So, it cannot be separated either when narrating the hadith or when writing the hadith [13]. Al-Thawri also said that *sanad* was a weapon of the Muslim, if he had no weapons then he would face a war [14]. Al-Awza'i said that the loss of knowledge of the hadith would not occur unless his *sanad* of

hadith was lost [14]. As important as *sanad* is in delivering the hadith as well as in the writing of the hadith, the importance of *sanad* and its value can be felt by those who study *rijal* of a hadith after studying it in the books explaining about it. Its importance is in line with the importance of knowing *ittisal* (the continuation of the *sanad* hadith series from beginning to end) and *inqita'* (it is interrupted by one or more of the *sanad* hadith series) for hadith, otherwise, it would be difficult or impossible to distinguish between *sahih* hadith and *maudhu'* hadith and would encourage to fabricate the hadith. So, to know all these things it is still necessary to have a *takhrij* (the hadith that the author gives in his book) study and *dirasah asanid* about these hadiths, until we know the status of the hadith, whether it is acceptable or not, whether it is practicable or not.

### 3.2 Writing the Hadith Using *Rawi al-A'la* without the Narrator of Hadith (Sanad)

In the second method of writing the hadith, Shaykh al-Zarnuji simply wrote *rawi al- a'la* at the level of *sahabah* without mentioning who the narrator of the hadith is. For example [9]:

ما روي عن أبي الدرداء رضى الله عنه أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : ( من سلك طريقا يطلب فيه علما سلك الله به طريقا من طرق الجنة )

This method will make it difficult for readers and researchers to know the truth of its hadiths and must review it repeatedly to find out the source of the hadith. Some of the hadith also have been mixed with the comments or opinions of other scholars. So, more and deep research needs to be done toward the hadith.

### 3.3 Using *Riwayat Bi al-Ma'na* Method (Narrative of Meaning)

Certain hadith was written by Shaykh al-Zarnuzi in his book *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* using *riwayat bi al-ma'na* method. An example is when he writes about the prohibition for *mu'min* to destroy themselves, saying [9]:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : ليس للمؤمن أن يذل نفسه

The above text shows that Shaykh al-Zarnuji wrote the hadith through its meaning. This can be proven when referring to the original *matan* or text as narrated in Sunan al-Tirmidhi [15], Sunan Ibn Majah [16], the same hadith is also narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal in Musnad with a maxim [17]:

لا ينبغي لمؤمن أن يذل نفسه قالو : وكيف يذل نفسه ؟ قال : يتعرض من البلاء مالا يطيق

It is difficult to trace the status, *hukm* and sources of hadith when writing hadiths using *matan* only, and it's more difficult to trace when writing using meaning. Therefore, this method needs to study the *takhrij* and *dirasah asanid* to find out the status of the hadith whether it is *marfu'*, *mawquf* or *maqtu'*, whether *sahih*, *hasan*, *da'if*, or *mawdu'*. The *sahabah* of the Prophet made it possible to recite the hadith by meaning such as Ali bin Abi Talib, Ibn 'Abbas, Anas bin Malik, Abu Darda', 'Abd Allah bin Mas'ud and Aishah while from *tabi'in* such as Hasan al-Basri, al-Shi'bi, Amru Ibn Dinar, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, Mujahid and 'Ikrimah [10]. Certain *sahabah* maintained their allegiance to *riwayah al-hadith* with *lafzi*, among them 'Umar bin al-Khattab, 'Abd Allah bin 'Umar and Zayd bin al-Arqam, the other scholars who

tend to *riwayah al-hadith* with *lafzi* are Muhammad bin Sirin, Raja' bin Haywah, Qasim bin Muhammad, Tha'lab bin Nahwi and Abu Bakr al-Razi [18]. Nonetheless, those who adhere to the *riwayah al-hadith* with *lafzi* do not strictly prohibit the *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning. The scholars argued about the permissible or not to *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning by the other than *sahabah* of the Prophet. Abu Bakr al-'Arabi says it is not allowed to *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning other than *sahabah* of the Prophet. The *sahabah* of the Prophet are allowed to *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning because: (1) They have high knowledge of Arabic (*al-Fasahah wa al-Balaghah*); (2) They witnessed the circumstances and actions of the Prophet (saw).

Most scholars allow the *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning with the terms agreed upon [18]:

- a. The only ones who can *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning are the only ones who really have a deep knowledge of Arabic. Thus, the *riwayah* of the *matan hadith* will be avoided by mistake, such as legalizing the illegal or otherwise.
- b. *Riwayah al-hadith* with meaning is done because it is so compulsory for example forgets the literal (*harfiah*) order.
- c. The hadith which is *riwayah* with meaning is not in the word of the Prophet in the form of reading of ta'abbudi such as *zikr*, *do'a* (prayer), *azan* and so on and not in the form of *Jawami' al-Kalim*.
- d. The narrator of the hadith narrates the hadith with meaning or is in doubt in the order of *matan al-hadith* in which the narrator narrates it to add words (*Aw Kama Qala, Aw Nahwu Hadha*) or that the same meaning with it after declaring the relevant *matan* hadith.
- e. The ability to *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning is only limited to the time before the official record of the Prophet's hadith in a book, after this period the *riwayah al-hadith* should be by *lafzi* [19].

The existence of these terms indicates that the *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning although it is allowed by scholars but the practice is strictly controlled, meaning that narrators are not free to perform *riwayah al-hadith* with meaning. Then hadith scholars raise questions about whether it is possible to narrate the hadith by summarizing the *matan al-hadith*. Some scholars prohibit it and some allow it unconditionally and some scholars allow it with certain conditions. The last opinion is widely followed by hadith scholars. These terms are:

- a. The person doing the summary is not the narrator of the hadith.
- b. If the summary is done by the narrator of the hadith, then there must be a hadith that submits perfectly.
- c. Not cut sentences of the hadith containing the word exclusion (*al-istisna'*), terms, *al-ghayah* and so on related.
- d. The summary does not include the clues and explanations contained in the hadith.
- e. The person doing the summary should be the person who really knows the content of the hadith [19].

Scholars have different opinion towards the narration of the hadith by summarizing the *matan* of hadith, but the cautious opinion is one that allows it with the conditions to be fulfilled.

#### 4 Conclusion

Shaykh al-Zarnuji is an Islamic scholar with an international reputation. His knowledge and works are recognized worldwide especially in the Archipelago area. He also is an active scholar in writing works covering various disciplines of Islamic studies. His work is still

widely used in Malaysia and Indonesia as a reference to this day. In this study, the author finds that the methodology of writing the hadith used by Shaykh al-Zarnuji is to write the hadith without *sanad*, writing the hadith using *rawi al-a'la* without the narrator of the hadith and using *riwayat bi al-ma'na* method (narration of meaning). The use of this methodology by Shaykh al-Zarnuji shows that he has expertise in the knowledge of hadith, although he does not have a specific book about hadith in his works. This does not mean that he has no expertise in hadith. On the other hand, this study shows that he has good knowledge and expertise in the field of hadith.

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