

**THE INTELLECTUAL LEGACY OF ABD AL-RAUF AL-FANSHURI:
TAFSIR, ISLAMIC LAW, AND SUFISM IN THE MALAY WORLD****Anayya Syadza Zainuddin¹, Kasimah Binti Kamaruddin², Zainuddin³**^{1,2}Universiti Sulthan Zainal Abidin, Trengganu, Malaysia³Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda AcehEmail: si4406@putra.unisza.edu.my**ABSTRACT**

Abd al-Rauf al-Fanshuri al-Jawi was one of the most influential scholars in the intellectual and religious history of the Malay world, recognized as a Quranic exegete, jurist, and Sufi master. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of his contributions, including his biography, scholarly networks, exegetical methodology, and his role in Islamic law and Sufism. Using a systematic literature review based on documentary analysis, this research examines various academic sources to understand Abd al-Rauf's intellectual approach and its impact on the development of Islam in the Nusantara. The findings reveal that Abd al-Rauf's legacy extends beyond *Turjuman al-Mustafid*, the first complete Quranic exegesis in Malay-Jawi, to the dissemination of Islamic knowledge through his extensive network of scholars and students. His exegetical methodology integrates textual and contextual approaches, with an emphasis on tauhid, Sufism, and Islamic law, fostering a balanced and contextualized interpretation of Islam within the socio-cultural framework of the Malay world. The findings highlight the need for further research on Malay-Jawi exegesis and comparative studies with other interpretative traditions in the broader Islamic world.

Keywords: *Abd al-Rauf, Turjuman al-Mustafid, Malay-Jawi exegesis, scholarly networks*

ABSTRAK

Abd al-Rauf al-Fanshuri al-Jawi merupakan salah satu ulama paling berpengaruh dalam sejarah Islam di dunia Melayu, dikenal sebagai mufassir, ahli fiqh, dan sufi. Studi ini mengkaji kontribusinya secara komprehensif, mencakup biografi, jaringan keilmuan, metode tafsir, serta pemikirannya dalam hukum Islam dan tasawuf. Dengan menggunakan tinjauan pustaka sistematis berbasis dokumentasi, penelitian ini menelaah berbagai sumber akademik untuk memahami pendekatan intelektual Abd al-Rauf dan dampaknya terhadap perkembangan Islam di Nusantara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Abd al-Rauf tidak hanya dikenal melalui *Turjuman al-Mustafid*, tafsir Al-Quran berbahasa Melayu-Jawi pertama yang lengkap, tetapi juga melalui kontribusinya dalam menyebarkan ajaran Islam melalui jaringan murid dan ulama yang luas. Metode tafsirnya menggabungkan pendekatan tekstual dan kontekstual, dengan penekanan pada tauhid, tasawuf, dan hukum Islam, yang memperkuat pemahaman Islam yang moderat dan berakar pada konteks sosial budaya Melayu. Temuan ini



menegaskan perlunya penelitian lebih lanjut tentang tafsir Melayu-Jawi serta studi perbandingan dengan metodologi tafsir di dunia Islam yang lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: *Abd al-Rauf, Turjuman al-Mustafid, tafsir Melayu-Jawi, jaringan ulama*

A. INTRODUCTION

The role of Abd al-Rauf as a prominent Malay-Jawi exegete has garnered significant attention in Islamic scholarship. This literature review explores his contributions as a *mufassir* (Quranic exegete) by analyzing both his works and the research conducted on his legacy. The discussion is structured into two main sections: first, an overview of Abd al-Rauf's biography, and second, his influence as a leading exegete. The biographical section examines key aspects of his life, including his name, birth, lineage, education, career, notable teachers, disciples, written works, and passing. The subsequent analysis highlights his diverse contributions as a *mufassir*, including his role as a Malay-Jawi exegete, a contextual interpreter of the Quran, an intellectual scholar, a proponent of religious moderation, and a pioneer of Quranic exegesis grounded in *tauhid* (Islamic monotheism) and Sufism. Additionally, he was an expert in *qira'at* (Quranic readings) and Islamic jurisprudence (*muamalah*).

Moreover, Abd al-Rauf's scholarship reflects his efforts to harmonize textual and contextual understandings of the Quran, ensuring that his interpretations remained relevant not only in his time but also for future generations. He is recognized for integrating traditional approaches with a broader understanding of the social and cultural context of Malay society. His moderate and inclusive approach significantly influenced the development of Islam in the *Nusantara*, shaping a balanced and tolerant Islamic thought within a diverse society. Abd al-Rauf played a crucial role in disseminating Quranic exegesis throughout the region by establishing intellectual and scholarly networks. In addition to producing written works, he trained students who later became influential scholars in various fields. His teaching methods reflected a systematic approach to Quranic interpretation, grounded in the disciplines of *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and Sufism. His intellectual legacy extends beyond Quranic interpretation, making him one of the most significant figures in the history of Islamic thought in the Malay world.

