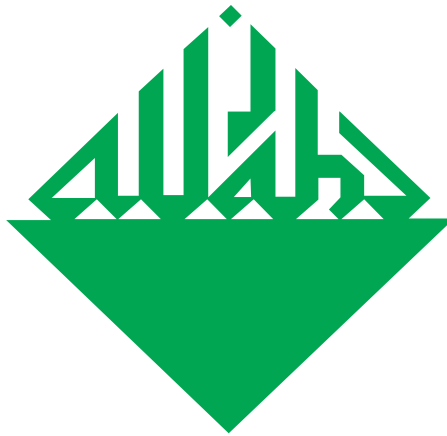


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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INDONESIA'S MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS AND THE OVERTHROW OF SUKARNO

Steven Drakeley

AN ARABIC MANUSCRIPT ON THE HISTORY OF *IṢLĀḤ* AND *IRSHĀD* 'REVOLUTION' IN INDONESIA

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Table of Contents

Articles

- 197 *Steven Drakeley*
Indonesia's Muslim Organisations
and the Overthrow of Sukarno
- 233 *Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk*
An Arabic Manuscript on the History of
Islāḥ and *Irshād* 'Revolution' in Indonesia
- 259 *Peter G. Riddell*
Variations on an Exegetical Theme:
Tafsīr Foundations in the Malay World
- 293 *Murodi*
Al-Niẓām al-ri'āsī ma'a ta'addudiyat al-aḥzāb:
al-Taḥāluf fī tāriḫ al-ri'āsāt ba'da niẓām
al-ḥukm al-jadīd (1998-2004)
- 321 *Ayang Utriza Yakin*
Ḥuqūq al-insān wa al-dīmūqrāṭiyah
wa dawr al-mujtama' al-madanī bi Indūnisīyā

Book Review

- 375 *Din Wahid*
Kembalinya Konservatisme Islam Indonesia

Document

- 391 *Muhammad Nida' Fadlan & Dadi Darmadi*
Islam, Local Culture, and Japan-Indonesian Relations

Peter G. Riddell

Variations on an Exegetical Theme: *Tafsīr* Foundations in the Malay World

Abstract: *The field of tafsīr al-Qurʾān in Malay has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent decades. The volume of commentaries has grown exponentially in the 20th century. Prior to that, Qurʾanic exegesis in Malay was sporadic and varied. This paper will consider pioneering efforts by Malay commentators on the Qurʾan, focusing on three key sets of materials. First, we will consider the earliest surviving fragments of tafsīr in Malay. Second, we will examine Tarjumān al-Mustafid by ʿAbd al-Raʿūf of Singkel, the first known commentary in Malay upon the whole Qurʾan, written in the late 17th century and subsequently widely disseminated throughout the Malay world. Third, we will focus upon the early 20th century commentary by Muḥammad Saʿīd bin ʿUmar of Kedah, regarded by many as the second commentary in Malay upon the whole Qurʾan.*

Keywords: *Tafsīr*, Sūrat al-Kahf, ʿAbd al-Raʿūf, Muḥammad Saʿīd bin ʿUmar, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah.

Abstrak: *Kajian Tafsir al-Qur'an di Dunia Melayu telah banyak menarik perhatian secara ilmiah pada beberapa dekade belakangan ini. Jilid tafsir telah bertambah berlipat-lipat pada abad ke-20. Sebelum itu, tafsir al-Qur'an di dunia Melayu masih jarang dan beragam. Tulisan ini akan mengkaji usaha awal oleh para penafsir Melayu terhadap al-Qur'an yang menekankan pada tiga bahan utama yang ada. Pertama, kami akan mengkaji potongan tafsir paling awal yang masih utuh. Kedua, kami akan menyelidiki kitab Tarjumān al-Mustafid karya 'Abd al-Ra'ūf dari Singkel, yang diketahui merupakan tafsir al-Qur'an pertama dalam bahasa Melayu, yang ditulis pada akhir abad ke-17 dan kemudian tersebar di seluruh dunia Melayu. Ketiga, kami akan meneliti pada tafsir Muḥammad Sa'īd bin 'Umar dari Kedah, yang dianggap banyak orang sebagai tafsir al-Qur'an lengkap kedua di dunia Melayu, pada awal abad ke-20.*

Kata kunci: *Tafsīr, Sūrat al-Kahf, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, Muḥammad Sa'īd bin 'Umar, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah.*

الخلاصة: لقد أثارت دراسة تفسير القرآن في عالم الملايو كثيرا من الاهتمامات العلمية في العقود الأخيرة. وقد تزايدت مجلدات التفسير أضعافا مضاعفة في القرن العشرين. كان تفسير القرآن في عالم الملايو قبل ذلك نادرة ومتنوعا. يتناول هذا البحث المحاولة الأولى التي قام بها مفسرو القرآن بالملايو ويركز على ثلاثة مواد رئيسية متوفرة. أولها، القيام بدراسة قطع مازالت سليمة من التفسير في العهد المبكر. ثانيها، التحقيق في كتاب ترجمان المستفيد لمؤلفه عبد الرؤوف السنكلي، وهو أول تفسير القرآن باللغة الملايوية فيما يعرف، والذي كتب في أواخر القرن السابع عشر الميلادي ثم انتشاره في جميع أنحاء الملايو. ثالثها، القيام بالبحث في تفسير محمد سعيد بن عمر الكيداهي (من كيداه بماليزيا) الذي اعتبره كثير من الناس أنه ثاني تفسير كامل للقرآن باللغة الملايوية، في أوائل القرن العشرين.

الكلمات الاسترشادية: التفسير، سورة الكهف، عبد الرؤوف، محمد سعيد بن عمر، سورة الفاتحة.

For the Islamic majority communities of Southeast Asia, the years since the end of the Second World War in 1945 have been a period of great change. Independence movements, which took various forms, led to the emergence of new nations with majority Muslim populations in parts of Southeast Asia. The vast majority of these populous Southeast Asian Muslim communities have a variant of Malay as their national language: Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia/Melayu in Malaysia and Brunei. It is on these linguistic communities that this paper will focus.

While the 1940s and 1950s heralded independence for most of these communities, another phenomenon was clearly discernible from the 1970s: Islamic resurgence. Southeast Asian Muslim communities were not immune from worldwide trends among Muslims towards greater political involvement, increased religious commitment and a merging of the two. Key factors occurred on the international stage to stimulate these trends, among which the most prominent were the oil crisis and rapid increase in oil prices of the 1970s, coupled with the Iranian revolution of 1979. The former led to vast funds being available for increasing Islamisation; the latter led to increased political activism by Muslims across the world, including those in Southeast Asia.

Increasing awareness of Islamic identity led to a growing appetite for study of the Islamic sciences. Various Islamic centres of learning which went by different names – madrasahs, pondoks, suraus, pesantrens as well as Islamic colleges and universities – moved onto centre stage in the latter part of the 20th century, in response to an increasing call on their training programs.

In addition to institutional growth, the production of Islamic literature increased in manifold ways in the second half of the 20th century, picking up pace from the 1970s onwards. At the centre of this growth in literature was the output of volumes that engaged with or explained Islam's most sacred text: the Qur'an. Translations of the Qur'an increased in quantity (Riddell, 2014a), as did exegetical materials that explained and interpreted the Qur'anic text.

The voices heard in these new materials were by no means uniform. On the contrary, vigorous debates took place among their authors about key hermeneutical questions. What was meant by a particular verse? Should verses be interpreted according to their surface meaning or were there underlying meanings that should be brought out? Who

is qualified to interpret the Qur'anic text? Should traditional ways of dealing with the text be prioritised, or should they be considered as outdated and replaced by a more dynamic approach that linked present realities with the priorities of the distant past – the community of the Prophet in Medina?

Such questions fed the volumes of Qur'anic commentaries that appeared increasingly in the second half of the 20th century (Hussin et al, 2012: 4344). The Malay scholar Abdullah Abbas Nasution signalled this trend early with his *Al-Quran bergantung makna Jawi*, which appeared in 1940 and which focused on a literal interpretation of Qur'anic verses. The 1950s and 1960 saw the publication of *Tafsir Nur al-Qur'an al-Karim* by Mustafa Abdul Rahman, who died prematurely after completing his commentary on the 27th juz' of the Qur'an. The prominent Acehnese scholar T. M. Hashbi Ash-Shiddieqy wrote the 30 volumes *Tafsir al-Nur*, taking the early 20th century commentary by the Egyptian al-Maraghi as its core, and playing a significant role in the emerging study of *tafsir* from the time of the work's first appearance in 1956. Other rigorous and weighty commentaries were *Tafsir Al-Azhar* by Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah and the 15 volumes *Tafsir al-Misbah* by Muhammad Quraish Shihab.

