

## The Contemporaneous and Local Influence in Kitab Al- Kifāyah: Chapters on Purification and Halal Food

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### Abstract

Kitab al-Kifāyah by Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah is an important fiqh (Islamic law) book written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century using the old Jawi script. His sincere endeavor to disseminate knowledge to the locals via this book has endeared him as one of the great pioneers of Jawi-based kitabs in the Malay Peninsula. His books put particular emphasis on the basics of aqidah (Islamic belief) and fiqh that managed to fill the gaps in Islamic references, especially in Jawi-Malay. More importantly, Sheikh Abdul Malik uses local, contemporaneous examples that range from local customs, culture, economic conditions, and local habitat to further elucidate his point. Inadvertently, by doing so, he has managed to solve any underlying issues that affect the daily life of the locals. Hence, this qualitative study aims to identify what are the types of influences that he took into account in Kitab al-Kifāyah. To achieve the said objective, the authors opt for document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The authors, among other things, found many instances where Sheikh Abdul Malik uses local examples after reaching his deductions (fatwa). It is especially true for fiqh-related issues. For instance, while elaborating on the subject of ablution water that changes color, smell, and taste after some interaction with other substances. The findings also highlighted the practicalities of the local scholars in not merely directly translating significant works from the Middle East, and it also goes to show their deep understanding of the local needs, culture, and its entailing complexities and sensitivities.

**Keywords:** Local influence; Kitab al-Kifāyah; Shaykh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah; Tok Pulau Manis; Terengganu

## Introduction

Kitab al-Kifāyah by Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah (SAMA) is a seminal fiqh (Islamic belief) book used by the Malays during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The book was widely used by his students who came from far and wide, from Terengganu and as far as Pattani. The lack of such writing, especially in the forms of old Jawi-Malay made Kitab al-Kifāyah even more important. The highly contextualized method of using local examples attracted the locals to study the book in-depth. This study is an attempt to identify whether the book uses local examples, especially on ablution and animals that are halal (or haram) to be eaten.

## Research method

The data collection was done through document analysis that focuses on the classic manuscript named Kitab al-Kifāyah by SAMA. Besides Kitab al-Kifāyah, this study also uses several works that are considered to be magnum opus within the Šāfi'ī's school of thoughts. Apart from that, the study also interviewed three (3) living descendants of SAMA to obtain first-hand accounts of his prodigious life. Besides, a historical expert on Malay-Muslim scholars was also interviewed.

## The Life of Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah

Before the authors proceed with the focus of examining the local examples as well as the influences in Kitab al-Kifāyah, we will begin with the biography of SAMA. This section will discuss two main aspects of his life – his birth and educational background.

### The Birth of Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah

SAMA (d. 1736AD) was more popularly known by the locals, even to this day, through his moniker – Tok Pulau Manis. He is an Islamic scholar whose ancestry can be traced to Baghdad, Iraq. From the information gathered from multiple field visits by researchers to his grave in Kampung Pulau Manis, Kuala Terengganu, he was born in 1678AD.

However, there are several discrepancies when it comes to his date of birth, which points to an earlier date. In one of his books, there is an annotation which states that he used to be under the tutelage of Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1690AD). As his date of birth states that he was born in 1678AD, he was only 12 when his teacher passed away. The researchers are of the opinion that this date of birth (1678AD) as highly inconsistent as he was reported to have been studying in Aceh as well as Makkah.

Interestingly though, his date of death is undisputed by many, i.e., 1736AD. He passed away when he was about 86 years old. This is relatively consistent with a report by M.C. ff. Sheppard (1949: pg. 11) which states that towards the end of SAMA's life, he was a man of old age. Oral accounts by his direct descendants also corroborated this fact (Šāfi'ī, 1984 & Embong, 2011).

### The Education of Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah

SAMA's education can be at least categorized into two stages. The early training in Java and Aceh in what is now known in modern Indonesia. The latter, more advanced ones were obtained in Makkah and Medina of modern-day Saudi Arabia. Naturally, coming from a long line of Islamic scholars (ulama), his first teacher was his father – Sheikh Abdullah bin Sheikh Abdul Qahar. Prior to his ventures outside of the Malay Peninsula, SAMA was first under the tutelage of the local ulama (Ibrahim, 1999).

When SAMA was about 20 years old, he furthered his study in Aceh or was more popularly known as “Serambi Mekah” (literally means the Gateway to Makkah). It was the epicenter of Islamic education in Nusantara and usually the first stop prior one’s move to Makkah and Madinah. In Aceh, SAMA was fortunate to have studied with Sheikh Abdul Raūf Singkel (Azra, 1994) and was reported to have made a personal copy of Tafsiran Baiḍawī, which was translated by his teacher into Malay (Šāfi’ī, 1989).