This study underscores the importance of investigating Abd al-Rauf al-Fanshuri al-Jawi's role as a distinguished scholar, not only in the fields of Sufism, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and *hadith*, but also in *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis). By shedding light on his contributions as a Malay-Jawi *mufassir*, this study expands existing knowledge and encourages further exploration of his interpretative methods. Analyzing the characteristics and uniqueness of his *tafsir* methodology will provide valuable insights for contemporary Quranic



studies and serve as an educational resource for future generations. Preserving and fully utilizing his works can enhance scholarly discourse and ensure their continued relevance within the community.

Employing appropriate research methodologies is crucial for producing high-quality academic studies. Systematic reviews help identify, assess, and interpret existing research in a structured and transparent manner, ensuring that scholarly investigations are well-founded and reproducible. This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to examine Abd al-Rauf al-Fanshuri al-Jawi's role as a Malay-Jawi *mufassir* within the geographical and historical context that shaped his interpretative approach. The review focuses on his methodological framework, the process of translating the Quran into Malay, and the use of Jawi script in shaping a distinctive Malay-Jawi exegesis. The study utilizes a documentation-based research method, which involves collecting and analyzing relevant written sources, including books, journal articles, and other academic materials related to the subject.¹ This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of previous research, identifying gaps in existing scholarship and providing a clearer understanding of Abd al-Rauf's contributions.² By systematically documenting these findings, this study ensures that they remain accessible for future researchers and continue to inform discussions on Islamic scholarship in the Malay world.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Biography of Abd al-Rauf bin 'Ali al-Fanshuri al-Jawi

The biography of Abd al-Rauf bin 'Ali al-Fanshuri al-Jawi encompasses discussions on his name, birth, lineage, death, education, career, teachers, students, and written works. Notably, *Tafsir Turjuman al-Mustafid*, the primary source for this study, does not contain biographical details about Abd al-Rauf, either in its manuscript or printed editions. However, such information is found in his other works, particularly *Mir'atut Thullab* and *Umdatul Muhtajin*. These texts serve as valuable resources for understanding Abd al-Rauf's life, intellectual legacy, and scholarly contributions.

Abd al-Rauf bin 'Ali al-Fanshuri al-Jawi as-Singkili (1024 H/1615 CE – 1105 H/1693 CE), commonly known as Abd al-Rauf or Tengku Syiah Kuala, was a renowned scholar during the Aceh Sultanate. The title "Syiah Kuala" originates from the location of his grave in Kuala Krueng Aceh, Desa Deah Raya, approximately 15 km from Banda Aceh. The designation "as-Singkili" refers to his birthplace in Aceh Singkil, where he was raised in Kampung Suro Singkil.³ The title "al-Fanshuri" reflects his lineage, as his father, Ali al-Fanshuri, hailed from Fanshur, a historic port city in Barus on Sumatra's west coast.

¹ Martin Terre Blanche and others, *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences* (Juta and Company Ltd, 2006).

² Arlene Fink, *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper* (Sage publications, 2019).

³ Muhammad Syamsu As, *Ulama Pembawa Islam Di Indonesia Dan Sekitarnya* (Lentera, 1999), iv.



This port, once part of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom, connects Abd al-Rauf's ancestry to Arab-Persian roots.⁴ Additionally, he is referred to as "al-Jawi," as mentioned in the preface of *Mir'atut Thullab*, where his full name is recorded as Aminuddin Abd al-Rauf bin Ali al-Jawi. He is celebrated as the author of the first Malay-language Quranic exegesis written in Jawi script, establishing him as a pivotal figure in the Malay-Jawi intellectual tradition.

The exact year of Abd al-Rauf's birth remains a subject of scholarly debate.⁵ Nasution (1988) suggests he was born in 1593 CE (1001 H), while D.A. Rinkes, cited by Azyumardi Azra, places his birth in 1615 CE (1024 H) in Singkil, Aceh. This latter date aligns with scholars such as Anthony H. Johns and Peter Riddell, who base their conclusions on the timeline of his return to Aceh from the Middle East in 1661 CE. Other sources, including Van Hove (1960), Peunoh Daly (1989), A. Hasjmy (1983), and M. Yunus Djamil (1961), suggest he was born in 1620 CE (1029 H).⁶ Despite these variations, evidence from *Mir'atut Thullab* and *Umdatul Muhtajin* supports the conclusion that he was born in 1615 CE (1024 H), at the end of the 16th century. Abd al-Rauf pursued Islamic studies, including *tafsir*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf*, in the Middle East for approximately 19 years (1642–1661 CE) before returning to Aceh. He served as a scholar and teacher for about 30 years before passing away in 1693 CE, suggesting he lived to the age of 78.⁷

Abd al-Rauf's lineage traces back to his father, Ali al-Fansuri, who was of Arab-Persian descent. Ali initially settled in Barus before moving to Singkil, where he married a local woman. While his mother is not explicitly mentioned in historical records, his grandfather is identified as Syamsuddin bin Abdurrahim. According to A. Hasjmy⁸, Abd al-Rauf's ancestors migrated from Iran to Pasai during the late 13th century under the Aceh Sultanate and later settled in Barus, a significant port on Sumatra's western coast. Additionally, in *Bayan Tajali*, Hamzah Fansuri, a relative of Ali al-Fansuri, refers to Abd al-Rauf's father as his brother, indicating that Abd al-Rauf was the nephew of the famous scholar Hamzah Fansuri. This familial connection is also noted by scholars such as Snouck Hurgronje, P. Voorhoeve, and Azyumardi Azra, who cite Abd al-Rauf's acknowledgment of the Fanshur origins of both Hamzah and Ali al-Fansuri.⁹ Despite extensive research, a complete genealogy tracing

⁴ Muhammad Solihin, 'Melacak Pemikiran Tasawuf Di Nusantara', 2005.

