

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ABDULLAH MUNSYI IN MALAY LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract

Malay modern literary research has never ceased to discuss the significance on the contribution of Munshi Abdullah in the Malay world. Although he was conferred the title of Father of Modern Malay Literature¹, his name was always hailed for some controversial remarks. His translation of the *Kitab Injil* and other missionary works received severe criticism and he was even noted for being the Western ally. Even some of the Malays who were adhere to chauvinistic attitude, would dismiss him as loyal Malay since he was noted using some awful words to describe the conditions of the Malays in his writings. Thus, looking thoroughly on his life history, this paper would like to examine his contributions in the Malay Literary works, of which he had contributed tremendously. This would also consult some discussion on his controversy among the scholars and his other significant works that should not be ignored by the history. Besides that, the author will also trace some of the new elements in his writing together with his very own style of writings which made him 'unusual' to his companions of his time. This will also includes the values that he has put forward and the important messages that he wanted to convey to his fellow Malay nations. Although his writing is somehow ruthless to some Malays, this is not apparently his

¹ The appointment of Abdullah Munshi as the Father of Modern Malay Literature was also challenged by many scholars, and the most notable one was directed to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas whereby in most of his writings he conferred the title to Hamzah Fansuri. Also, scholars differ in their views to include Syed Syeikh al-Hadi as the most eligible scholar for the title. Most of the scholar's debate is apparently grounded on how they perceive modernity and reform in the society. See further Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit UKM), 1972 and Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas, *The Origin of the Malay sha'ir*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968).

intention. Rather, he would like to inspire them to work hard particularly in their study since knowledge to him is power. It is the power of wisdom that would uplift their condition, recognize the difficulties and backwardness and help them to be acknowledged in life.

Introduction

Having brought up by a very religious family background, Abdullah was made to learn Islam and the Quran since his childhood. In fact, it was his first education he received through his grandmother since she was a Quranic teacher. She would make him to sit beside her all the time listening to her recitation although he did not start reading yet during that time. Then, his father made him to study and read the Quran with proper teachers. After that, then only he was made to learn other languages including Tamil, Hindu, English, and Chinese. Thus, this information is of great importance since he was criticized considerably on the writings and his literary efforts but few discussions were held on his religiosity. As a religious man, he would never jeopardize his own faith in seeking compliments from the British Colonial administrators. He stood firm on his Islam, and confronted the customs to help the Christians translating their sacred books while having very limited freedom and choice. Indeed, this is not a good excuse to those who disqualified him rather he was held responsible for Christianizing the Malay minds. What make him to endeavor on such efforts was primarily because of knowledge. Thus, in the following discussion, the author will try to highlight the important lines in his life history in order to know this very particular man in the history of the Malay world and how knowledge has made a great impact on him throughout his life.

A Life History of Munsyi Abdullah

His name is Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, but was commonly known in the Malay literary world as Munsyi Abdullah. Munsyi was a designation given for being a teacher, or teacher of language. He was born in a high respected family, whereby his

father Abdul Kadir (who was named after his grandfather) was the one who appreciated knowledge and inspired him to learn. As indicated by Winstedt, 'his career is interesting, because substantially it was the career of his greater son was to be.'² His father grew up in Malacca, and in his autobiography he mentioned that his father, after completing the Quran, was taught with languages and arithmetic. After that, he actively engaged with business in the interior of Malacca and taught Quran and religious classes to the local people.³ In fact, his father was also a teacher to an English lexicographer, William Marsden, and at the same time went for trading between Malacca and Siak. He also sent by the Resident of Malacca to many parts of Malay kingdoms for instance Lingga, Rau, Pahang, Terangganu, Kelantan, Palembang, Java and during his journey to these places he collected books. '... they (the books) were given to him gratuitously by the princes, and in some case my father paid for having the books copied, thus he obtained about sixty or seventy volumes with various names and on various subjects.'⁴ Before his retirement, Abdul Kadir also once became the interpreter for Batavian Government and Malay writer at Riau for quite some time.

Besides that, his great-grandfather -Syeikh Abdul Kadir- was also a very well known figure in the history, a teacher of Arabic language and religious study particularly the Quran. He was an Arab from Yaman migrated to Malacca married to a local woman who was also great teacher of the Quran in her village.⁵ Therefore, Abdullah was very consistent in his Quranic study since it was rooted from his family tradition. Having mixed blood in the family, he could converse in many languages

² Richard Winstedt. *A History of Classical Malay Literature.* (Petaling Jaya: Eagle Trading, 1996), 122.

³ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography of Munshi Abdullah.* (Singapore: Methodist Publishing House, 1918).

⁴ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography ...* 4.

