

## The Significant of Braille Hadith Studies In Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

Hadith Nabawi is the second most important sources in Islam after the Quran. It's great compliment to the Quran for a deeper understanding of the teaching found inside it. The visually impaired people understanding of the Quran have been help out by government incentive by creating the Braille Quran. This incentive helps the visually impaired people to read the Quran using the Braille system. Even thought that Hadith is the second source of Islam but it access to it by the visually impaired people require more attention. There are less developed Braille Hadith in Malaysia. The learning of Hadith would enable the visually impaired people to appreciate and understand the Sunnah of the Prophet which is in line with the teaching of the Quran. The objective of this study is to find out the development of Braille Hadith in Malaysia. The method of this study is using qualitative method by referring to literature from books, articles, journals, etc. Early finding shows that the development of formal studies of Hadith using Braille system is still small in the any education institution in Malaysia. The visually impaired people need to learn the Hadith using this system as much as the important of learning the Quran. The understanding of the Hadith would allow them to learn and love the Prophet and the Sunnah.

*Keywords: Visually impaired people, significant, Braille Hadith studies*

### INTRODUCTION

Hadith Nabawi plays an important role in Islam after the Quran. It is the second source of legislation in Islam as well as guidance and reference to the Muslim community as a whole. Hadith also be the only source to identify the life history of the Prophet Muhammad. Through hadith, the Prophet's description of life during the day and at night, when alone and in the public, while traveling and living, as well as moral beauty and perfection of appearance of the Prophet Muhammad is known. Therefore, hadith need to be learned by all Muslims regardless of their shortcomings. Even in the days of the Prophet Muhammad, there Prophet's companion named Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktoum RA who is a visually impaired man but was always eager to learn hadith. His persistence should be a driving force to the visually impaired people nowadays to learn about hadith and other knowledge. Allah SWT with His wisdom created man with many faces and forms. With qudrah and sovereign will of God, Allah bestows strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages, wealth and poverty, intelligence and stupidity, beauty and ugliness to anyone He wills. Human difference in the level of perfection is a test of the Almighty as an argument and proof of faith, piety and true devotion of His servants to enable them to receive real success and well-being in the Hereafter. Allah says in Surah Al-An'am 6: 165.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيُبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ  
سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*Meaning: And He it is Who made you successors in the earth and raised some of you above others in rank, so He may try you in what He hath given you. Thy Lord is quick in retribution, and certainly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

In line with this verse, the Prophet also said:

إذا سبقت للعبد من الله منزلة لم يبلغها بعمله، ابتلاه الله في جسده أو في ماله أم في ولده، ثم صبره  
حتى يبلغه المنزلة التي سبقت له منه

*Meaning: When a servant received requirement from God, a position that can not be acquired through practice, Allah SWT will test it on his body or on his property, or the children, then Allah SWT bestow patience upon him until he entitled to the position that God has set for it then.*  
(Ahmad 2001: 29)

## HADITH STUDIES IN FORMAL AND NON FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

Hadith study was a synonym annotation in Malaysia. Development of hadith studies in Malaysia has started since Islam began in Malaya since five centuries ago. When Islam began and grew indirectly this catalyzed the development and deployment of hadith studies in Malaysia (Suhaimi 2006: 22). Islam as ad-den brought a dynamic changes to the communities in Malaysia in particular. Spreading of Islam widely in the 14 AD and 15 AD until 20 AD has a number of implications.

Expanding of Islamic missionary that was at par with the culture of knowledge has started a revolution towards the way of life of local communities. An education system that was originally made up of non-formal systems such as in the form of huts, mosques and theologian residence began to be adapted in line with the revolutionary socialism of local communities and the evaluation of the education system that is more authoritative. This situation can be seen in most of the institutions that have been through the process of democratization such as modern religious school that has began to coordinate a learning system based on levels that have been set (Selamat & Ernawati 2011: 102). Education system in non formal institution was a method that was quite effective at the beginning of the coming era of Islam in the Malay Archipelago, teaching methods in the form of mushÉfahah and talaqqā was basically very dynamic in producing society with knowledge literacy (Suhaimi 2006: 75).

Before the 19 AD, it was unclear about the development of hadith studies in the Malay Archipelago. Although the Muslim community recognized the importance of it, hadith was usually applied to other knowledges that cover the three main branches of the religion that were faith, sharia and mysticism. This was because the hadith which became necessary as a second source of information, evidence and argument to determine the truth of an issue of faith, become an argument to a law and jurisprudence to guide the construction of ethics and morals (Muhammad Mustaqim 2011: 353). Thus, if carefully observed, works in the field of Hadith and related knowledges have not yet been booked specifically, but it was in the books of fiqh, mysticism and faith (Mazlan et.al 2012: 11).