⁵ Harun Nasution, 'Ensiklopedi Islam Di Indonesia Jilid I KH', *Imam Zarkasyi, Jakarta: Departemen Agama*, 1988.

⁶ Zaimul Asroor, 'Tarjumān Al-Mustafid: Tafsir Lengkap Pertama Di Nusantara', *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 1 (2018), pp. 94–110.

⁷ Syahrul Adam, 'MENAPAK JALAN SUFI (Kajian Kitab 'Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ilâ Suluk Maslak Al-Mufradin Karya 'Abd Al-Râuf Al-Sinkili)'.
⁸ Ali Hasjmy, 'Kebudayaan Aceh Dalam Sejarah', 1983.

⁹ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulam?' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004).



Abd al-Rauf's lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad remains unverified, although references to his Sufi heritage appear in his works.

Abd al-Rauf passed away in 1693 CE at approximately 78 years old, assuming he was born in 1615 CE. While some sources suggest alternative calculations—placing his age at 73 (1620–1693) or even 100 (1593–1693)—the most widely accepted estimate is 78 years (Basri, 2002). He was buried in Kuala Sungai Aceh, near the tomb of Teungku Dianjong in Peulanggahan, Banda Aceh, close to the Aceh River. Though some accounts claim his grave is located near a riverbank in Singkil, most historians and locals agree that his true resting place is in Kuala Krueng Aceh, Banda Aceh. During the 2004 tsunami, Abd al-Rauf's tomb remained intact, untouched by the disaster, while many other structures and graves were destroyed. He remains a revered figure in Aceh, and his tomb continues to attract visitors from across the region and beyond.

2. Education and Early Career of Abd al-Rauf

Detailed and systematic records of Abd al-Rauf's early life are scarce. It is assumed that his childhood was similar to that of other children of his era, marked by a modest village lifestyle where children assisted their parents during the day and attended Quranic lessons at night. Religious studies were conducted at the residence of a *Teungku* (Islamic teacher) or in *balee pengajian* (study halls). Some students resided with their teachers, developing greater independence and discipline, while others commuted daily. Those who lived at the teacher's house often excelled in their studies due to the immersive learning environment.

Abd al-Rauf began his education under his father, a scholar from Barus who had settled in Singkil. His father founded *Dayah Suro Lipat Kajang* in Simpang Kanan, Singkil, while his uncle, Hamzah Fansuri, established another *dayah* in Simpang Kiri, Singkil. These institutions attracted students from beyond the region, forming an early foundation for the spread of Islamic knowledge in the Malay world. Hamzah Fansuri, a well-known Sufi master, was renowned for his asceticism and literary contributions. Abd al-Rauf likely studied under both his father and uncle (Hasjmy, 1998). His father, Ali al-Fansuri, also played an influential role in the Trumon Kingdom, a polity that existed in the 16th or 17th century CE. This is evidenced by currency inscribed with "*Negeri Trumon*" and "*Negeri Atjeh*", minted in England by order of Raja Bujang Trumon.¹⁰

As he progressed in his studies, Abd al-Rauf traveled to Koetaradja (modern-day Banda Aceh) to pursue higher Islamic education at various *dayah*. At the time, Koetaradja was the capital of the Aceh Sultanate, founded by Ali Mughayat Syah on 1 Jumadil Awal 913 H/8 September 1507 CE. The

¹⁰ H M Zainuddin, 'Tarikh Aceh Dan Nusantara, Pustaka Iskandarmuda, Medan, 1957', *UC BERKELEY LIBRARIES C046023240 JANO*, 11994, p. 2994.



city flourished during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), becoming a major center of Islamic scholarship. Abd al-Rauf also visited Pasee (Samudera Pasai), where he studied at Dayah Blang Pira Pasee, an institution known for its strong Islamic scholarship with scholars of Arab, Persian, and Indian descent—remnants of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom. This region held significance for Abd al-Rauf, as it was the homeland of his ancestors.

Before embarking on his pilgrimage to Mecca, Abd al-Rauf explored various regions of the *Nusantara*, engaging in scholarly exchanges and possibly trading activities. While in Koetaradja, he studied with scholars associated with Hamzah Fansuri. In Pasee, he likely learned under Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani.¹¹ Eventually, he departed for the Arabian Peninsula, initially intending to perform *hajj* but instead remained to pursue advanced religious studies. Abd al-Rauf arrived in Arabia around 1052 H/1642 CE at the age of 27. His academic pursuits are documented in *Umdat al-Muhtajin*, which details the Sufi orders he studied, the scholars he engaged with, and the regions he visited, including Duna, Yemen, Jeddah, Mecca, and Medina. He studied under 19 scholars and maintained scholarly relationships with 27 others. While in Yemen, he studied with the Ja'mān family of scholars, including; Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Ja'mān, Qadhi Ishaq bin Muhammad bin Ja'mān, Ishaq bin Ja'mān (1014–1096 H/1605–1685 CE). Additionally, he engaged with; Faqih Ath-Thayyib bin Abi al-Qasim bin Ja'mān, the Mufti of Bayt al-Faqih, and Qadhi Muhammad bin Ja'mān. This family was well-known for producing distinguished scholars in Sufism and Islamic jurisprudence. Many of them were disciples of Ahmad Qusyasyi and Ibrahim al-Kurani, two of the most influential Sufi scholars of the 17th century.