Sheikh Abdul Raūf Singkel was a former student of two prominent scholars in Makkah, i.e., Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī and Sheikh Aḥmad al-Quraisyī. Sheikh Abdul Raūf Singkel was a royal scholar to the Sultan of Aceh. He was widely considered as a learned scholar on matters pertaining to hadith, fiqh (Islamic law), usuluddin (Islamic theology), nahu (grammar), saraf (morphology), tafsir (exegesis), and tasawwuf (mysticism). Apart from that, he was also a leader of Tarekat Shatariyyah. Sheikh Abdul Raūf Singkel has always considered SAMA as one of his best students and agreed to induct him as a Tarekat Shatariyyah member (Šāfi’ī, 1989).

SAMA then furthered his study in Makkah circa the 1680s in his 30s. Until today, there is no official record on the first Malay to have studied in Makkah. However, it can be strongly posited that SAMA is one of the earliest one to have done so. After his study in two out of three Muslim’s holiest sites, he then returned to his homeland to give back to his society like so many other Islamic scholars, namely, Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Nawawi al-Bantani dan Sheikh Daud al-Fatani (Redzuan, 1998).

Among his three main disciplines of aqidah, tasawwuf, and fiqh, SAMA was more inclined to tasawwuf-related knowledge. Next is fiqh. His primary source of inspiration was Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī. In his SAMA’s books on fiqh, he cited scholarly works of Daw al-Shama’ah by Sheikh Jalaluddin al-Suyūṭī, Munyah Ahl al-Warā’ by Sheikh Aḥmad al-Quraishi, Minhaj al-Ṭālibīn by Imam Nawawī, Tatimmah by Ibn Matūlī, al-Ḥawī by al-Mawardī, and Nihāyah by Imam al-Ramlī (Šāfi’ī, 1985).

In usuluddin (Islamic theology), SAMA opted for Imam al-Ash’ari’s approach, which is also considered as one of the notable scholars by Sunni Muslims. The same method was also widely accepted and practiced by the leaders of Tarekat Shādhiliyyah, such as Abū al-Hassan al-Shadhilī and Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī (Šāfi’ī, 1989). SAMA’s other scholarly works also reveal his depth of understanding on tafsir (exegesis), hadith, mustalah (hadith terminology) and ancillary sciences of nahu (grammar), saraf (morphology), and balaghah (language) and sirah nabawiyyah (prophetic biography). Both of his deep and broad understanding of Islam has undoubtedly raised his rank as one of the foremost Islamic scholars of his time (Šāfi’ī, 1985).

In 1690AD, when he was about 40 years old, he decided that it was time to leave Makkah and return to his hometown of Terengganu. His return was popularly associated with the demise of his beloved teacher, Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī (d. 1690AD) as his departure date was almost immediately after his teacher’s death (Mohamad, . 1999: 21).

According to Dato’ Haji Ambak, SAMA was a knowledgeable, learned sufi (mystic). It was evident through his translation of Kitab Hikam. It was not a mere translation work. SAMA was even able to arrange and penned his commentary according to the corporeality of the time (personal communication, 1 February 2011). Correspondingly, according to another of his direct descendants, Haji Ismail Bin Embong, SAMA was a revolutionary Islamic scholar that was ahead of his time (personal communication, 1 February 2011). In a Maal Hijrah (Prophet’s Migration anniversary) seminar that was conducted in Terengganu, a resolution was passed to rename an Islamic school in memory of his massive contribution to Islam. That resolution

was followed through, and now there is an Islamic religious school named “Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Sheikh Abdul Malik.”

### **Background of Kitab al-Kifāyah**

There are three known works of SAMA, i.e., Kitab al-Kifāyah, Risalah al-Naql dan Risalah Kayfiah Niyah. He was a prolific author even from his formative years in Aceh. However, his works in Aceh was mainly reproductions and direct translations of significant works from Arabia (Šāfi‘ī, 1984).

The second most famous work by SAMA is Kitab al-Kifāyah, which put special emphasis on *usuluddin* and *fiqh*. It discusses on localized issues on *aqidah* (belief), *fiqh*-related matters such as *taharah* (purification), *salah* (prayer), fasting, *zakat* (tithe payment), and the prescribed method of ritual slaughter of halal animals or *dhabihah*. This book was explicitly meant for the locals. Notwithstanding, this book was never commercially published and extremely difficult to find. The authors, however, have managed to locate at least four (4) remaining copies left. Two of them was in Malay Manuscript Center, National Library of Malaysia and the remaining manuscripts are preserved in the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. *Kifāyah* is an Arabic word, which means “sufficient.” Inherently, the use of *Kifāyah* as the book title carries a literal meaning of sufficiency of the fundamental knowledge of Islam. It is also a book that has a complete discussion on the necessary knowledge of a Muslim or otherwise known as *fard al-kifāyah*.