However, this does not mean that the science of hadith as a part of discipline was not directly studied among the Malays. On the other hand, the works of hadith have existed as early as the 17AD in Aceh which was a leading center for Islam after the fall of Malacca. The proof can be seen as scholars such as Sheikh Ali Wan Abdul Rahman al-Khurasan and Tok Kalantani intensified their efforts in expanding hadith studies in Malaysia. Among the works of the famous hadith that has been generated since 17AD to 20AD were: Kitab *al-Fawaid al-Bahiyah fi Ahadith al-Nabawiyah* and *Hidayah al-Habib fi al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib* by Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri (17th century), Kitab *Tanbih al-Ghafilin* in Malay language from Sheikh Abdullah Abdul Mubin

Pau Buk al-Fatani (18th century), Kitab *al-Jauhar al-Mauhub wa al-Munabbihat al-Qulub* from Syeikh Wan Ali bin Wan Abdul Rahman Kutani translated version of Kitab *Fara'id Fawaid al-Fikr fi al-Imam al-Mahdi* from works of Syeikh Mirghani bin Yusuf (19th century) and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, famous hadith books were Kitab *Matali' al-Anwar wa Majami' al-Azhar* by Syeikh Uthman Jalaluddin al-Kelantani and translated book of Hadith *al-Jawahir al-Bukhari* by Syeikh Hussien Nasir Muhammad Tayyib al-Mas'udi al-Banjari al-Qadi and book of Hadith 40 by Mustafa Abdul Rahman (Bunyamin, 2009: 31-35). It can be seen from the works produced is that it was all revolved around the collection, description and text translation and the essence of hadith in certain topics only. Instead, the paper discussed the terminology and methods related to knowledge of hadith (Musta'lah al-hadith) can not be detected its existence during the that time. (Muhammad Mustaqim 2011: 354).

During the beginning, the scriptures like *Matn al-Arba'in* by Imam Nawawi, *Bulugh al-Maram* by Ibn Hajar and *Riyadh al-Salihin* by Imam Nawawi became the first choice in learning hadith (Fauzi et.al, 2010: 2), but now the situation has changed. From the researcher point of view, although there are still institutions that maintain this method of study at Tun Abdul Aziz Mosque, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Al-Azhar Mosque in Selangor International Islamic University College and Kampong Melayu Mosque, but shifts during in the development of knowledge among theologian and scholars had produced a more structured system of learning hadith according to the levels that have been set. For example higher education institutions such as the Department of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith, Islamic Studies Academy, University of Malaya, has introduced specific subjects in depth knowledge of hadith degree level, such *Manhaj Muhaddithin*, Research Bibliography Hadith, *Dir'asat al-As'nan*, *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, Hadith and Current Issues, Hadith Text Review, *Takhrîj al-Hadith*, *Ahadith al-Abkém*. This situation can also be seen at the Department of the Quran and al-Sunnah in National University of Malaysia, Faculty of al-Quran and al-Sunnah Islamic Science University of Malaysia, the Department of al-Quran and al-Sunnah in the Faculty of Revealed Knowledge of the International Islamic University Malaysia and in Department of al-Quran and al-Sunnah in Selangor International Islamic University College (Fauzi et.al, 2010: 20). Organized application of hadith study allowed students to understand the disciplines of hadith better compared to irregular system. Thus it is not only transforming the existing system, but is able to produce a responsive and corrective community in all fields, especially in the understanding of Islam as a universal religion.

## **BRILLE HADITH STUDIES' DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA**

United Nations (UN) has acknowledged the importance to access to education in helping disabled people to achieve equality of rights and fundamental freedoms. The importance of access to education for the disabled had also been acknowledged by the Malaysian government. Disabled Act which was launched in 2008 stated that people with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of their disability. In fact, through the Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010, access to education is one of the four main thrusts of this plan, in which the first approach in achieving the objectives of this plan is to achieve equality of educational opportunities for students who are marginalized, including students with disabilities. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has taken a positive step of providing a program to help children who have trouble learning in normal according to their ability to focus on aspects of intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional, social, talent, values moral and aesthetic values (Ahmad Yunus & Tengku Intan Zarina 2014: 310).

In Malaysia, the development of education for the visually impaired people community began in the early 20th century. This development can be divided into two main stages, namely:

- i. Developments during British colonial period.
- ii. Developments during the period after independence.