Abd al-Rauf spent approximately 19 to 20 years in Arabia, deepening his understanding of Sufi teachings, Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In *Mir'at al-Thullab* and *Umdat al-Muhtajin*, he reflects on his long stay, stating: "I found this task burdensome due to my lack of fluency in the Jawi-Malay language of Sumatra, caused by my prolonged travels and residence in Yemen, Mecca, and Medina." This statement refers to Sultanah Tajul 'Alam's request for Abd al-Rauf to write a legal text for the Aceh Sultanate. His extended stay in Arabia had slightly diminished his command of Jawi Malay, as seen in *Mir'at al-Thullab*, which was predominantly written in Arabic. Abd al-Rauf became a pioneer of Quranic exegesis in the Malay world. His work, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, written in Jawi-Arabic (Pegon script), became foundational for subsequent generations of *tafsir* scholars in the *Nusantara*.

According to Snouck Hurgronje¹², Abd al-Rauf did not specify the exact year of his return to Aceh, providing only general indications. However, other

¹¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah* (Prenada Media, 2013).

¹² Snouck Hurgronje, 'Aceh Di Mata Kolonialis (The Achehnese)' (Jilid II. Jakarta: Yayasan Soko Guru, 1985).



sources suggest, 1662 CE (a year after Ahmad Qushashi's passing), or 1661 CE/1071 AH.¹³ If his return was in 1662 CE, it would have been shortly after his teacher's demise. Regardless, he arrived in Aceh during the reign of Queen Safiyatuddin Syah (1641–1676 CE).

Upon returning, Abd al-Rauf settled in Banda Aceh Darussalam, then governed by Queen Safiyatuddin (1645–1675 CE) with Saifurrijal as its mufti.¹⁴ Soon after, he underwent an assessment to validate his scholarly credentials. Voorhoeve recounts that shortly after his return, Khatib Seri Raja bin Hamzah al-Asyi, a contemporary scholar and likely the Sultan's trusted secretary, brought him a Malay manuscript discussing the conditions of facing death. Abd al-Rauf responded that its contents were not found in hadith or Sufi literature he had encountered.¹⁵ In response, Abd al-Rauf authored three treatises; 1) *Lubb al-Kashshaf wa al-Bayan* – addressing the process of facing death. 2) *Tibbi al-Mar'i min Nafsi* – adapted from an Arabic work, providing guidelines for predicting death, locally known as *Kitab Teh*. 3) A treatise on the primacy of the *dhikr* "La Ilaha illa Allah" during one's final moments. After writing these treatises, he sent them to his teacher Ibrahim al-Kurani in Medina for review. Once approved, the manuscripts were returned. Shortly thereafter, Queen Safiyatuddin appointed him Mufti and Qadhi Malikul Adil of the Aceh Sultanate. At the Sultanah's request, he authored *Mir'atu al-Thullab fi Tashil Ma'rifati Ahkami al-Shar'iyyah*, a *fiqh* text written in Malay using Jawi script, aimed at simplifying Islamic jurisprudence for the Sultanate.

3. Teachers, Network of Teachers, and Student of Abd al-Rauf

Abd al-Rauf studied under numerous scholars during his time in the Middle East, where he mastered various Islamic disciplines, including Arabic language, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), hadith, logic (*mantiq*), philosophy, geography, astronomy, theology (*tauhid*), history, and medicine. He also engaged deeply with Sufi teachings and tarekat orders, particularly the Shattariyah and Qadiriyyah.¹⁶ His scholarly training in Arabia lasted nearly two decades, solidifying his reputation as a learned scholar upon his return to Aceh. Among his most influential teachers was Sheikh Ahmad al-Dajjani Qushashi, a Palestinian scholar who passed away in 1660 CE, and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, a prominent Kurdish scholar who died in 1689 CE.

¹³ Abdoerraoef Rinkes, 'Rinkes, DA, Abdoerraoef van Singkel', *Bijdrage Tot de Kennis van de Mystiek Op Sumatra En Java*. Heerenveen, 1909.

¹⁴ Petrus Voorhoeve and Abu Bakar, *Bayān Tajallī (Bahan-Bahan Untuk Mengadakan Penyelidikan Lebih Mendalam Tentang Abdurra-Uf Singkel)* (Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1980).

¹⁵ Ahmad Daudy, 'Allah Dan Manusia: Dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry', 1983, p. 30.

¹⁶ Azyumardi Azra, 'Opposition to Sufism in the East Indies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Islamic Mysticism Contested* (Brill, 1999), pp. 665–86.