From the in-depth study of the three copies of Kitab al-Kifāyah, there is no explicit mention of when SAMA’s start or finish date of the book. However, according to Ismail Che Daud (2012), the book was completed on Thursday, 27 June 1726.

As the oldest, *fiqh* manuscript in Terengganu and one of the earliest, if not the earliest in the Malay Peninsula after Kitab *Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (Zurita, 2014), the researchers are of the opinion that Kitab al-Kifāyah was penned to disseminate basic, fundamental knowledge of Islam to both Terengganu locals and Malays in the Peninsula at the time. It was especially important as reference materials on such topic are somewhat sparse. The book is also made significant as it was written by someone who has learned the knowledge from the epicenter of Islam – Makkah, and Medina.

### **Contemporaneous Local Examples in the Chapter on Purification**

Kitab al-Kifāyah contains discussion on *ibadah* (acts of worship) that includes, *inter alia*, purification, prayer, fasting, *aqiqah* (birth sacrifice), sacrifice (*qurban*), and animal slaughtering. In the purification chapter, SAMA explicated on the ruling of ablution water that changes in taste, smell as well as its coloring by using local, and contemporaneous examples. “Maka terkadang air mutlak itu berubah rasanya atau baunya atau warnanya sebab bercampur dengan benda yang suci yaitu seperti air kunyit atau air tempung atau kesumba atau air komkoma atau barang sebagainya. Maka tatkala itu hendaklah kita tilik pada air itu jika hilanglah daripada air itu nama air mutlak yakni kita katakanlah akan dia air kunyit atau atau air kesumba atau barang sebagainya. Maka tatkala itu tiadalah dapat menyucikan sesuatu dengan dia dan tiada harus dipakai pada mengambil air sembahyang dan sekalian mandi yang fardu, hanya suci jua hukumnya. Maka harus ia minum /A39/ dan ditanakkan nasi dan lainnya. Dan jika tiada hilang air itu daripada nama air yang mutlak sebab sedikit berubahnya, maka air itu suci menyucikan jua hukumnya. Maka harus dipakai pada

membasuh segala najis dan pada mengambil air sembahyang dan pada segala mandi yang fardu". (Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, MSS517: Folio 38-39).

Translation: "Then at times, the ablution water changes in taste or smell or color when it is mixed with turmeric water or flour water or annatto or saffron water or the likes. Then when one sees such a thing, then it is no longer known as ablution water. We will then name them as turmeric water or saffron water or the likes. Therefore, such water is merely pure but will not be able to purify something with and can no longer be used as ablution and mandatory lavation. Then it is commendable to be drunk /A39/ and cook rice with and others. And if it does not lose its ablution properties or changes ever so slightly, then the water is pure and able to purify. Henceforth it is commended to clean all kinds of stool and ablution and mandatory lavation. (Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, MSS517: Folio 38-39).

In the above excerpt, SAMA explicated that ablution water might change its properties when mixed with other materials or substances such as turmeric water, flour water, annatto, and saffron. In Manuscript B, there is no 'water' in front of the words of turmeric and flour. Therefore, in Manuscript B, the materials or substances are turmeric, flour, annatto, and saffron are in powder form. The researchers are inclined to agree with the texts in Manuscript B as materials or substances that we usually put into water are not liquid.

The text above also goes to show how SAMA was expounding on the effect of mixture between other materials and ablution water to the extent of altering its original properties. To ease the understanding of the Malay locals, SAMA strategically opted to use examples that are familiar to them.

The first material was turmeric. Its scientific name is *curcuma domestica* and was widely used for medicinal purposes. Turmeric is also known to be used in relieving menstrual pain, antispasmodic, anti-lethargy supplements, stamina-booster, and strengthening the immune system (Sofyan Tsauri et al, n.d.:103-104). However, turmeric is more popularly known, especially among the Malays and Indians as a seasoning substance in cooking (Fauziah AR et al.: 187). The second material that was discussed by SAMA in *Kitab al-Kifāyah* is flour that is mixed with water. In its watery form, it is used by Malays as a remedy for diarrhea.