In addition to these significant works of exegesis that represented the creative output of their authors, other scholars devoted themselves to translating into Bahasa Indonesia or Bahasa Malaysia key Arabic commentaries. For example, Dato' Yusoff Zaky b. Yacob translated the seminal commentary by the Islamist icon Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, as *Di bawah bayangan al-Quran* (Qutb & Yacob, 2000).

So such activity represented the result of subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, processes of Islamisation and increasing Islamic identity that came to mark Southeast Asian Muslim societies in the latter decades of the 20th century. But what was it building upon? What previous exegetical activity had taken place in these communities that laid the foundations for this surge in *tafsir* writing? In the following sections, we will take account of two of the earliest complete commentaries in Malay upon the whole Qur'an that survive today, as well as their fragmentary predecessors. In the process, we will consider how such early exegesis set the stage for 20th century exegetical resurgence.

Setting the Stage

Muslim traders and travellers had some level of contact with coastal communities in Southeast Asia from the earliest period of Islam. Chinese records provide evidence of Muslim presence in the Chinese court as early as the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632 – 661), with the number of Muslim envoys to China increasing during the Umayyad dynasty (661 – 750) (Nakahara, 1984: 1-2). Those travelling by the sea routes inevitably passed through the Straits of Malacca, stopping off at various points along the way for re-provisioning and contact with local populations. Nevertheless, such contacts do not represent the establishment of Muslim communities, though even at this early stage it may well be that copies of the Qur'an were left behind by Muslim travellers in their Southeast Asian stopover points en route for China.

The earliest communities of Muslims can be traced with confidence to the late 13th century. Marco Polo touched on north Sumatra in his travels in the 1290s and recorded that the city of Perlak had embraced Islam. He wrote as follows:

“You must know that the people of Ferlec used all to be idolators, but owing to contact with Saracen merchants, who continually resort here in their ships, they have all been converted to the law of Mahomet. This applies only to the inhabitants of the city. The people of the mountains ... worship many different things; for whatever they see first when they wake in the morning, that they worship.” (Latham, 1958: 225)

The same decade produced a gravestone recording that the ruler of the kingdom of Samudra-Pasai on the northern tip of Sumatra, Malik al-Saleh, was Muslim (Marrison, 1951: 29). Shortly thereafter, in 1303, the region of Terengganu on the Malay peninsular produced an inscription testifying to the existence of a Muslim community. The text of this inscription is in Jawi, the Malay language written with the Arabic alphabet, and is devoted to the promulgation of certain Islamic legal provisions.

It is fair to assume that where one finds Islamic communities, there one will also find the Qur'an. And where one finds the Qur'an, one can expect to find different attempts to interpret the sacred text of Islam. So what evidence is there of the Qur'an and its interpretation in these earliest Malay world Muslim communities?

Traditional Malay Islamic literature is quite allusive on this question. Islamic themes appear repeatedly in classics such as

Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai, Sulalat al-Salatin, Hikayat Muhammad Hanafyya and many others. Valuable research has been carried out by specialists in early Malay literature which provide some glimpses into these earliest Malay Muslim communities (Winstedt, 1969; Braginsky, 2004). But unfortunately, they are not detailed on the specific question of study of the Qur'an and its exegesis, though we can assume that it took place during the early centuries of Islamisation of Southeast Asia.

Manuscripts of part or all of the Qur'an appear from around 1600. A fragment of *Sūrah* 58 (*al-Mujādalah*) is contained within a manuscript collected in 1604 in Aceh by the Dutch mariner Pieter Williamzoon van Elbinck; this manuscript subsequently found its way into the collection of the famous Dutch Orientalist Thomas Erpenius (d. 1624). After his death, this manuscript, along with other Malay manuscripts in his collection, was purchased by the University of Cambridge in 1629 (Van Ronkel, 1896: 2).

A similar story surrounds the earliest full copy of the Qur'an that has survived. Catalogued as MS 96 D 16 in Rotterdam city library, this manuscript was given by the Sultan of Johor in July 1606 to Dutch Admiral Matelieff de Jonge in appreciation of his assistance in the Johor military campaign against Portuguese Malacca. Upon the return of the Dutch Admiral to Holland, the manuscript was passed on and found its way into the Rotterdam public collection (Riddell, 2002)

So with a discernible history of over 900 years of Islamic communities in the Malay-Indonesian world, we have clear evidence of the presence of the Qur'an for the last 600 years of that period. What about evidence of Qur'anic exegesis?

Translation and Exegesis of the Qur'an: The Earliest Fragments

Hamzah Fansuri was a key literary pioneer of Malay Islamic writing. Scholars argue about his date of death with views ranging between 1527 and 1590 for the year that he breathed his last (Guillot & Kalus, 2000; Braginsky, 2001).¹ In his poetry and prose, Hamzah included many Qur'anic quotations rendered into Malay. Fifteen of his surviving poems contain renderings of Qur'an verses in poetic form. Brakel observes:

“...the less esoteric the poems, and the more they are directed towards a larger audience, in other words: the stronger rhetorical effect is required, the more likelihood there is that the Qur’ān is resorted to.” (Brakel, 1980: 3)²

Freer renderings appear within his three surviving prose works, including *Asrār al-‘arīfīn* (Secrets of the Gnostics) which gives us a taste of Hamzah’s approach to translating the Qur’anic text.³

Q2:255	<i>(Allāh lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm...)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(Allah! <i>La ilaha illa Huwa</i> , none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains) and protects all that exists...
Hamzah	(Bahwa Allah Ta’ala esa, tiada Tuhan lain melainkan Ia, Hidup, memegangkan sekalian...) (Al-Attas, 1970: 244)
Hamzah English	(Truly God is one, there is no Lord apart from Him, living, sustaining all...)
Q14:34	<i>(wa atākum min kull mā sa’altumūhu...)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(And He gave you of all that you asked for...)
Hamzah	Ku(beri akan kamu daripada sekalian yang kamu pinta...) (Al-Attas, 1970:249)
Hamzah English	I (gave you all that you requested...)
Q15:99	<i>(wa a’bud rabbaka hattā ya’tika al-yaqīn.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty) i.e. death.
Hamzah	(Sembah Tuhanmu hingga memberi dikau nyata.) (Al-Attas 1970:239)
Hamzah English	(Worship your Lord until certainty is given to you.)
Q17:72	<i>(wa man kāna fī ḥādhīhi a’ mā fā-huwa fī al-ākhirā a’ mā wa adallu sabīlan.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(And whoever is blind in this world) i.e., does not see Allah’s Signs and believes not in Him, (will be blind in the Hereafter, and more astray from the Path.)
Hamzah	(Barangsiapa tiada mengenali) Allah (di sini di akhirat pun tiada dikenali.) (Al-Attas, 1970:239)
Hamzah English	(Whoever does not recognise) God (here, he will also not be recognised in the hereafter.)

Q20:76	<i>(Jannāt ‘adn tajrī min taḥṭihā al-anhār, khālidīna fihā wa dhālika jazā’ man tazakkā.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(‘Adn) Eden (Paradise) everlasting Gardens, (under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever: such is the reward of those who purify themselves) by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden and by doing all that which Allah has ordained.
Hamzah	(Dibalaskan mereka itu yang Islam) daripada Tuhan mereka itu: (tempatnya syurga, lalu di bawahnya sungai, masuk mereka itu dalamnya kekal.) (Al-Attas, 1970:270)
Hamzah English	(Those who are Muslim will be rewarded) by their Lord (with Paradise, under which rivers flow, and where they will abide forever.)
Q23:92	<i>(‘ālim al-ghayb wa al-shahāda fa-ta‘ālā ‘ammā yushrikūna.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(All-Knower of the unseen and the seen! Exalted be He over all that they associate) as partners to Him!
Hamzah	(Mahasuci Allah tiada dapat diperikan.) (Al-Attas, 1970:243)
Hamzah English	(Exalted is God; He cannot be associated.)
Q36:82	<i>(inna-mā amruhu idhā arāda shay’an an yaqūla la-hu kun fa-yakūnu.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, “Be!” and it is!)
Hamzah	(Bahwasanya barang titah-Nya, tatkala berkehendak kepada [se]suatu, bahwakan berkata baginya: ‘Jadi kau!’ menjadi.) (Al-Attas, 1970:247)
Hamzah English	(Truly as for His command, when He wishes something, He simply says to it, “Be!” and it is..)
Q42:11	<i>(laysa ka-mithlihi shay’.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(... There is nothing like unto Him...)
Hamzah	(Tiada suatu pun) barang yang kita bicarakan dengan hati kita, atau dengan ma’rifat kita (sudah-sudah.) (Al-Attas, 1970:243)
Hamzah	(There is nothing) of what we say in our innermost heart or with our esoteric knowledge that is like Him...)