Sheikh Ahmad Qushashi was a leading teacher of the Shattariyah Sufi order in Mecca and Medina, while Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani also taught the same order in Medina. Abd al-Rauf obtained a full initiation (*ijazah*) in the Shattariyah and Qadiriyyah orders from these two figures, granting him the authority to propagate these teachings upon his return to the Malay world.¹⁷ Additionally, Abd al-Rauf studied under two distinguished Indian scholars residing in Arabia at the time, Sheikh Badruddin Lahori and Sheikh Abdullah Lahori. He further expanded his knowledge by learning from Sheikh Umar Fursan, the Mufti of Mukha, Yemen, Abdul Fattah al-Khas, the Mufti of Zabid, and Faqih Tayyib Ja'man, the Mufti of Bayt al-Faqih.¹⁸ These scholars were instrumental in shaping Abd al-Rauf's expertise in jurisprudence and Sufi practices.

In Mecca and Medina, he formed scholarly relationships with notable figures such as Ibrahim al-Kurani, Isa al-Maghribi, and Ibn Abd al-Rasuli al-Barzanji.¹⁹ In Zabid, he was mentored by Abdulrahim bin Siddiq al-Khash, Amin bin Siddiq al-Mizjaji, and Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Adnani, a renowned Quran reciter. His studies in Zabid introduced him to Sufi philosophy and the doctrines of prominent Islamic thinkers, which later influenced his approach to *tafsir* and *fiqh* in the Malay world. In Northern Yemen, Abd al-Rauf studied under figures such as Abdul Fattah al-Khash, the Mufti of Zabid; Syaid Thahir bin Husayn al-Ahdal; and Muhammad Abd al-Baqi al-Mizjaji, a well-known Naqshbandi Sufi Sheikh who passed away in 1664 CE. Other significant teachers included Qadhi Muhammad bin Abi Bakr bin Muthayr (d. 1675 CE) and Ahmad Abu Abbas bin Muthayr (d. 1664 CE).²⁰ His extensive travels and studies enabled him to develop a well-rounded understanding of both exoteric and esoteric Islamic sciences.

Upon his return to Jeddah, he continued his studies under Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Barkhali, the Mufti of Jeddah. Later, he moved to Mecca, where he studied under Baruddin al-Lahuri and Abdullah Lahuri, among others. One of his most influential mentors in Mecca was Ali bin Abd Qadir al-Thabari, a respected *muhaddith* (hadith scholar) with strong ties to the Thabari family, a lineage of distinguished Islamic scholars in the Haramain (Mecca and Medina).²¹

Ali al-Thabari, like his brother Zayn Abidin al-Thabari, was widely recognized as an expert in Islamic jurisprudence. The Thabari family maintained scholarly networks with scholars in Zabid, particularly the Ja'man

¹⁷ Ahmad Said Hasani, 'Malaysia, Thailand, Singapura Hingga Brunei Darussalam', *UIN Syarif Jakarta*, 2017.

¹⁸ Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam Masa Kini: Sejarah Dan Aliran* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1987).

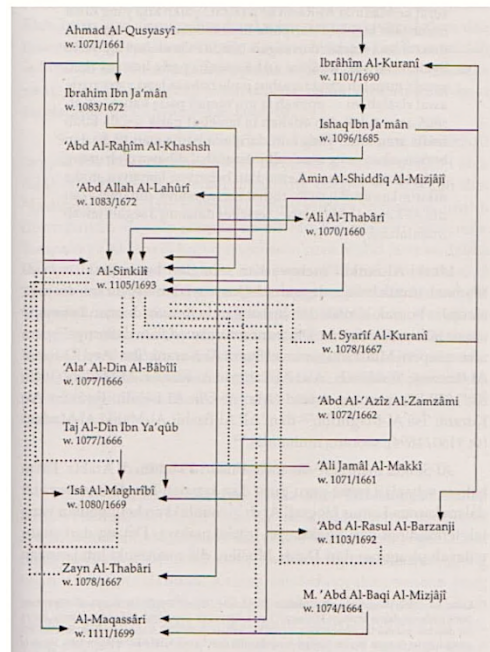
¹⁹ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah*.

²⁰ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah*.

²¹ HA Said, 'Mengenal Tafsir Nusantara: Melacak Mata Rantai Tafsir Dari Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapura Hingga Brunei Darussalam', *Garuda.Kemdikbud.Go.Id*, 2017.



family, who had previously mentored Abd al-Rauf. Azyumardi Azra further noted that Abd al-Rauf interacted with other renowned scholars in Mecca, including Isa al-Maghribi, Abd Aziz Zamzami, Tajuddin bin Yaqub, Ala'uddin al-Babili, Zainuddin al-Thabari, Ali Jamal al-Makki, and Abdullah bin Said Ba Qasyir al-Makki.²² His exposure to diverse scholarly traditions and multiple Sufi lineages enabled him to become a highly respected scholar upon his return to Aceh.