Next, SAMA also elaborated on the effect annatto on ablution water. According to KamusDewan (2005:773) annatto or *carthamus tinctorius* is a plant that produces a dye or even paints that is red (Yaakub 1997:92). It is used as a coloring in food, dye for cotton, silk, pandanus straw, rattan, wood products, pharmaceutical drugs, floor cleaner, furniture, and shoes. The extracted sap from the bark has the same properties as Arabic gum (Ong, 2008: 163). Apart from that, another substance that can be extracted from annatto is called bixin, which is rich in antioxidant, antigenotoxic, and anticarcinogenic properties. It can also be used for fever, appetite problem, blood flow, and abdominal distention (Hardiman, 2014:207-208).

The book also uses another local example is "komkoma" or saffron, which is a spice derived from the *crocus sativus* flower. Its dried form is used for coloring, spice, and medicine. According to R.O. Winstedt, "komkoma" is also known as "kungkuma" (Winstedt, 1969: 169).

Subsequently, SAMA deliberated on the "hukm" or ruling on ablution water mixed with turmeric, flour, annatto, and saffron. As cases in point, when it is later known as turmeric water or saffron water, therefore it no longer can be used for wudhu' or ablution. However, it can still be used for drinking and cooking purposes. The specific hukm for this is that these types of water are 'pure but not able to purify.' SAMA's discussion on this hukm is consistent



with significant works by prominent ulamas of al-Šāfi'ī's school of thought (al-Anṣārī, n.d., 3:3 & al-Haytamī, n.d.: 33-34).

SAMA then went to explain the hukm on ablution water that went through only slight changes when comingled with substances such as turmeric, flour, annatto, and saffron. Although mixed with other halal elements, so long that it does not alter its original properties, it can still be called as ablution water and not turmeric water. It is *mustahab* (commendable) to use this type of water for ablution and mandatory lavation (al-Anṣārī, n.d., 3:3 & al-Haytamī, n.d.: 33-34).

From the explanation mentioned above, SAMA has been embracing the local cultures in his elaboration. The rationale is clear – to enable better understanding for the local, Malay students, especially on the ablution subject. Though the Middle Eastern scholars did not mention most of these substances, SAMA chose to incorporate examples that are more contemporaneously relevant.

### Local and Contemporaneous Examples in Halal Food

Apart from the discussion of ablution, SAMA also decided to integrate local examples in the chapters on halal food.

#### 1) “Teritip” (Barnacle)

In *Kitab al-Kifāyah*, SAMA outlines the general guidelines on the hukm of eating seafood. He uses local examples in discussing the types of seafood that are permissible to eat:

**“Dan demikian lagi** halal memakan segala isi karang karangan laut yang tiada hidup di darat lagi tiada memberi muḍārah memakan dia seperti indung mutiara dan kepah dan remis dan teritip dan barang sebagainya.” (Syekh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, MSS 517: folio 115)

Translation: "And but also, it is halal to eat all sea creatures but those that are amphibious, non-deleterious to be eaten as clams, mother-of-pearls, scallops, barnacles, and its equivalents." (Shaykh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah MSS517: folio 115).

From the above excerpt, SAMA has issued a practical guideline on the permissibility of seafood – all sea creatures, by default, are permissible to be eaten except those that are poisonous, intoxicating or hazardous to health. Besides, there is another crucial caveat, i.e., the hukm does not apply to amphibious creatures, which is also consistent with the fatwas by both Šāfi'ī and Ḥanafī scholars (al-Zuhailī, 1989: 687). SAMA also uses a local example of barnacle that can be widely found along the Malaysian coastal lines but rarely found in the local markets. It is very likely that at the time of writing, it was also a staple food among the locals.

Barnacle is a type of arthropod that lives in shallow and tidal waters. During the low tide, especially during the dry season, it can be found on rocks and boats. They may even be found on animals such as whales. As it develops, it will eventually glue itself onto whatever hard surface they landed upon and ultimately stayed there for its entire lifetime. Nevertheless, its protective plates or shells may injure divers (<http://www.terangi.or.id/index>: Retrieved on 10th September 2013). Locals usually eat it with rice. It is rich in protein, low calorie, contains calcium and vitamin A. It can even be used as a cough suppressant (Heryawan, 2013).

The permissibility in eating barnacle are consistent with the following Quranic verse and hadith:

i- Al-Quran:

أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِ وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

Lawful to you is the game from the sea and its food as provision for you and the travelers, but forbidden to you is game from the land as long as you are in the state of ihram. And fear Allah to whom you will be gathered.