Q57:3	(<i>huwa al-awwal wa al-akhīr wa al-zāhir wa al-bāṭin wa huwa bi-kull shay' alīm.</i>)
Hilali & Khan	(He is the First) nothing is before Him (and the Last) nothing is after Him, (the Most High) nothing is above Him (and the Most Near) nothing is nearer than Him. (And He is the All-Knower of every thing.)
Hamzah	(Ia jua Yang Dahulu, Ia jua Yang Kemudian, Ia Yang Nyata, Ia Terbunyi; Ia tahu pada segala suatu.) (Al-Attas, 1970:245)
Hamzah	(He alone is the First, He alone is the Last, He is the Evident, He is the Hidden; He knows all.)

Hamzah's spiritual disciple, though not necessarily a contemporary, Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i, served as *Shaykh al-Islam* in the Sultanate of Aceh from approximately 1588 until his death in 1630 (Johns, 2009: 149). He also translated individual Qur'anic passages into Malay, such as the following:

Q3:19	(<i>inna al-dīn 'inda Allāh al-islām.</i>)
Hilali & Khan	(Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam.)
Shams al-Din	(Kebaktian berkenan kepada Allah itu Islam.) (Van Niewenhuijze, 1945: 36)
Shams al-Din English	(The faith of God is [none other than] Islam.)

It was during Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i period of predominance that we encounter the first surviving example of extended exegesis. This is represented by the Malay commentary on *Sūrah* 18 (*al-Kahf*), contained within Cambridge MS Or. Ii.6.45. This manuscript, like the previously-mentioned work that contains the fragment of *Sūrah* 58, belonged to the collection of Thomas Erpenius. In this case the copyist is unknown, as is the author. It dates from around 1600. Its Malay rendering of individual Qur'anic verses is filled out with extensive commentary drawn from several classical Arabic works of *tafsīr*, especially the famous commentaries by al-Baghawī and al-Khāzin. The anonymous author of this work, who may well have been connected with Hamzah Fansuri and/or Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i, aimed to do much more than simply render the Qur'anic verses into Malay. He set as his goal the detailed exegesis of their content.

A monograph level study of Cambridge MS Or. Ii.6.45 is set to appear.⁴ For now we will consider one verse to provide a glimpse of this commentary's approach:

18:7	<i>(innā ja'alnā mā 'alā al-ard zīnatan lahā li-nabluwahum ayyuhum ahsan 'amalan)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them) mankind (as to which of them are best in deeds.) i.e. those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them – deeds -- totally for Allah's sake and in accordance to the legal ways of the Prophet.
Ii.6.45 Malay	<p>(Sesungguhnya telah Kami jadikan segala barang semesta sekalian yang di bumi itu) daripada segala haiwanat dan tumbuh-tumbuhan dan gulai-gulaian dan segala sungai, sekalian itu (perhiasan bagi bumi),</p> <p>Jika seseorang bertanya: “Segala haiwanat dan tumbuh-tumbuhan dan segala sungai itu nyatalah akan perhiasan bumi. Adapun segala ular dan kala dan syaitan perhiasan bumi lagikah ia?”, maka jawabmu: “Itupun perhiasan bumi jua baginya akan menyatakan keesaan Allah menjadikan semesta sekalian. Atas kata Mujahid, adapun maksud firman Allah mengatakan perhiasan bumi itu, dan segala anbia dan segala aulia dan segala ulama dan segala orang salih. Kata setengah mufassir murad daripada perhiasan itu segala tumbuh-tumbuhan pohon kayu akan perhiasan bumi dan segala yang diam atasnya.</p> <p>(akan menunjuki Kami bagi mereka itu) dengan dia siapa kutaha daripada mereka itu (yang lebih amalannya dalamnya) dan terlebih tapanya pada melakangi dia dunia dan meninggalkan ghurūr dalamnya.</p>
Ii.6.45 English	<p>(Truly We have made everything which is on the earth) including the animals, and plants, and the cooked food, and the rivers, all of this (as embellishments for the earth),</p> <p>If someone asks: “Animals and plants and rivers are evidence of embellishments for the earth. As for snakes and scorpions</p>

	<p>and devils, are they also embellishments for the earth?”, then answer: “They too are its embellishments to testify to the oneness of God in creating all things.” According to Mujāhid, the meaning of God’s pronouncement regarding the embellishments of the earth [includes] the prophets and the saints and the scholars and the pious. Some commentators say that the embellishments are represented by the plants and everything which lives upon the earth.</p> <p>(so that We can distinguish among them) who among them is perhaps (greater in works) and more repentant in renouncing the world and in leaving behind the illusion in it.</p>
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Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658) followed Hamzah Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Samatra’i chronologically but set out to eradicate their influence from the Sultanate of Aceh. He, too, included within his works many Qur’anic citations and Malay renderings, such as the following:

Q19:90	<i>(takādu al-samāwāt yatafaṭṭarna minhu wa tanshaqq al-ard wa takhīr al-jibāl haddan)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(The Heavens are apt to split asunder and the earth crack and the mountains to fall apart)
Al-Raniri	(Hampirlah tujuh petala langit belah-belah, cerak-ceraklah tujuh petala bumi, dan runtuhlah segala bukit berhamburan) (Al-Attas, 1966: 89)
Al-Raniri English	(The seven heavens are almost torn apart, the seven earths have vast cracks and the mountains disintegrate)
Q19:91	<i>(an da’aw lil-rahmān waladan.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(when they hear the sayings) of the Jews and Christians (that the God who is called the Merciful begat a son.)
Al-Raniri	(tatkala mendengar kata) Yahudi dan Nasara (ada bagi Tuhan yang bernama Rahman itu anak.) (Al-Attas, 1966: 89)
Al-Raniri English	(upon hearing the words) of the Jews and Christians (that the Lord named the Compassionate has taken a son.)
Q51:50	<i>(Fa firrū ilā Allāh innī lakum minhu nadhīr mubīn)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(Hasten ye then) at once (to Allah: I am from Him a Warner to you, clear) and open!

Al-Raniri	(Larilah kamu kepada Allah, bahwasanya aku bagimu menakuti yang amat nyata.) (Jones, 1974: 10-11)
Al-Raniri English	(Flee to God; truly I am warning you most clearly.)

By the time of al-Raniri, Islamic communities had been present for over three and a half centuries in the region, although the faith's hold on the region was under challenge with the advance of European colonisation. Networks of *madrassa* Islamic schools played an important role in consolidating the Islamic presence (Azra, 2006: 52ff). These educational networks were nourished by study visits made by their leading scholars to overseas destinations, including Arabia and India.

The Evidence So Far

Having considered above various efforts at fragmentary translation and exegesis of the Qur'an in Malay that took place up to the middle of the 17th century, let us pause to draw out a number of features of interest.

First, and perhaps most important, we should consider that the period in question was a period of high activity – and indeed conflict – among Sufi groups. Much has been written on this question [Al-Attas, 1966; Azra, 2004] and we will not discuss it in detail here. However the predominance of the monistic-inclined Sufi thought under Hamzah Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i, and the bitter reaction against their writing by Nur al-Din al-Raniri, encourages us to look for evidence of these polemics in the translation and exegesis that lies before us.

In fact, there is not a great deal of evidence of Sufi thinking in our examples above, but the few hints that we do encounter are tantalising. Hamzah translates *a'mā* (blind) as “tiada mengenal Allah” (does not recognise God) in rendering Q17:72. This is fascinating, given the likely reaction that the suggestion of “recognising God” (rather than recognising God's creative acts) could cause among shari'a-minded Muslims, including reformist Sufis such as al-Raniri.