⁵ He also mentioned in his autobiography that his grandmother was also a teacher to him- although she spoiled him too much, that while she was teaching her students reading the Quran, she always took him to accompany her. She will give him a reed pen, a little rice ink and a tablet to play with. With that, he started to know the shape of the letters.

including Malay, Arabic, Tamil, Hindustani, and English. Abdullah was born in Kampong Pali, a Tamil word resembles mosque. He was born after all his four siblings were died in infancy. His mother was terribly sad with the misfortune, and thus spent her time weeping and mourning over the deaths. Meanwhile, a religious man from Haddad known as Habib Abdullah lived nearby his parent's house could hear her mourning every time. He advised the parents to cease from weeping and grief as they will be granted a son. He told them to name him 'Abdullah' after his name. Being the only child to have survived in the family, his mother was very particular and showered him with great love. In his autobiography also, Munsyi Abdullah has shown an immense gratitude to his mother how her love and care will always be remembered in his days that he could not recompense with anything in his life.⁶

Abdullah received his formal education not from the very early age since he was spoiled by his grandmother too much. Later, his father brought him to school and gave him personal tutor at night. His education with his father and his two uncles Ismail Lebai and Mohamed Latiff was a tough one— since he was beaten many times but he recognized it as good teaching and education. His devotion to knowledge was also magnificent. He thought that knowledge is the most wonderful thing created by God and that he has confidence in the proverb that says; 'when you get money buy gold: then sell your gold and buy diamonds: and sell your diamonds and buy rubies: and sell your rubies and buy knowledge.'⁷ Also, the best thing in his autobiography he made a section for man to ponder on the moral value of his commentary. He made a sincere advice that no one in this world who could hate richness and status. But

⁶ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...* In his autobiography he mentioned that during his early age his life was full of challenge since he was not a healthy son. His parents spent a lot of money to take care him. The Malays believe that if a child is always sick, his parents are not suitable to take care of him, and thus he has to be sold to another family. Because of that custom – which he lamented as foolish he was 'sold' and nursed by many different families.

⁷ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...*, 12.

to him, knowledge is the ladder to reach anything that you desire in life including status and luxurious life. Therefore, man should pay enormous attention to knowledge and you will be respected and helped throughout your life in this world and the next.

Abdullah's parents were very strict on religious study and Quranic lesson especially his father. He would send him to learn Quran from the renowned scholars. Abdullah started his first education by reading and writing the Quran. After he had mastered the Quran⁸, then only his father made him studying Tamil language since it was a privilege to know this language. But still his father would monitor his five daily time prayers. In his autobiography he mentions that;

But though I was learning the Tamil language, my father ordered me that I was no account to absent myself from any of the five hours of prayers at the mosque. And if he did not see me go there even once, I should certainly get the rattan.⁹

Munsyi Abdullah had started teaching as early as thirteen years old. He began teaching the Indian soldiers reading the Quran and conducting religious classes and that he was called with the Malay nickname 'Munsyi' or teacher of language. During his teenage years, he had assisted his father in his business preparing letters and contracts. When Raffles came to Malacca he employed Abdullah and his two uncles to write letters to Malay rulers and articles particularly on Malay idioms and poetry. Since then, he then continued his career as a great teacher to many missionaries. He was also responsible to copy and collect Malay manuscripts including poems, verses. However when Raffles moved to Java, he could not follow him

⁸ It is mentioned in his autobiography during his recitation exam he says, "at the same time some clever people asked me several questions concerning the reading of the Koran, and the sound, and so forth; when I answered, the priest or preacher repeated the prayer of blessing, after which I was told to salute my teacher, and then my parents." W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...*, 18-19

⁹ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...*, 20.

since his mother resisted. Then, he worked with a Protestant clergyman William Milner and other missionaries and provided them Malay classes. In return, he studied English and also Cantonese with Chinese teacher from the Anglo-Chinese Mission.

When the Dutch came to Malacca in 1822, Abdullah went to Singapore with Rev. Mr. Thomsen. With his proficiency in English and Cantonese, he became a Malay writer to many English and Chinese merchants who were just arrived at the port. During his stay in Singapore, he also managed to meet Raffles again. Regrettably, he then met a great obstacle in life where he lost his personal belongings and his masterpiece collections in a fire. Abdullah in his life had offered tremendous help not only to the English missionaries but also individuals from the Anglo-Chinese mission. He would for some time return to Malacca to teach them Malay and collaborated with them to set up Malay translations at their printing press. He was also noted to give his Tamil friend a hand to translate the Tamil *Panchatantra* into Malay. Then, once in his life he faced with a great loss of his daughter and that had inspired him to write *Dawa'i Kulub* or *Salve for Hearts*.¹⁰