In the days of British colonialism, efforts to provide services and education for the visually impaired community in Asian countries including Malaya was spearheaded by social movements such as religious institutions for example the Anglican Mission. To meet the educational needs of visually impaired people further expanded in Malaya, a school named Princess Elizabeth Elementary School was established in 1949 in Johor Bahru. However, this was limited to education at the primary school only. Nonetheless, the visually impaired people still have another alternative way to obtain education and training as they have the opportunity to enter training and rehabilitation institutions such as Gurney Training Centre (GTC) in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, which was also known as Gurney Rate Training Centre, which was established in 1953 by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for rehabilitation and vocational training (Wong Huey Siew & Sandiyao 2002: 146-148).

After independence, the Malaysian government, especially during the 1960s and beyond were directly involved in the subject of special education. This policy change appeared significant compared to the British colonial era. This is because at that time there were no legal provisions related to this issue. However, the situation has changed since the Education Act 1961 for the first time has touched on matters of special education, the government has also realized that how important it is to provide quality education to all students. Therefore, a Cabinet Committee has been established to examine the needs of education, including special education in 1979. After independence, the visually impaired people were provided with education in secondary schools and universities. After that, government increased their efforts to improve education facilities for the disabled in the country. This was because in the Education Act 1996 (Chapter 8) have outlined several rules regarding this. Similarly, the attitude and awareness of the needs of special education in our country, especially from the government is very positive as they have agreed to set up department and the NCC in 1964 and 1995 to take responsibility for the development of education for the disabled (Wong Huey Siew & Sandiyao 2002: 158 -159).

Cabinet Committee Report on the Implementation of the Declaration of Education Reference 169 represents a turning point that led to an emphasis and a clearer focus on the development of Special Education in Malaysia. Reference 169 was one of the the effort that showed the government's concern to the visually impaired people in Special Education. This mentioned that:

"With the realization that the government should be responsible for the education of children with disabilities was shown that government should take full responsibility over the education of the organizations that operate them at this time. In addition, participation by voluntary bodies in promoting the education of children with disabilities should be further promoted. "

However, for the visually impaired Muslim, the special education system was still not fulfilling their needs as a Muslim. This was because not all special education institutions in Malaysia offer Quranic study, let alone study of hadith. At present, the study of Braille hadith is still limited because most blind religious studies classes devoted to the study of the Quran in Braille. Visually impaired people also found it difficult to implement Braille hadith class because of no formal education. This situation is seen as unfair by the visually impaired people because they cannot

learn these two sources of Islamic jurisprudence, namely the Quran and hadith. If you look at, study the Quran continues to grow to the blind. They not only learn it in school, but can learn at university. Studies hadith also lags behind and never studied formally in any place. This is a situation that is unfair to them because the study of hadith is as important as learning the Quran, and the hadith we can better understand the verses of al-Quran al-Karim (Tengku Intan Ahmad Yunus & Zarina 2014: 311).

## **SIGNIFICANT OF BRAILLE HADITH STUDIES**

Braille hadith studies has its own significance or importance to the visually impaired people. Among its significant are:

### **Fulfilling the needs of visually impaired people**

Hadith studies began to emerge from the first call of Islam and continue to grow through to this IT era. History chronologically shows that the factor of maintaining the purity of true Islamic teachings was the pivotal development of hadith studies. In Malaysia, there are lot of places, institutions, mosques, schools and universities that provided hadith studies. However, formal hadith studies in Malaysia were only focused on those non-disabled people. To date, there are no any formal hadith studies for the blind. As a result, these people are often left behind in understanding the science of hadith. Similarly, in terms of teaching aids (BBM). According to Zakaria Yahya (2014: 1), only one hadith Braille module is available for the convenience of the blind which is the "Hadith of the Doomsday". It is the voluntary work by one of the visually impaired people. The book is available at the Association of Blind People Islam Malaysia (PERTIS). To carry out an effective teaching and learning, of course, a variety of fuel and teaching modules required. However, Braille hadith studies can not be carried out by the authorities because of the lack of teaching aids.

PERTIS has introduced Braille Quran that was produced by the expert committee and advisory PERTIS in collaboration with the Islamic Development Department (JJAKIM), was the first to be introduced in Malaysia. Braille Quran printed by PERTIS was the only one that was created for the visually impaired people in order to read the Quran. Braille for the hadith also, until now there has not been any software that can help the visually impaired people to learn hadith. This cause this group of people to be left far behind in this field. Thus, the authors hope will be a variety of technologies and software that can help this special group studying the hadith. This is a very sad situation. At the moment we are racing to study various types of knowledge, the visually impaired people can not catching up in education, especially in fields of study the Quran and al-Sunnah. This is because, without the grace of sight, these people are only able to receive the teaching and learning based of hearing, smell, touch and taste (Mustaffa 2010: 1).