Furthermore, Hamzah's rendering of Q42:11 was potentially explosive. The Qur'anic text simply states “There is nothing like unto [God]”. Hamzah adds “barang yang kita bicarakan dengan hati kita, atau dengan ma'rifat kita” (what we say in our innermost heart or with our esoteric knowledge). The suggestion of multiple layers of meaning,

and hidden knowledge of the divine for the adept, was to become increasingly controversial from the time of al-Raniri onwards, with reformists seeking to emphasise above all the dualistic nature of the divine/human connection.

The single verse that we considered from *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahf* is interesting from the perspective of hints of Sufism as well. Reference is made in the commentary to the *aulia'* (saints), and the commentator adds his own interesting comment: “dan terlebih tapanya pada melakangi dia dunia dan meninggalkan *ghurūr* dalamnya” (more repentant in renouncing the world and in leaving behind the illusion in it). The reference to renunciation of a world that is illusory is potentially controversial for dualists who reject any suggestion that the separation of the creator and the created world is an illusion.

Apart from these few comments on Sufi themes, a few other observations are worth bringing out. Hamzah's rendering of Q14:34 with the first person singular pronoun “I” for God, while the Arabic original uses the third person “He”, is potentially controversial. In his rendering of Q20:76, Hamzah reverses the word order of the Arabic original, thereby demonstrating the poet's commitment to a freer style that assists reader comprehension. Similarly, Hamzah chooses a freer style of translation in rendering Q23:92. Finally, Q57:3 lends itself to Sufi exegesis, but Hamzah refrained from going down that path.

It is important to make a more general observation about *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahf*. The single verse before us is enough to provide a representative snapshot of the commentary as a whole. Clearly this work is much more exegesis than simple translation, given the detail provided; the ten word Arabic original verse attracts a Malay commentary of 140 words. Furthermore the commentator goes about his exegetical task by prioritising narrative exegesis: explaining the verse by drawing on his sources to present colourful and interesting narrative. He identifies his sources, though only in a minimalist way; full names are not provided and in that way, the narrative is left uncluttered from cumbersome names.

So by the middle of the 17th century, the Malay world was actively producing Qur'an manuscripts, translations of certain verses, and at the very least exegesis at the level of the *Sūrah*. We will now devote the remainder of this paper to a consideration of two works that are widely regarded as the first two surviving Malay language commentaries on the whole Qur'an: *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān*.

Translation and Exegesis of the whole Qur'an in Malay

There was a gap of around 250 years between the production of these two commentaries. Such a time lapse has ramifications for context in a myriad of ways. Nevertheless, some striking similarities between the authors of these two commentaries, and the commentaries themselves, can be drawn out. For this reason, the discussion which follows will use a framework based on similarities, while still identifying differences as we encounter them.

'Abd al-Ra'ūf was born in Singkel in around 1615. At this time, Singkel was a vassal state of the Sultanate of Aceh, which was at its peak of power and influence in the region, though the British and Dutch colonial powers were beginning to make an appearance on the scene. Not only was the Sultanate a significant political force, but it also represented the theological centre of gravity of the Malay world at the time. This no doubt provided a context for 'Abd al-Ra'ūf during his childhood, though we are unable to say any more on that period of his life (Lombard, 1967).

Muḥammad Sa'id b. 'Umar was born in Kedah in 1854 (Rusdi and Majid, 2013: 82). The British forward movement in Malaya was slowly taking place from initial bases in the Straits Settlements. Sa'id b. Umar was born into a religious family. His father was a prominent religious leader and Sa'id b. Umar received his instruction in the faith of Islam from his father during his childhood years, setting him on his own life's path as a religious scholar.

Though they lived centuries apart and in different geographical locations in the Malay world, both men faced a similar decision as they approached adulthood: how were they to progress from acquiring a base of Islamic knowledge in their own locality to becoming genuine authorities in Islamic studies? The answer was straightforward: they needed to leave their home regions to undertake specialist studies with reputable teachers in recognised centres of learning elsewhere.

'Abd al-Ra'ūf left Aceh in around 1642, bound for Arabia. He was to spend the next 19 years in different centres of learning in the Arabian peninsula, studying with a number of shaykhs, following a curriculum which covered the full range of Islamic sciences, and attaching himself to several different Sufi orders. When he returned to Aceh in 1661, ready to meet the requests of the Sultan and the religious authorities to write on Islamic subjects and serve in the religious hierarchy, he was regarded as an authority in his own right and deservedly so.

Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar had a number of options available to him for furthering his studies. Neighbouring Patani was home to several notable Islamic scholars; he could have furthered his education in India; he could have undertaken specialist studies in the Middle East, either in Mecca or in Cairo. In the event, he chose to pursue his studies in Patani and then in Mecca. The knowledge acquired, and the kudos that came from having studied in these centres, ensured that he returned to the Malay Peninsula as a recognised authority in Islam. He initially returned to Perak, where he established a *pondok* (a boarding school) from which he taught his students, and in 1894 he returned to his native Kedah to spend the rest of his life there, combining sacred with secular by working both as a teacher of Islam and a rice farmer.

Both men followed the Shafi'i law school, and assumed significant official positions in the religious hierarchy upon returning to their homelands. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf was appointed as *Shaykh al-Islām*, the highest religious authority in the Sultanate of Aceh, as well as *Kadi Malikon Adil* [Azra, 2006: 106], specifying his pre-eminence as a scholar of law. Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar was appointed as *Qāḍī* of Kedah.

Both men were active in teaching and writing, though on this score the output of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf far exceeded that of Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar. The former wrote on all the major areas of Islamic learning: hadith studies, jurisprudence, exegesis, Sufism, dogmatics and so forth. Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar only wrote two works – though they were major works in their own right – addressing exegesis and jurisprudence. His work on jurisprudence, *Fatwa Kedah*, was never published and reportedly only has limited circulation today (Zulkifli and Hamza, 2005: 73).

Another element shared by the two religious scholars was their involvement in Sufi orders. Although he studied with a number of different orders during his time in Arabia, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf devoted himself to one particular order upon his return to Aceh: the Shaṭṭariyya Order. It was through his efforts, and those of his students, that this order subsequently spread throughout the Malay world. As for Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar, he attached himself to the Naqshbandiyya-Aḥmadiyya Order and was to remain actively involved in it throughout his life.

A further interesting parallel can be identified in considering more closely their respective commentaries. While both *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* drew on a number of Arabic exegetical sources,

the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was to serve as primary source for each of them (Riddell, 1984; Sheh Yusuff et al, 2013: 48). Significant secondary sources for both included *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* and *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*; additional materials for Sa‘id b. Umar’s commentary included *Tafsīr al-Jamāl*, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, *Tafsīr al-Nasafī*, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, and *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī* (Sheh Yusuff et al, 2013: 48).

As the first known Malay commentary on the whole Qur’an, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* represents a hinge point in the history of Southeast Asian Islam. It should be seen both in terms of what preceded it and what followed it. In that context, let us pause in our comparison with the later *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* to allow for a brief set of comparative comments between the earliest fragmentary translation and exegesis of the Qur’an and *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*. Our preceding discussion provides us with several useful points of reference. We begin with some initial thoughts comparing Hamzah Fansuri’s approach to rendering the Qur’an and that of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*.

Q17:72	<i>(wa man kāna fī ḥādhihi a‘mā fa-huwa fī al-ākḥira a‘mā wa aḍallu sabīlan.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(And whoever is blind in this world) i.e., does not see Allah’s Signs and believes not in Him, (will be blind in the Hereafter, and more astray from the Path.)
Hamzah	(Barangsiapa tiada mengenai) Allah (di sini di akhirat pun tiada dikenal.)
‘Abd al-Ra’ūf	(Dan barangsiapa dalam) dunia (ini buta) daripada yang sebenarnya, (maka yaitu di dalam akhirat terlebih buta) daripada jalan yang luput daripada syiksa (dan terlebih jauh daripada jalan) yang tersebut itu. ⁵
‘Abd al-Ra’ūf English	(Whoever in) this world (is blind) to the truth, (then in the hereafter they will be more blind) to the path that leads away from punishment (and will be distanced from the path) just mentioned.