His Precious Works in the Malay World

Abdullah's contributions to the Malay society are clearly presented in Syed Farid Alatas's comment that he was the first who stood firm on criticizing feudalism and its impact on Malay's life whereby in his *Alternative Discourse in Southeast Asia* he puts forth that;

Abdullah was a keen observer of the problem of Malay backwardness in his time, which he attributed to the prevailing feudal order. Abdullah was in favour of utilizing the Malay language as a means of developing the consciousness of the Malays. While he was certainly not against the art of Quranic recitation, he

¹⁰ Richard Winstedt. *A History of Classical Malay Literature...*

regarded as irrational the study of the Qur'an without understanding its contents (1838/1965:15). He lamented that the Malay elite did not play a leading role in patronizing learning among the Malays in order that the Malay would be able to produce works in the various branches of knowledge (1838/1965:15-16). Abdullah goes on to assess the impact of feudalism on the Malay mind which he saw as opposing Islamic values. He is the first critical account of feudalism to emerge in Malaya and offered a perspective that broke with both the prevailing feudal and colonial viewpoints.¹¹

Thus, his contribution can also be found in many of his remarkable writings throughout his life such as *Hikayat Abdullah* (An autobiography), *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah, Dawa'i Kulub* and so on so forth. *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah*, for instance is well noted for his everlasting advices to the Malay rulers of that time to remain responsible for their subjects i.e. the Malays. He perceived his critics to the Malay rulers (*Kerajaan*) as timely and appropriate and compared it with British system of governing, since it prompted a hindrance towards social well-being of the Malays during that time¹². Despite of being religious, he also wrote extensively on natural science mainly in his *Hikayat Binatang*. *Hikayat Binatang* was the first book on natural science written in Malay language and was widely used in schools. His writings particularly his *Hikayat Abdullah* was noted for introducing Western education to the Malays and inspired them to work for development and progress. He had also criticized the backwardness of the Malays and their negative attitude for rejecting progress.

Among his tremendous endeavours was that in 1838, he had the chance to visit the east coast of Malay Peninsula i.e. Kelantan. While taking letters to Kelantan ruler, he recorded his invaluable experience in his *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*

¹¹ Syed Farid Alatas, "Alternative Discourse in Southeast Asia", SARI, 19(2001), p.55.

¹² Siti Hawa Hj. Salleh, *Malay Literature of the 19th Century*, (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia, 2010).

(*The Voyage of Abdullah*). He had also devoted his life doing the editing works of the *Sejarah Melayu*. Later, (after his wife died) he moved permanently to Singapore and having noted to help Keasbery in many of his translation works including Malay hymn-book, *Little Henry and His Nurse*, *Kejadian Isa* and the most controversy one *Kitab Injil*. However, it is of the latter work that Winstedt reveals Abdullah's most regret that 'he was not allowed a free hand.'¹³

One scholar argues that a number of people would critique Abdullah for being Western ally, but few of them have undergone research on his religiosity. For instance when criticizing the feudalistic nature of Malay leadership he had made his reference to one of the famous books in the Malay World *Tajus Salatin* which highlights the responsibility of the leaders to lead with fair and equality ('adil). Thus, in his commentary he argues that this is what Islam would encourage the leaders to do by looking after the subordinates and not to use the money in a luxurious way or pre-occupied with opium addiction.¹⁴

The Call Upon Malays

The need to change the society was rampant in the late 1990s in every aspects of life: education, economic, politic, social condition and etc. Yet, a similar call towards progress and the importance of education had been enunciated even during the colonial era (1874-1957). As Milner provides a vivid description of the situation during the colonial period that some of the Malays regained their vitality and paved the ways for a new intellectual milieu. As one scholar claims that;

The colonial period, in spite of its deep-running injustices, was for certain Malays a time for ideological

¹³ Richard Winstedt. *A History of Classical Malay Literature...*

¹⁴ Azhar Ibrahim Alwee. *Abdullah Munshi, Kesedaran Islam dan Kolonialisme*. Paper presented at Seminar of Education, 5 Mac 2007, organized by the Institute of National Education in Singapore.

adventure, there was a talk on a 'new learning', and a 'new sedar' or awareness. Some people felt as if they had for centuries been like "frogs beneath the coconut shell who believe they shell is the sky." Convinced they were now in possession of a manifest reality, these Malays began to engage in what they say as a hard-headed analysis of their historical situations of possible strategies for reforming their society.¹⁵

This was also the primary concern of MunsyiAbdullah, on the unprogressive condition of the Malays that they have to struggle and make change in their life. He had also stressed on the inability of the Malays 'to change or modernize their ideas or to produce anything new.'¹⁶ Based on his eyewitness accounts on the Malays and their discontent circumstances, MunsyiAbdullah wrote extensively to warn them. His *Hikayat Abdullah* is one of the evidences that he would never forgive himself if the Malays were to be left out in the society and what was written down was essentially his magnanimous advice towards them. As Milner once recorded he urged the Malays to partake seriously in the education¹⁷ and advancement of the West and also to take charge of their conservative attitude if they really want to change.¹⁸ Thus, to locate his Malay identity would not be sufficient to look into his family background alone – although many would disregard him as Malay for having

¹⁵ Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), v.