Braille hadith study is equally essential to the visually impaired people, as the Quran. Although there was no Braille studies for students with special needs, it is expected to be implemented as soon as possible to meet the needs of the visually impaired people. According to Zakaria Yahya (2014: 1), the visually impaired people also want to learn as they learn the Quran. However, with limited teaching aids, Braille hadith module, trainers and software or gadgets to learn this hadith makes them far behind in studying the hadith.

### Helping visually impaired people to understand hadith

Allah sent Prophet Muhammad with the revelation of the Quran to guide mankind from the darkness of ignorance to the light of the guidance of Allah SWT. Guidance and instructions of God requires man of being humanized through the appreciation of al-Quran and Sunnah according to his teachings. Prophet Muhammad also called the people to do good and forbid evil and even justify doing something that is good and forbid the bad things. Adhere to the messengers of God's revelation of the Quran and al-Sunnah is a guide to mankind in order not to go astray in life.

In the context of the existence of Braille hadith studies, it was indispensable in helping the visually impaired people to understand the hadith as a guide as a Muslim as hadiths are a source of supplementary law of the Quran. These efforts require the support and assistance of people who are able to read or explain the contents of the book of hadith. Indeed, Islam regards those with disabilities have the utmost respect and Islamic invited us to pay attention and to stand beside them, develop strength, ability and skills and improve their way of handling life. As recommended by our religion, the Prophet said:

وعونك الضعيف بفضل قوتك صدقة، وبيانك عن الأثر صدقة

*Meaning: your help to the poor meritorious power of charity, and explanation of those obscure speech meritorious charity. (Ahmad 2001: 291)*

The Prophet's promise was an encouragement and motivation to the people to always do good deeds to those who are weak because every man wants love and defense. cAbd cAbd Rahman al-KhÉliq (1995: 159) states that the existence of disabled people is a virtue and blessings. This is because love and service to the disabled will be a factor in the existence of God's grace and gifts to people around the disabled.

### Following Prophet SAW in all aspect

In order to love and emulate the Prophet, each individual requires a knowledge and understanding of the hadith as the hadith itself contained everything about Rasululullah SAW either way to worship, daily activities, relationships with family, during meeting, morals, appearance and others. Visually impaired people also have no exception in order to emulate the character of the Prophet Muhammad as an example and *qudwah hasanah*. Humans learn from the example and character of the Prophet Muhammad which was the role model of all time, as mentioned in the hadith:

كان خلقه القرآن

*Which means: Verily character ( Rasulullah SAW) is the Quran. (Ahmad 2001: 15)*

The meaning of the hadith by itself in terms of words, deeds, taqrÊr (confession/ acknowledgement) or physical or moral of the Prophet whether before or after Prophet Muhammad being sent (Abu Layth 2009: 5). The word of the Prophet means any conversation or interactions of Prophet Muhammad, no matter in any form either order, prohibition, statements or otherwise. Deeds of the Prophet Muhammad also means any conduct, actions and gestures of the Prophet Muhammad that in fact is a form of practical guidance for the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. While taqrÊr (confession/acknowledge) of the Prophet Muhammad means a thing done in the presence of the Prophet, or to the knowledge of the Prophet Muhammad about something that has been done by someone, but the Prophet did not prevent him or not disclose his hatred for it, even the Prophet remained silent and let it be, Prophet's silence is considered as acceptance

of the case (Syed Abdul Majid, 2011: 63-64). Thus, the visually impaired people require a formal study of hadith in order to gain knowledge and understanding of the hadith and to love and emulate the Prophet Muhammad.

### **Encouragement and self motivation to increase knowledge**

The Prophet had declared and celebrated the disabled as human equals in the sight of Allah SWT. From an Islamic perspective, the position of the disabled is the same as a normal human being. Everyone is associated with liability qualifying and all disabled persons have sufficient conditions are mukalaf (Nor Salimah 2013: 82). The Prophet and his companions showed great example in giving rights to this group. This is because the value and dignity of man standing on the side of Allah SWT, but faith is not based on a person's physical condition. There are many people with disabilities who have higher spirit-than-normal human, and contributed to the society more than their counterparts.