We saw that in rendering Q17:72, Hamzah Fansuri dared to refer to the concept of “recognising God”, in the process risking the ire of his later adversaries. This concept points to the degree to which Hamzah was embedded within his Sufi context. ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf, living 100-150 years after Hamzah, was also committed to the Sufi path. How did he deal with this verse?

In fact, ‘Abd al-Ra’uf’s rendering is striking in the extent to which he avoids any Sufi flavour. His rendering is a model of word-for-word translation, where he strives at all costs to follow the word order of the Arabic original, even to the point of producing a stilted form of Malay “translationese”.

How can we explain this difference in approach? It could be accounted for in part by the development of the science of tafsīr in the Malay world during the 100-150 year gap, with an emerging understanding of this field of knowledge through education, overseas visits and other factors. But a key reason for the difference in approach between these two must also relate to chronology. Hamzah preceded the bitter polemic of the 1630s under al-Raniri; indeed, he was a key target of the latter. However, ‘Abd al-Ra’uf followed this polemic in time and clearly saw it as part of his role to calm troubled waters, as it were. Hence he produced a safe rendering of this verse, avoiding the kinds of Sufi metaphors which had come to cause such a problem for Hamzah and Shams al-Din.

Q20:76	<i>(Jannāt ‘adn tajrī min taḥṭihā al-anhār, khālidīna fihā wa dhālika jazā’ man tazakkā.)</i>
Hilali & Khan	(‘Adn) Eden (Paradise) everlasting Gardens, (under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever: such is the reward of those who purify themselves) by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden and by doing all that which Allah has ordained.
Hamzah	(Dibalaskan mereka itu yang Islam) daripada Tuhan mereka itu: (tempatnyanya syurga, lalu di bawahnya sungai, masuk mereka itu dalamnyanya kekal.)
‘Abd al-Ra’uf	Yaitu (segala syurga yang tempat tetap yang berlalu dari bawahnya segala sungai padahal mereka itu kekal dalamnyanya. Dan adalah yang demikian itu balas orang yang menyucikan dirinya) daripada segala dosya.
‘Abd al-Ra’uf English	Namely (an eternal paradise under which rivers flow, where they will remain forever. Such is the reward for those who cleanse themselves) of sins.

In Q20:76, Hamzah’s concern is comprehension by his readers. He adjusted the Arabic word order to achieve a greater measure of coherence for his audience. In contrast, ‘Abd al-Ra’uf is concerned with fidelity to the sacred source text. He faithfully mirrors the syntax of the

Arabic of the Qur'an. 'Abd al-Ra'uf again takes a much safer approach than Hamzah.

What can we observe in comparing 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* with the earlier *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahf*?

18:7	(<i>innā ja'alnā mā 'alā al-ard̄ zīnatan lahā li-nabluwahum ayyuhum aḥsan 'amalan</i>)
Hilali & Khan	(Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them) mankind (as to which of them are best in deeds.) i.e. those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them – deeds -- totally for Allah's sake and in accordance to the legal ways of the Prophet.
Ii.6.45 Malay	<p>(Sesungguhnya telah Kami jadikan segala barang semesta sekalian yang di bumi itu) daripada segala haiwanat dan tumbuh-tumbuhan dan gulai-gulaian dan segala sungai, sekalian itu (perhiasan bagi bumi),</p> <p>Jika seseorang bertanya: “Segala haiwanat dan tumbuh-tumbuhan dan segala sungai itu nyatalah akan perhiasan bumi. Adapun segala ular dan kala dan syaitan perhiasan bumi lagikah ia?”, maka jawabmu: “Itupun perhiasan bumi jua baginya akan menyatakan keesaan Allah menjadikan semesta sekalian.” Atas kata Mujahid, adapun maksud firman Allah mengatakan perhiasan bumi itu, dan segala anbia dan segala aulia dan segala ulama dan segala orang salih. Kata setengah mufassir murad daripada perhiasan itu segala tumbuh-tumbuhan pohon kayu akan perhiasan bumi dan segala yang diam atasnya.</p> <p>(akan menunjuki Kami bagi mereka itu) dengan dia siapa kutaha daripada mereka itu (yang lebih amalnya dalamnya) dan terlebih tapanya pada melakangi dia dunia dan meninggalkan ghurūr dalamnya.</p>
'Abd al-Ra'uf	(Bahwa sanya telah Kami jadikan barang yang atas bumi itu akan perhiasan bagi bumi, supaya Kami cobai akan mereka itu yang mana mereka itu terlebih baik amal) mereka itu dalamnya.

'Abd al-Ra'ūf English	(Truly We have created all things on the earth as an embellishment for the earth, so that We could test them to identify those whose works were better) in it.
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Once again, the later commentary appears to be avoiding controversy at all costs. It faithfully reflects the word order of the original Arabic verse. It avoids reference to renunciation and the world as an illusion which *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahf* had done. In some ways the earlier commentary is much more colourful and interesting, but the later commentary is much safer. This points to the reality of Aceh in the 1660s and 1670s, when *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* was composed; Sufism was a subject of contestation to a degree that was not the case one century earlier. Even this single verse suggests that 'Abd al-Ra'ūf sought not to polarise, and this is borne out by other research (Johns, 1998).

Exegeting Sūrat al-Fātiḥah

In this final section of this paper we will turn our attention back to a comparison between the two commentaries on the whole Qur'an: *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān*. We need to set limits for our task in order to reach plausible conclusions. To this end we will focus upon their respective treatments of *Sūrat al-fātiḥah*.⁶

As the first chapter of the Qur'an, *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* plays a crucial role in creating a first impression, or setting the stage. It provides the commentator with the opportunity to introduce his style and provide an initial window into his overall approach.

Given that 'Abd al-Ra'ūf and Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar apparently used the same primary source – *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* – one would expect some similarities of approach. Indeed, both provide some background discussion to the *Sūrah*. *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* provides it at the beginning of the *Sūrah* in the Preface, while *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* provides it at the end of the *Sūrah* in the Postscript. Furthermore, both commentaries identify some of their sources by name in this first *Sūrah*: *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* identifies al-Bayḍāwī and *Manāfi' al-Qur'ān* while *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* identifies al-Nasafī as a source.

The Preface presented in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* is as follows:

Preface	
TM	Ini Surat al-Fatihah yaitu tujuh ayat yang dibangskan ia kepada Mekkah ya'ni yang turun di Mekkah. Maka tersebut di dalam Bayḍawī bahwa Fatihat itu penawar bagi tiap-tiap penyakit. Dan tersebut di dalam <i>Manāfi' al-qur'an</i> barang siapa membaca dia, adalah baginya daripada pahalanya [yang tiada dapat menggandai dia kitab] dan memberi manfa'at akan berbaik-baik orang dan perkasih. Wa allāh a'lam
TM	This is <i>Sūrat al-fātiḥah</i> , comprising seven verses which were collected in Mecca, in other words they were revealed in Mecca. It is mentioned by Bayḍawī that this chapter serves as a remission for every illness. And it is mentioned in <i>Manāfi' al-Qur'an</i> that for whoever reads it, there is a reward [...], and it gives benefit to the best and most loved people. And God knows best.

In spite of the similarities, the differences in approach by these two commentators to *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* are striking. Let us consider their respective approaches on a verse-by-verse basis.

Q1:1	<i>(bi-ism allāh al-rahmān al-rahīm)</i>
HK	(In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.)
TM	(Dengan nama Allah yang amat murah) di dalam dunia ini lagi (yang amat mengasihani) hamba-Nya yang mu'min di dalam negeri akhirat itu jua. Kau mengambil berkat pada membaca fatihat ini.
TM	(In the name of God the Most Beneficent) in this world and (the Most Merciful) towards His believing servants in the hereafter. You will earn blessing by reading this Sūrah.

Although *bi-ism allāh* is not rendered in its usual position in *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān*, it is discussed at the end of the *Sūrah* in the Postscript. We will consider it at that point.

In this rendering of verse 1, *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* emphasises the all-encompassing nature and sovereignty of God by stating explicitly the phrase “this world ... the hereafter.” It also includes a promise of blessing here that does not appear among other commentaries examined.