Abd al-Rauf's Network of Teachers
Source Diagram: Azyumardi Azra

Network of Teachers

Abd al-Rauf's scholarly network was vast, encompassing teachers, intellectuals, and Sufi masters from various regions. According to Syamsul Bahri Khatib, Abd al-Rauf listed his primary mentors and intellectual influences in his work *Umdat al-Muhtajin*. Among them, 20 scholars directly taught him specific texts, while 15 others were figures he met without engaging in extensive study with them.²³ His primary teachers included Sheikh Abd al-Qadir Murir of Mocha, Sheikh Ali al-Thabari in Mecca, Sheikh Abd al-Qadir Barkhali in Jeddah, and Sheikh Abd al-Wahid al-Khusyiri in Bait al-Faqih, Yemen. In addition, he interacted with prominent scholars such as Sheikh Umar Fursan, Mufti of Mukha, Sheikh Abdul Fattah al-Khash, Mufti of Zabid, and many others from Mecca, Medina, and Yemen.

²² Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah*.

²³ Syamsul Bahri, 'Tasawuf Syaikh Abd Al-Rauf Singkel Dan Paham Wujudiyah Dalam Karyanya Kitab Tanbih Al-Masyi', 2004.



Among the Sufi figures he encountered were Sheikh Muhammad Ujail, Sheikh Mirza Naqshbandi, and Sheikh Muhammad Makshum Naqshbandi. His most significant influence came from Sheikh Ahmad al-Qushashi, his Sufi master in Medina, who granted him full authorization (*ijazah*) to act as a *khalifah* (spiritual successor) in the Shattariyah and Qadiriyyah orders. After Sheikh Ahmad al-Qushashi's passing in 1660, Abd al-Rauf continued his advanced studies under Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, further deepening his knowledge in both exoteric and esoteric Islamic sciences. Through his rigorous training, Abd al-Rauf emerged as a well-rounded scholar proficient in both the legalistic aspects of Islam and Sufi mysticism. His unique intellectual synthesis allowed him to bridge Shariah (Islamic law) and Sufism, emphasizing a harmonious balance between outward religious practice (*ilm zahir*) and inner spiritual knowledge (*ilm batin*). This balanced approach would later shape his interpretative methodologies in *tafsir*, his legal opinions in *fiqh*, and his leadership in the Acehnese religious community.

Students of Abd al-Rauf

Abd al-Rauf mentored a large number of students, many of whom became renowned scholars who played a crucial role in spreading Islam across the Malay Archipelago. His disciples significantly contributed to the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, Sufi teachings, and jurisprudence, ensuring that his influence endured across generations. One of his most notable students was Baba Daud bin Agha Ismail bin Agha Mustafa al-Jawi ar-Rumi, a descendant of Roman scholars who migrated to Turkey and later to Aceh, where they became prominent scholars. Over time, Baba Daud's lineage settled in Pattani, where it gave rise to Syekh Daud bin Ismail al-Fathani, a highly regarded scholar who played a significant role in Islamic intellectual traditions in the Malay world.²⁴

Another distinguished student was Burhanuddin Ulakan, recognized as the first disseminator of Islam in Minangkabau, West Sumatra. He introduced the Shattariyah order to the region, establishing a strong Islamic presence that influenced generations of Minangkabau scholars and practitioners. In West Java, Abd al-Rauf's disciple Abdul Muhyi Pamijahan is considered a saint (Wali Allah) and is credited with introducing the Shattariyah order to Java. His influence later expanded across the region, with the order gaining prominence in various Islamic centers throughout Java. Yusuf Tajul Mankatsi, a scholar from Bugis (South Sulawesi), is also identified in some historical accounts as one of Abd al-Rauf's disciples. However, other sources suggest that he was a close contemporary, as both Yusuf and Abd al-Rauf studied under Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani.²⁵ Regardless of

²⁴ Ridwan Arif, 'Syekh'Abd Al-Ra'uf Al-Fansuri Rekonsiliasi Tasawuf Dan Syariat Abad Ke-17 Di Nusantara', *Jakarta: Kompas*, 2020.

²⁵ Asroor.



their direct association, Yusuf played a key role in expanding the Shattariyah order in Sulawesi and was instrumental in spreading other Sufi orders, such as Qadiriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah.

A genealogy discovered in West Kalimantan states that Yusuf Tajul Mankatsi received the Shattariyah teachings from Abd al-Rauf and later became the first to propagate the order in South Sulawesi. Additionally, the manuscript *Mukhtashar Tashnif Abd al-Rauf* by Abdur Rauf bin Makhalid Khalifah al-Qadiri al-Bantani suggests that Yusuf Tajul Mankatsi was actually a second-generation student of Abd al-Rauf, indicating the depth and breadth of his intellectual and spiritual lineage. Abd al-Rauf's influence also extended to the Malay Peninsula, where he mentored scholars who played key roles in shaping Islamic thought and jurisprudence. One such figure was Abdul Malik bin Abdullah Terengganu, more commonly known as Tok Pulau Manis. He authored several important Islamic works, including *Kitab Kifayah*, which contributed to the development of Islamic legal discourse in the region. Some historical accounts also suggest that Abdur Rahman Pauh Bok al-Fathani was among Abd al-Rauf's students. However, it is more likely that Abdur Rahman Pauh Bok—also known as Abdul Mubin bin Jailan al-Fathani—was a contemporary rather than a direct disciple, as both studied under Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani.²⁶