The right to study, teach and learn is a right for all people regardless of their shortcomings. The need to obtain adequate knowledge and equality in education should not be disputed because the soul, the mind, the brain that was given by Allah SWT remains the same, but there are among this group has a low self-confidence. This is because they see flaws and being imperfect as compared to other normal human being. Prophet Muhammad encouraged individuals to seek knowledge, even said about the advantages for those who seek knowledge, namely:

من سلك طريقا يلتمس فيه علما سهل الله له طريقا إلى الجنة

*Meaning: Those who seek to study, then God will make his way easier to heaven. (Al-Tirmidhi 1998: 325)*

Braille hadith studies will be an encouragement for disable people to deepen their knowledge in particular fields of hadith. This may be able to produce disable people who are actively seek to acquire knowledge, changing socially, join forces to uphold Islam, creative in generating income etc (Mohd Azrul Hisham & Mohd Shafiee 2014: 109).

### **Developing visually impaired people potential**

General survey regarding the history of humanity's discovered many examples of neglect, elimination, humiliation, and even torturing the disabled due to imperfections in them. Ignorance and naivete of civil society in the past to understand the wisdom behind the imperfections that Allah has bestowed on these people, exacerbated by the views and attitudes of the leaders and their pastors. Sources said that the leaders and prominent pastors of Islamic civilization not loud enough even cruel to people with disabilities (Adnan et.al 2014: 17).

In the context of Arab society, up to the arrival of the Islam, also carry the same attitude. The officials did not want to see the disabled or ill people in their event. Generally the same attitude were within their community members (Al-Sakran 2010: 172-173). Reported that they would never eat in a ceremony with the disabled or diseased. They were very offensive to the visually impaired man groping for food, irritated with the people with limp injured leg, and was disgusted by the stench of the sick (Al-Qurtubiy 1964: 313).

However, the arrival of Islam that brought the concept of *rahmatan lil 'ÉlamÊn* that was mercy for all creation proves that principle and spirit of Islamic teachings really meet the nickname given to the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, a lot of calls, guidance and instruction that were given by Prophet Muhammad to educate not only the disabled but also the whole of humanity by stating that the flaws and imperfections were not something futile.

However, a great reward awaits those who successfully passed this test, whether they are from among the disabled themselves, the guards, counselors, leaders and even entire communities that contribute to the welfare and interests of this group. Among the famous hadith in this chapter are the words of the Prophet Muhammad:

إن الله قال: إذا ابتليت عبدي بحبيبتيه فصبر، عوضته منهما الجنة

*Which means: Verily Allah Almighty says: When I examine my two eyes (blindness), and he put on the test, then I'll replace it with him two eyes to heaven. (Al-Bukhan 2002: 116)*

For those with disabilities, they should see the above hadith as a manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad declaration that they have a special place in Islam. Those who were patient with this test have a place in the sight of Allah SWT. The motivation from the Prophet Muhammad reflected the position of the disabled who are grateful and pleased with the provisions of Allah SWT to the extent that it was commendable to be by his side with the promise of paradise.

History has shown the potential of the visually impaired people when the Prophet Muhammad had faith to appoint people with disabilities as a national leader, the muezzin, a priest and a member of the jihad. Prophet opened up to cAbdullah Ibn Umm Maktoum RA to contribute to the progress of Islam and defend Islam from enemies of Allah and appointed °Abdullah Ibn Ummi Maktoum RA to become the muezzin and the governor of Medina during the Prophet's absence. Trust is something that is heavy but trust from the Prophet Muhammad because of his leadership and abilities had made him a charismatic leader (Adnan et.al 2014: 23).

It can be concluded that the Prophet Muhammad was able to develop the potential of people with disabilities was not solely based on duty but also accounting the social aspect. Thus, the lack or imperfection in fact is the most valuable asset for them in an investment with Allah SWT. In fact, it turns out their imperfections in the sense of sight may be able to develop their potential to become a successful person. On this basis, the hadith studies of the visually impaired can be seen as a catalyst for them to unleash their potential and capabilities and thus contribute to the religion, society and the state.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mastery of the religion knowledge is emphasized in all societies regardless of any shortcomings. Lack of oneself is not a reason for them not to try to learn the main treasure of Prophet Muhammad which is hadith. Therefore, due to lots of benefits of hadith studies, thus Braille hadith studies should be implemented as soon as possible in order to realize the equality in education and to ensure that these people well versed in all types of knowledge, including the Quran and hadith. Thus, the normal Muslim communities should play a greater role in helping their brothers and sisters who need support and help, not on the basis of goodwill alone but also in the context to empower the visually impaired people to face of the challenges of life. Instead, all the parties should be involved to work together and mobilize efforts in order to play their role to dignify all aspects related to the two most important sources of Islam, namely the Quran and hadith.



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