Q1:2	<i>(al-ḥamdu li allāh rabb al-‘ālamīn)</i>
HK	All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).
TM	(Segala puji thabit bagi Allah Tuhan yang mempunyai segala makhluk.)
TM	(All lasting praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures.)
NI	(Segala puji-puji itu bagi Allah Tuhan) yang menjadikan (sekalian alam) daripada manusia dan jin dan malaikat dan segala binatang darat dan laut dan langit bumi dan lain-lainnya. Maka tiap-tiap satu itu nama alam itu arti alamat atas Tuhan yang menjadikannya, seperti tahi lembu alamat atas ada lembu. Maka Allah itu nama bagi Tuhan yang disembah dengan sebenarnya.
NI	(All praise be to God, the Lord) who created (all the world) including humans and jinn and angels and all creatures of the land and the sky and elsewhere. And the names of each of these elements is a sign of the Lord who created it, just as a cow’s excrement is a sign of the existence of a cow. So God is the name for the Lord who is truly worshipped.

In verse 2, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* ignores the linguistic detail offered by its primary source, the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, and presents an encapsulated rendering of the verse in the tersest of ways. In contrast, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* extracts some of the exegetical detail from the *Jalālayn* without the linguistic discussion. But there is a fascinating detail provided here; note the exegetical reference to the cow’s excrement which, at one level, is unappealing yet on another level, serves as a magnet for its readers in connecting with the reality of the Malay world context. This graphic description is a reference to cultural context and, no doubt, also draws its metaphor from Muḥammad Sa‘īd b. ‘Umar’s own work as a rice farmer, which he carried out alongside his role as a religious scholar (Zulkifli and Hamza, 2005: 72).

Q1:3	<i>(al-rahmān al-rahīm)</i>
HK	The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
TM	Lagi (Tuhan yang amat murah) di dalam dunia ini lagi (yang amat mengasihani) hamba-Nya yang mu‘min di dalam negeri akhirat. ⁷

TM	Moreover (the Lord who is Most Beneficent) in this world and (the Most Merciful) towards His believing servants in the hereafter.
NI	(Tuhan yang amat murah) di dalam dunia ini lagi (yang amat mengasihani) bagi hambanya yang mukminin di dalam akhirat.
NI	(The Lord who is Most Beneficent) in this world and (the Most Merciful) towards His believing servants in the hereafter.

The treatment of verse 3 by both commentaries is unremarkable and quite similar. *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* repeats material from verse 1, while *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* is almost word for word with the earlier commentary, pointing to the use by the author of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* among his sources.

Q1:4	(<i>mālik yawm al-dīn</i>)
HK	The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)
TM	<p>(Raja yang memerintahkan pada hari kiamat.)</p> <p><i>Fā'ida:</i> Pada menyatakan ikhtilaf antara segala qari yang tiga pada membaca <i>mālik</i> (v.4), maka Abū 'Amr dan Nāfi' ittifak keduanya atas membaca <i>malik</i> dengan tiada alif dan Ḥafṣ dengan alif. Maka adalah ma'nanya tatkala dibaca dengan alif "Tuhan yang mempunyai segala pekerjaan hari kiamat."</p> <p>Bermula jikalau tersebut pada yang lagi akan datang bacaan Dūrī demikianlah, maka yaitu baca murid Nāfi' dan Abū 'Amr, karena⁸ segala imam qari yang masyhur itu tujuh jua, maka tiap-tiap seorang daripada mereka itu dua muridnya yang masyhur. Pertama daripada yang ketujuh itu Nāfi' namanya, maka muridnya yang masyhur Qālūn dan Warsh. Kedua Ibn Kathīr namanya, maka muridnya Bazzī dan Qunbul. Ketiga Abū 'Amr namanya, maka muridnya Dūrī dan Sūsī. Keempat Ibn 'Āmir namanya, maka muridnya Hishām dan Ibn Dhakwān. Kelima 'Āsim namanya, maka muridnya Abū Bakr dan Ḥafṣ. Keenam Ḥamza namanya, maka muridnya Khalaf dan Khalād. Ketujuh Kisā'i namanya, maka muridnya Abū al-Ḥārith</p>

	dan Dūrī. Maka dinamai Dūrī ibn Dūrī Kisā'ī, dan yang dahulu itu Dūrī Abū 'Amr. Wa allāh a'lam
TM	(A King who rules on the Day of Judgement.) Pericope: Concerning the differences among the three readers in reading <i>malik</i> (v.4), Abū 'Amr and Nāfi' agree in reading <i>malik</i> without <i>alif</i> , while Ḥafṣ includes <i>alif</i> . The meaning when read with <i>alif</i> is "the Lord who commands all events of the Day of Judgement." When readings by Dūrī are mentioned in forthcoming discussion, it will refer to readings by students of both Nāfi' and Abū 'Amr. Altogether there were seven famous readers, with each having two famous students. The first of the seven was Nāfi', with his most famous students being Qālūn and Warsh. The second was Ibn Kathīr, whose students were Bazzī and Qunbul. The third was Abū 'Amr, and his students were Dūrī and Sūsī. The fourth was Ibn 'Āmir, and his students were Hishām and Ibn Dhakwān. The fifth was 'Āsim, and his students were Abū Bakr and Ḥafṣ. The sixth was Ḥamza, whose students were Khalaf and Khalād. The seventh was Kisā'ī, and his students were Abū al-Ḥārith and Dūrī. His full name was Dūrī ibn Dūrī Kisā'ī, while the former's name was Dūrī Abū 'Amr. And God knows best.
NI	(Tuhan yang memiliki hari balasan) yaitu hari kiamat kerana tiada memiliki padanya melainkan Allah semata-mata. Dan adapun pada dunia maka pada zahir ada memiliki raja-raja maka pada hakikat-Nya tiada yang memiliki dunia dan akhirat melainkan Allah semata-mata.
NI	(The Lord who rules the day of recompense) namely the Day of Resurrection because none rule it apart from God alone. As for this world, it appears to be ruled by Kings but in truth none rule the world and the hereafter apart from God alone.

Verse 4 provides *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* with the opportunity to include a discussion of the *qirā'āt* and to introduce readers to this important field of studies. The author⁹ only focuses on a single variant, which is sufficient to allow him to introduce the three main readers to be drawn upon throughout the work: Abū 'Amr, Nāfi' and Ḥafṣ. He

also anticipates a problem of confusion and pre-empts it by clarifying the multiple referents for the name Dūrī. In doing so, he spells out the identity of Ibn Mujāhid's seven primary readers, and two transmitters for each, as follows:

Primary reader	Transmitters
Nāfi'	Qālūn and Warsh
Ibn Kathīr	Bazzī and Qunbul
Abū 'Amr	Dūrī Abū 'Amr and Sūsī
Ibn 'Āmir	Hishām and Ibn Dhakwān
'Āsim	Abū Bakr and Ḥafṣ
Ḥamza	Khalaf and Khalād
Kisā'ī	Abū al-Ḥārith and Dūrī ibn Dūrī Kisā'ī

The much more modest exegetical contribution of *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* on this verse ends with a strong dualistic affirmation of the sovereignty of God.

Q1:5	(<i>īyyāka na'budu wa īyyāka nasta'in</i>)
HK	You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).
TM	(Kami tentukan akan Dikau ibadat dan kami tuntutan daripada-Mu tolong ¹⁰) atas berbuat ibadat dan yang lainnya.
TM	(We give You worship and seek Your help) in doing worship and all things.
NI	(Akan Dikau kami sembah pada ibadat kami) daripada sembahyang dan puasa dan zakat dan haji dan lainnya. (Dan akan Dikau kami minta tolong) atas Tauhid kami dan iman dan takwa dan harap dan ikhlas ibadat bagi Engkau, dan pada membanyak zikir lidah dan hati dan perbuka mata hati dan bersih akan dia dan berhadapannya dan rendongnya kepada Engkau semata-mata kerana asal hati itu sangat bersih. Maka menutup akan dia oleh debu percakapan yang sia-sia dan dusta dan jika kerja maksiat jadi titik hitam sampai tiada tampak suka yakni tiada datang pikiran kebajikan yang di-ibarat dengan, dan tetapi buta mata hati itu maka tiada suatu amalan yang boleh bersihan balik melainkan zikir Allah dengan lidah dan hati, atau hati sahaja, sampai jadi bersih tertangkap rupa alam dalamnya seperti yang jatuh pada setengah awliya.