As a prominent scholar and Sufi master, Abd al-Rauf was the first to introduce the Shattariyah order to the Malay-Indonesian region. His teachings attracted students from various areas, as Aceh served as a significant stopover for Hajj pilgrims traveling to Mecca. Many of his disciples brought back his teachings to their homelands, where they adapted them to local cultural and religious contexts. The order later spread to Java, where Abdul Muhyi Pamijahan played a key role in propagating its teachings. In Cirebon, a major Islamic and cultural hub, the Shattariyah order became embedded in local literature and mystical traditions. This integration was particularly evident in *serat suluk* literary works, which emphasized metaphysical concepts such as *wujudhiyyah* (unity of being) and *martabat tujuh* (seven levels of existence). These influences extended to Surakarta, where similar adaptations highlighted the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Islamic mysticism.²⁷

Among Abd al-Rauf's Acehnese students were several distinguished scholars who played vital roles in preserving and expanding his teachings. These figures included Teungku Chik in Leupu Gampong Mulia, also known

²⁶ Ade Nailul Huda and Akhyar Amnar, 'Silsilah Sanad Qirā'āt Syaikh 'Abd Al-Ra'ūf Al-Sinkili Dalam Tafsir Turjumān Al-Mustafid', *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits*, 16.2 (2022), pp. 317–40; Wendi Parwanto, 'Penafsiran Surat Al-Falaq [113]: 3-4: Menurut Abd. Ar-Rauf As-Singkili, Hamka Dan M. Quraish Shihab: Telaah Atas Epistemologi Dan Genealogi', *MISYKAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran, Hadist, Syari'ah Dan Tarbiyah*, 3.2 (2018), pp. 205–36.

²⁷ Sri Mulyati, *Tasawuf Nusantara: Rangkaian Mutiara Sufi Terkemuka* (Kencana, 2017).



as Baba Daud ar-Rumi, who was considered Abd al-Rauf's chief successor. Other notable disciples included Syaikh al-Fairusi al-Baghdadi (Tengku Chik Tanoeh Abee), Syaikh Nahyan Tanoeh Abee, Teungku Chik Abdurrahim Ulee Lheu, Teungku Chik Dilamjabat, and Teungku Chik Dianjong. These scholars not only contributed to the spread of Islamic teachings and Sufi traditions in Aceh but also extended their influence to regions such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi.

The impact of Abd al-Rauf's students was not limited to religious education but also extended to legal, theological, and political affairs in the region. Many of his disciples held important positions in the courts of Malay sultanates, serving as muftis, qadhis (judges), and royal advisors. His legal treatises, particularly *Mir'atu al-Thullab*, provided a structured framework for Islamic governance and jurisprudence in the Sultanate of Aceh and other Malay-Islamic polities. This legal tradition significantly influenced Islamic law in Aceh, Minangkabau, and the Malay Peninsula, reinforcing the integration of Islamic jurisprudence into local governance. Through the efforts of his students, Abd al-Rauf's intellectual and spiritual legacy continued to thrive across the Malay-Indonesian world. His contributions to Islamic scholarship, Sufi thought, and legal traditions solidified his position as one of the most influential scholars in Southeast Asian history. His teachings on Shariah and Sufism provided a foundation for Islamic education in the region, shaping generations of scholars, religious leaders, and legal experts who carried forward his vision of a balanced and holistic Islamic tradition.

4. Abd al-Rauf: Scholar, Exegete, and Intellectual Legacy in the Aceh-Malay World

Abd al-Rauf was a distinguished scholar who significantly contributed to the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Aceh-Malay Islamic world. His extensive writings reflect a deep engagement with Islamic scholarship, jurisprudence, mysticism (*tasawwuf*), and Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), making him one of the most influential scholars in Southeast Asia. His works are predominantly in Arabic and Jawi script, covering a broad range of topics. The original manuscripts of his works are preserved in university libraries in Leiden, the Netherlands, serving as a valuable resource for researchers.²⁸

Abd al-Rauf authored approximately 36 texts, including one book on Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), two on hadith, ten on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and twenty-three on Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*). His contributions in fiqh include major works such as *Mir'ah al-Tullab fi Tashil Ma'rifah al-Ahkam al-Syar'iyah*, a comprehensive legal guide in Malay covering muamalah (transactions), munakahat (marriage law), siyasah (governance), and jinayat

²⁸ Muliadi Kurdi, *Abdurrauf As-Singkili: Mufti Besar Aceh Pelopor Tarekat Syattariah Di Dunia Melayu* (Naskah Aceh, 2023).



(criminal law). Other notable legal texts include Bayan al-Arkan, which explains the pillars of Islam, and Majmu' al-Masa'il, a compilation of legal questions and answers for Muslim communities. His legal works played a crucial role in shaping Islamic jurisprudence in the Malay world, influencing religious and judicial practices across the region.

In Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*), Abd al-Rauf wrote extensively on spiritual purification, ethical conduct, and the Sufi path. His works include Tanbih al-Masyi al-Mansub ila Thariq al-Qusyasyi, a guide to the Qusyasyi Sufi order, and Umdah al-Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufarridin, which outlines Sufi practices in the Malay language. He also explored key Sufi concepts such as wahdatul wujud (unity of existence), tajalli (divine manifestation), and dhikr (remembrance of God). His integration of Sufism with Sunni jurisprudence underscored his moderate and pragmatic approach to Islamic spirituality. Beyond prose, Abd al-Rauf also composed religious poetry. His Syair Ma'rifah, transcribed in Bukit Tinggi in 1859, explores the four components of religion leading to insan kamil (the perfect human being). This work aligns him with Hamzah Fansuri's mystical-religious poetic tradition, positioning him as both a transmitter and innovator in Islamic intellectual thought.²⁹ His affiliation with the Shattariyah Sufi order, which he studied under Ahmad al-Qushashi in Medina, helped propagate Islamic mysticism across the Malay world, particularly in Java and the broader archipelago. Due to Aceh's status as a transit hub for Hajj pilgrims, his teachings reached Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula, further expanding his intellectual and spiritual influence.

One of Abd al-Rauf's most significant contributions was his role as a Malay-Jawi exegete, pioneering Quranic translation and commentary in the Malay language. His most renowned work, Turjuman al-Mustafid, is recognized as the first complete Quranic exegesis written in Malay, making Islamic teachings more accessible to non-Arabic-speaking communities. In this work, Abd al-Rauf utilized interpretative tools such as Asbab al-Nuzul (occasions of revelation), Qiraat (variant readings), and narrative accounts. While Turjuman al-Mustafid does not comprehensively cover all Quranic sciences, it laid the foundation for subsequent Malay exegeses.³⁰

His exegetical methodology reflects a balanced approach, integrating linguistic, contextual, and thematic analyses. He categorized Quranic chapters into Sab' al-Tiwal (seven long chapters) and Al-Mathani (chapters with fewer than 100 verses). Furthermore, he provided a historical account of Quranic preservation, chronicling its transcription on various materials during the Prophet's era and its standardization under Caliph Uthman. His translation efforts (1661–1675 CE) ensured that the Quran's teachings were

²⁹ Solihin.

³⁰ Firdaus M Yunus, 'Tgk. Syiah Kuala Pengembang Tarekat Syattariah Di Nusantara', *Kalam: Jurnal Agama Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 4.2 (2016), pp. 163–86.



accessible to Southeast Asian communities, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. When compared to other Quranic translations, Abd al-Rauf's work stands as a pioneering effort. For instance, the first Yoruba translation emerged in 1916, while the Hausa translation appeared in 1975. His 17th-century exegesis highlights his groundbreaking role in Quranic scholarship in the Malay world. *Turjuman al-Mustafid* was widely distributed, with early editions appearing in Istanbul (1884) and later in Singapore, Jakarta, Penang, and Cairo. This extensive publication and reprinting history underscores its foundational role in Islamic education in Southeast Asia.

In terms of methodology, Abd al-Rauf employed a *tafsir bi al-ra'y* approach, integrating independent reasoning with classical sources. He drew inspiration from earlier scholars such as Al-Baydawi and Al-Jalalayn, adapting their insights to resonate with the cultural and linguistic context of the Malay world. His exegesis also addressed key Quranic sciences, including lexical studies, abrogation (*naskh wa mansukh*), and thematic interconnections. Through *Turjuman al-Mustafid*, Abd al-Rauf demonstrated a commitment to preserving Quranic authenticity while ensuring its teachings remained relevant to the Malay-speaking Muslim community. His pioneering role as a Quranic exegete continues to influence scholars and students of Islamic studies in Southeast Asia, cementing his enduring intellectual legacy.

C. CONCLUSION

Abd This study highlights the significant role of Abd al-Rauf al-Fanshuri al-Jawi as a key figure in the development of Quranic exegesis in the Malay world. As a scholar, jurist, and Sufi, he contributed not only to the dissemination of Islamic teachings but also to the intellectual and spiritual landscape of the Nusantara. Through a systematic review of existing literature, this research has demonstrated that Abd al-Rauf's influence extended beyond his authorship of *Turjuman al-Mustafid*, the first complete Quranic exegesis in Malay-Jawi, to the establishment of a far-reaching scholarly network that shaped Islamic thought in the region. His exegetical methodology, which integrates textual and contextual approaches, reflects a nuanced understanding of both classical Islamic scholarship and the socio-cultural realities of the Malay world. By emphasizing tauhid (Islamic monotheism), Sufism, and Islamic jurisprudence, his works played a crucial role in developing a balanced and contextualized interpretation of the Quran, ensuring its relevance across generations. Furthermore, his engagement in legal thought and Sufi discourse positioned him as a pivotal figure in the intellectual and spiritual traditions of Southeast Asia.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its comprehensive mapping of Abd al-Rauf's *tafsir* methodology and his intellectual network, areas that remain underexplored in contemporary scholarship. The findings underscore the need for further research on the interpretative methods of Malay-Jawi scholars, particularly in comparison with other exegetical



traditions in the broader Islamic world. Future studies could benefit from a deeper engagement with primary manuscripts and archival sources to enhance understanding of Abd al-Rauf's intellectual legacy. Ultimately, this study reaffirms Abd al-Rauf's status as a pioneer of Quranic exegesis in the Malay world while opening new avenues for research on the transmission of Islamic knowledge in Southeast Asia. His scholarly contributions remain relevant today, offering valuable insights into the historical development of tafsir and the broader intellectual currents of Islamic thought in the region.

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