(Al-Mā'idah 5:96)

ii- Hadith:

عن جابر أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سُئِلَ عَنْ مَاءِ الْبَحْرِ فَقَالَ هُوَ الطُّهُورُ مَاؤُهُ الْحَلَالُ  
مَبْنِيَّةٌ

Translation: Jabir narrated, Rasulullah (peace be upon him) said regarding the sea, Allah's Messenger said: "Its water is pure, its dead (animals) are lawful (to eat)."

(IbnMajah 1998,3:221)

## 2) "Kelemayar" (Glow-worm)

Another creature that was made as an example in Kitab al-Kifāyah is glow-worm:

"..dan halipan dan kelemayar dan lipas dan hulat..."

Translation: "...and centipede and glow-worm and cockroach and caterpillar..."

(Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, MSS517: folio 116)

Nowadays, "kelemayar" or glow-worm is rarely found. It is a greyish insect that is more closely resembles small centipede. It is usually found in homes and may found itself in human's ears. However, it is markedly different from a centipede that neither bite nor sting a human. It glows at night and is able to curl up its body. In certain places, it is called "genggulung" in Malay, which literally means 'an animal that curls up.'

From the above passage, it is clear that "kelemayar" is a type of insect. According to the majority of Šāfi'ī scholars, all insects are haram except for the ones that are by-products of vinegar-making and those that can be found in vegetables or fruits (if they are difficult to be picked out) (Shams al-dīn Muḥammad bin al-Khāṭib al-Sharbīnī 1998, 4:382). This is because it is a type of animal that is non-hygienic and spreads disease. In one hadith, Prophet was narrated as saying that there are five animals are permitted to be killed, ﷺ Muhammad even when one is in the state of ihram<sup>1</sup>, and the fuqaha (Islamic jurists) issued the impermissibility to eat those five animals:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ خَمْسٌ مِنَ الدَّوَابِّ  
مَنْ قَتَلَهُنَّ وَهُوَ مُحْرِمٌ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَقْرَبُ وَالْقَارَةُ وَالْكَلْبُ الْعَقُورُ وَالْغَرَابُ وَالْحِدَاةُ

Translation: Narrated by Abd Allah bin Umar R.A, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "It is not sinful of a person in the state of Ihram to kill any of these five animals: The scorpion, the rat, the rabid dog, the crow, and the kite." (al-Bukhari t.t. 4:446)

<sup>1</sup> A sacred state into which a Muslim must enter prior to performing hajj (major pilgrimage) or umrah (minor pilgrimage).

In the hadith, there is no specific mention on insects per se. However, the scholars have deduced a hukm on eating “kelemayar” or ‘glow-worm’ from the original hukm on rats and crows, which both are non-hygienic and disease carriers. Therefore, SAMA’s fatwa in Kitab al-Kifāyah is consistent with the fuqaha in Šāfi’ī’s school of thought.

### 3) “Cicak tokek” (Tokay gecko)

“... (dan tu’kir dan cicak) dan bengkarung dan naga...”

“... (and tokay gecko and gecko) and skink and naga...”

(Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, MSS 517: folio 116)

Tokay is of the genus of gecko. It is native to Asia and few Pacific Islands, slightly bigger, and has a different appearance from house gecko due to its rougher skin texture. Its mating call of ‘tuk-ko-tuk-ko’ (hence the literal name of “tokek”) can be usually heard in the morning (The Encyclopedia of Malaysia: The Seas, 91).

In fiqh books, especially those of Šāfi’ī’s school of thoughts, there is no explicit mention on the hukm of eating “tokek” or tokay gecko. However, due to its noticeable similarity with gecko, the same ruling can, therefore, be applied to tokay gecko as well. The hukm is based on the following hadith:

عَنْ أُمِّ شَرِيكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَرَ بِقَتْلِ الْوَرَعِ وَقَالَ كَانَ يَنْفُخُ عَلَى  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Translation: Narrated by Ummu Sharik R.A., Rasulullah (peace be upon him) ordered that the salamander should be killed and said, "It (i.e., the salamander) blew (the fire) on Abraham." (al-Bukhari n.d., 2: 461)

## Conclusions

SAMA was a prominent, classical scholar that has massively contributed to the development of Islam in the Malay Peninsula. The authors are of the opinion that Kitab al-Kifāyah is SAMA’s most famous work, which was extensively used as the reference book for his students. This paper chose to focus on two specific chapters of ablution and halal (or haram) foods. SAMA’s use of local examples such as turmeric, annatto, glow-worm, tokay gecko, and barnacle demonstrate his sense of pragmatism and not merely directly translating the book in its literal form. In so doing, SAMA also proves that Islam is flexible, timeless, and remains relevant throughout the history of humankind.

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