NI	(To You we give worship) through prayer and fasting and almsgiving and pilgrimage and so forth. (And to You we turn for assistance) in acknowledging your Oneness and faith and reverence and hope and sincere worship of you, and in increasing <i>dhikr</i> of the tongue and heart and opening the inner eye and cleansing through it and pointing and devoting it to You alone because the origin of the heart is very pure. So protect it from vain and lying words. And if evil deeds become a black spot that is not pleasing [to You], namely good thoughts that can be exemplary are not evident, but the eyes of the heart are blind, then there is no deed that can cleanse anew other than <i>dhikr</i> to Allah of the tongue and the heart, or the heart alone, until internal cleanliness like nature is achieved such as that which was sent down to the saints.
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On verse 5, *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* provides a telescopic commentary, barely saying more than the verse itself. In contrast, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* begins with a concise statement of the five pillars of Islam (except for the *shahāda*). Of great interest is the fact that it goes on to offer explicit references to Sufi notions and themes, mentioning various forms of *dhikr* and alluding to layered meanings of Qur’anic terms. This is expressed in terms of prayer and supplication. The comment concludes with the suggestion that if the believer properly practices *dhikr* of the tongue, he/she can attain internal cleanliness “such as that which was sent down to the saints.”

Q1:6	<i>(ihdīnā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm)</i>
HK	Guide us to the Straight Way
TM	(Beri pertunjuk oleh-Mu akan kami jalan yang betul.)
TM	(Guide us to the straight path.)
NI	([Tu]njuki oleh-Mu akan kami jalan yang betul) atau tambah akan kami atau kekal akan kami jalan yang betul agama Islam.
NI	(Show us the straight path) or increase for us or provide for us the true path of Islam.

Both commentaries render verse 6 in a concise and similar way, except that *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* stipulates that the straight path is the “path of Islam”, to achieve textual coherence by making the distinction with the following verse that addresses Jews and Christians.

Q1:7	(<i>ṣirāṭ al-ladhīna anʿamta ʿalayhim ghayr al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim wa lā al-dāllīn</i>)
HK	The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).
TM	(Jalan segala mereka itu yang telah Kaunugerahai ¹¹ niʿmat atas mereka itu, lain daripada jalan segala yang dimurkai atas mereka itu, dan lain daripada jalan segala orang yang sesat.) Bermula dikehendaki dengan jalan yang dimurkai di sini jalan segala Yahudi, dan jalan segala yang sesat jalan segala Nasrani. Wa allāh aʿlam.
TM	(The path of all those whom You favoured, not the path of those who earn Your anger, nor the path of those who are astray.) The path that earned your anger signifies that of the Jews, and the path of all who are astray is the path of the Christians. And God knows best.
NI	(Jalan segala mereka yang telah Engkau nikmat atas mereka itu.) Empat firkaḥ daripada segala anbia dan <i>ṣidiqīn</i> dan syuhada dan <i>ṣāliḥīn</i> . Maka anbia orang yang jadi nabi; dan <i>ṣidiqīn</i> segala orang yang benar zahir dan batin pada Allah dan manusia; maka syuhada itu segala muslimin yang mati perang kafir kerana meninggi agama Islam; dan <i>ṣāliḥīn</i> itu segala mereka tiada tinggal taat kepada Allah dan tiada kerja maksiatnya. Maka jalan orang-orang itulah kita minta ditunjuki kepadanya. (Lain daripada jalan segala orang yang dimurka atas mereka itu) Yahudi. (Dan lain jalan segala orang yang <i>dallālah</i> sesat) Nasrani yakni lain daripada jalan Yahudi dan Nasrani. Kata setengah ulama lain daripada jalan segala kafir dan munafik.
NI	(The path of all those on whom You have bestowed favour.) There are four groups: the prophets, the upright, the martyrs and the righteous. The prophets include all those who became a prophet; the upright refers to all those who show external and internal integrity before God and mankind; the martyrs refers to all Muslims who die in war with the infidels thereby upholding the faith of Islam; and the righteous refers to all those who do not cease to be devout before God and do no evil. So we beg that all those

	groups be shown the path. (Not the path of all those with whom [You] are angry) the Jews. (And not the path of all those who are astray) the Christians; namely not the paths of either the Jews or the Christians. Some scholars explain this as not the path of the infidels and the hypocrites.
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In commenting on verse 7, *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* bluntly portrays the Jews and Christians in a negative light, echoing the most common way of interpreting this verse in traditional Qur'anic exegesis down the ages. *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān*'s comment on this verse is more nuanced. It goes into some detail in explaining what is meant by the groups who have received God's favour, as the prophets, the upright, the martyrs and the righteous, defining each in turn. The commentator keeps his audience's needs in view in providing sufficient detail for his readers to understand complex concepts. With regard to identifying the groups who have earned God's wrath and are astray, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* suggests that, in addition to the traditional understanding of these two groups as Jews and Christians, there are alternative interpretations in the exegetical literature. This indicates the pedagogical intent of the author in seeking to give his readership a broader set of references in interpreting this foundational *Sūrah* than was the case for 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's audience, which lived during a relatively early period of Islamisation in the Malay world.

Postscript	
NI	Maka <i>fātiḥa</i> hingga <i>wa lā ḍāllīn</i> itu: adapun <i>āmīn</i> itu, maka <i>muwāfiqa</i> ulama tiada daripadanya, dan tiada daripada Qur'an, tetapi sunat disudahi <i>fātiḥa</i> dengan <i>āmīn</i> kerana (<i>ibdinā al-ṣirāt</i>) itu doa, demikianlah tiap-tiap doa harus <i>qasr</i> serta <i>takhfif</i> dan <i>tashdīd</i> dan harus madd serta keduanya. (Kata Imam al-Nasafi): kata <i>qīl</i> makna segala kitab seratus empat buah terhimpun dalam Qur'an; dan makna Qur'an terhimpun dalam <i>fātiḥa</i> seolah-olah <i>fātiḥa</i> naskah <i>mukhtaṣar</i> dan Qur'an tafsilnya, kerana terhimpun bicara Tuhan itu pada (<i>al-ḥamdu li'llāhi rabb al-'ālamīn al-rahmān al-rahīm</i>), dan negeri akhirat pada (<i>mālik yawm al-dīn</i>), dan terhimpun segala ibarat daripada itikad dan hukum suruh dan teguh pada (<i>īyyāka na'budu wa īyyāka nasta'in</i>), dan shariat

	<p>sekalian pada (<i>ṣirāṭ [al-]mustaqīm</i>), dan cerita anbia dan segala orang saleh pada (<i>al-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim</i>), dan cerita segala kuffar pada (<i>ghayr al-maghdūb 'alayhim wa lā al-dāllīn</i>). Dan makna <i>fātiḥa</i> terhimpun pada <i>bi-ism allāh</i>, maka makna <i>bi-ism allāh</i> terhimpun pada <i>bā'</i>-nya, maka makna <i>bā'</i> (<i>bī kāna mā kāna</i>) dengan “aku jadi barang yang telah jadi” (<i>wa bī yakūn mā yakūn</i>) dan dengan “aku lagi jadi barang yang akan jadi”. Wa allāh a'lam.</p>
NI	<p>Considering the <i>fātiḥa</i> up to <i>wa lā dāllīn</i>: as for <i>āmīn</i>, the scholars are agreed that it is not part of [the <i>fātiḥa</i>] nor part of the Qur'an, but it is fitting that the <i>fātiḥa</i> ends with <i>āmīn</i> because (<i>ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ</i>) is a prayer, and in this way each prayer must be constrained with lightening and intensification, and must take a <i>madda</i> on both [vowels]. (According to Imām al-Nasafi): The referent of “It is said” is the group of 104 [previously revealed] books summarised in the Qur'an, and the meaning of the Qur'an is collected in the <i>fātiḥa</i> as if the <i>fātiḥa</i> is an abridged scroll and the Qur'an is its explanation, because the words of the Lord are collected in (<i>al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabb al-'ālamīn</i> [v.2] <i>al-rahmān al-rahīm</i> [v.3]) and the hereafter in (<i>mālik yawm al-dīn</i> [v.4]), and all religious matters regarding faith, duty and obedience are summarised in (<i>īyyāka na'budu wa īyyāka nasta'in</i> [v.5]), and matters of Law in (<i>ṣirāṭ [al-] mustaqīm</i> [v.6]), and the stories of the prophets and all righteous people in (<i>al-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim</i> [v.7]), and stories of the infidels in (<i>ghayr al-maghdūb 'alayhim wa lā al-dāllīn</i>). The meaning of the <i>fātiḥa</i> [as a whole] is summarised in <i>bi-ism allāh</i>, and the meaning of <i>bi-ism allāh</i> is summarised in the <i>bā'</i>, and the <i>bā'</i> (<i>bī kāna mā kāna</i>) signifies “I am what has been” (<i>wa bī yakūn mā yakūn</i>) and “I will be what will be.” And God knows best.</p>

This Postscript, which only appears in *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān*, makes brief reference to linguistic considerations: “*āmīn* ... must conclude with lightening and emphasis, and must take a *madda* on both [vowels].” However the commentator's interest clearly lies elsewhere. He draws

on al-Nasafī in engaging in a fascinating exploration of underlying meanings, suggesting that the entire text of the Qur'an really represents exegesis of this *Sūrah*, with each phrase of the *Sūrah* encapsulating broader themes relating to doctrine, law and stories. In turn, the meaning of this *Sūrah* can be encapsulated in the *bismillah*, which has as its core the letter *ba'* which carries much broader significance. In taking this approach, Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar signals early that he has no interest in a literalist, surface-meaning angle on interpreting the Qur'anic text.

Conclusion

The material under consideration in this article spans at least 350 years.¹² The early fragmentary examples of exegesis emerging from the Malay world in the 16th and 17th centuries provide a context to the bitter polemic that divided the Sultanate of Aceh in the 1640s.

An examination of the early fragmentary materials alongside the earliest known complete commentary on the Qur'an, *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, suggests that the latter work strove to eliminate what was seen as certain excesses in the approach of its fragmentary predecessors. The evidence suggests that a more liberal, less structured approach to exegesis in the earliest materials was circumscribed by the much more disciplined and safer approach of 'Abd al-Ra'uf. In other words, an exegetical approach which allowed room for Sufi speculation and rich narrative colour – with considerable appeal to a broad audience being the likely result – gave way to a narrower, more text-based approach which was more suited to a study situation for specialists than to the broader public.

'Abd al-Ra'uf's more conservative approach to interpreting the Qur'an may have been a significant factor in his commentary's durability. It dominated the exegetical scene in the Malay world for the next 250 years. However, his approach, which effectively banished Sufi speculation and rich narrative from the field of *tafsīr*, was bound sooner or later to give way to less structured and more imaginative approaches. We see the beginning of such a process of exegetical relaxation evident in Muḥammad Sa'īd b. 'Umar's *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān*.

Both *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* are still in print, pointing to their continuing popularity. While the latter has been criticised by some for its inclusion of stories of marginal significance

without comment by the author (Sheh Yusuff et al, 2013: 49), this controversy has not spelt the end of its popularity, as evidenced by the continued use of this work by Islamic communities across Malaysia. For example, the huge Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah mosque in Selangor held weekly study sessions focusing on this commentary from January 2014, led by Ustaz Don Daniyal.¹³ It seems that scholarly criticism cannot dampen the appetite of many people for rich narrative exegesis with a Sufi flavour.

In terms of date of composition, clearly *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* should be grouped with the earlier fragmentary translations and commentaries in a kind of exegetical Phase 1. Should *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* be grouped in this same phase of exegetical activity in Malay, or does it foreshadow a new phase?

The similarities between *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān*, and indeed their authors, suggests that they should be grouped together in some way. The life stories of the two authors, though separated by 250 years, have distinct parallels. The style of exegesis, with phrase by phrase commentary on the Qur'anic text, supplemented by insertions of longer exegetical material, is similar. Indeed, the sources of both works bear a large degree of overlap. Moreover, both commentaries adopt language styles which somewhat limit their respective audiences. *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* uses a literal approach to translation of the Arabic text, with the result that the Malay is somewhat opaque for most readers, especially those who do not understand Arabic. For its part, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* has been criticised for the presence of Kedah Malay dialect terms that are not understood by Malay speakers from other regions.

Nevertheless, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* does represent a break with the past in certain ways and a foreshadowing of the future. The early hints of Sufi exegesis evident in the earliest fragments examined were noticeably absent from *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, because its author was consciously avoiding feeding intra-Sufi polemics that had occurred in his own lifetime. However, even in the few verses of *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* that we examined, there are signs of an earlier Sufi exegesis being rehabilitated. Much more research into this perceived trend needs to be undertaken.

While *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* is somewhat safe, textual, monochrome and mechanical – though it should be said that Da'ud Rumi's additions did add some interest – *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān* is colourful, reflective and

multilayered in its interpretation of the Qur'anic text. In this way it anticipates the much more sophisticated approach to exegesis of Islam's sacred text that is found in late 20th and early 21st century commentaries in Bahasa Malaysia/Indonesia¹⁴ and that represents an entirely new phase in the Malay exegetical tradition. *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* could be seen as a bridge between the two phases.

Endnotes

- This paper was first presented at the international conference on “Southeast Asian Islam: Legacy and New Interpretation”, Syahida Inn, PPIM, UIN Jakarta, 14th-16th August, 2014.
- 1. Space does not allow us to engage with this debate in this article. I shall return to it in more detail in my forthcoming monograph.
- 2. For a concise list of those Qur’anic verses which appear in Hamzah’s poetry, cf. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, 1986: 189.
- 3. In the excerpts which follow, Qur’an text and rendering of that text has been placed in parentheses. Text outside the parentheses represents exegetical additions. The translation into English of the Qur’an by Hilali & Khan has been provided separately as a point of comparison with the English translation of the commentaries.
- 4. My book on this manuscript will be submitted to publishers in June 2015. A detailed journal article on the manuscript and its sources appeared as Riddell, 2014b.
- 5. All text presented from ‘Abd al-Ra’uf’s commentary is drawn from ‘Abd al-Ra’uf, 1951.
- 6. Spelling conventions in use in the following discussion posed some challenges, given that 250 years elapsed between the production of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān*. Many words of Arabic origin which could be considered as loan words in the former work, not yet fully integrated into Malay vocabulary, would have undergone that process of integration fully by the time of the composition of *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān*. Considering this, I have transliterated some Arabic loanwords in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* according to their Arabic transliteration, while the same words appear with modern Malaysian spelling in *Tafsīr Nūr al-Ihsān*. An example is *mu’min* in the earlier work, which is transliterated as *mukmin* in the later commentary.
- 7. Persamar Press edition adds “itu” at the end of this phrase.
- 8. Persamar Press edition “kerana”.
- 9. The paragraphs on the *qinā’āt* were compiled by Baba Da’ud Rumi, a leading student of ‘Abd al-Ra’uf. For recent research on this figure, cf. Özay 2011.
- 10. Persamar Press edition “pertolongan”.
- 11. Persamar Press edition “Kaukurniai”.
- 12. Depending on the date of death identified for Hamzah Fansuri.
- 13. http://www.mssaas.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=401&Itemid=127, accessed 14 July 2014.
- 14. Note that the 15 volume *Tafsīr al-Misbah* by Muhammad Quraish Shihab devotes 95 pages to its exegesis of *Sura al-fatihah* alone!

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1. Hefner, Robert, 2009a. "Introduction: The Political Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," in *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Hefner, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
4. Wahid, Din, 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang, 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: ' , *b*, *t*, *th*, *j*, *h*, *kh*, *d*, *dh*, *r*, *z*, *s*, *sh*, *ṣ*, *ḍ*, *ṭ*, *ẓ*, ' , *gh*, *f*, *q*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *h*, *w*, *y*. Short vowels: *a*, *i*, *u*. long vowels: *ā*, *ī*, *ū*. Diphthongs: *aw*, *ay*. *Tā marbūṭā*: *t*. Article: *al-*. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

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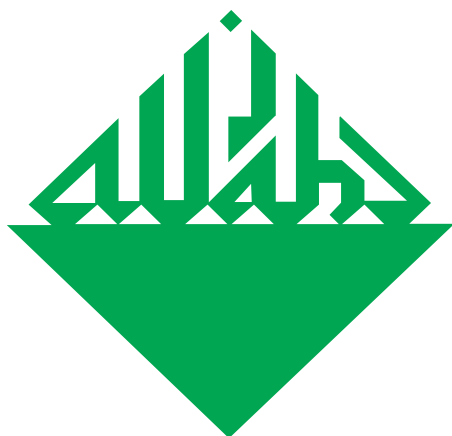
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