¹⁶ A. H. Hill (translator), *The Hikayat Abdullah: Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.310 cited in Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Writing a New Society: Social Change through the Novel in Malaysia*, (Australia: Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2000), 2.

¹⁷ The importance of education has been the main issue discussed in the Malay writings. This includes the first Malay newspaper *Jawi Peranakan* which was established in 1876, the local newspaper *Utusan Melayu* and the Islamic monthly *al-Imam* which concern revolves around the significance of education as 'a means of individual and communal self-improvement.' See Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Writing a New Society...*, 69.

¹⁸ See also Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Tamil-Arab descendents, but his care and concern upon the Malays would be necessarily adequate to say him of Malay root.

Besides that, he has also set a life to show that he was capable in learning and taking active participation with the foreign scholars and contributed in the society through his extensive and valuable writings. His journey was not always pleasant, as presented in the previous discussion and had even created the ill-famed controversy along with his career in the society. As Virginia puts it out;

*Clearly, Malays who came in contact with other arrangements for society, whether Western inspired or religious (Islamic), could begin to compare their social order with others. This indeed was what Abdullah Munsyi had done, and what other Malays began to consider.*¹⁹

Father of Modern Malay Literature

Before we can examine the contributions of Munsyi Abdullah in the Modern Malay Literature, it is worthwhile reading his autobiography how he falls in love in Malay language. Abdullah, noted for teaching experience learned his Malay language from a well known Datok Sulaiman. In his autobiography he mentioned that Datuk Sulaiman was the person who taught him the roots and origins of Malay language. He was an old man from kampong Hulu and a man of pure Malay origin whom he referred when he came across with new words in religious works, poetry and stories. Another man who was responsible to teach him the mystery of Malay language was Datuk Astur. He regards both of them as his great teachers and says that "it was they who told me that the Malay language has its own grammar and declensions and parsing..."²⁰ After they died, he continued learning from an Arab, Sayid Shaikh

¹⁹ Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Writing a New Society...*,3.

²⁰ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...*,28.

bin Alwi, from whom he read various books including *Ummu Barahin* explaining the Essence and Attributes of God, and later *KitabFakih* introducing him about Islamic laws and jurisprudence. All the books mentioned were written in Malay language. Thus, as a young man with diverse knowledge particularly on Islam and Quran he had been trained to read so many books in Malay language. He endeavored to know this language before using it in writings. Thus, the trainings he had gone through had sharpened his style and creativity in his writing. His love towards Malay language was recorded in his book, in which he says; "... they (the Malays) will not study their own language, and do not want to establish schools to teach it; this is beyond my comprehension... I wonder how can one know the language of other people before one knows one's own language."²¹

Abdullah Munsyi was hailed by many as a modernist, whose style of writing differed and was no more like old-hikayat. He was also known as the author who identified events and wrote literature on the basis of a social and friendly approach i.e. the behavior of the kings and the events in Malacca. The genre of his writing also was quite close to the modern genres like short story 'cerpen' etc. He also maintained his individuality in his writing that he did not subscribe to the cliché of the past rather he made used of the events that took place in Malacca and the local people. This form of writing can be identified as social criticism as noted by Ahmad Kamal Abdullah that Tun Sri Lanang was the first writer who put forward social criticism, and was later followed by Abdullah Munsyi in his *Hiakayat Abdullah* and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*.²²

Hikayat Abdullah was written in 1840/ 1256H. It was first published in Singapore with a print made by lithography (*cetakan batu*) in 1849, and later in Leiden in 1882. All his publications were written in Malay Jawi script. Hashim Musa in

²¹ W. G. Shellabear (trans.), *The Autobiography...*,31.

²² Ahmad Kamal Abdullah, et.al, *History of Modern Malay Literature. (Vol.II)* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992).

his *Sistem Sejarah Tulisan dalam Bahasa Melayu* commented that *Hikayat Abdullah* was enriched with many unusual words, particularly of such English words;

مادم	madam	كرنيل فركوار	Colonel Farquhar
رفليس	Raffles	روبو	Robert
وليوم	William	ميلين	Millen
كود مونيغ	good morning	هرلوجي	harlogee
امريكان	American	مكزين	magazine
طومسن	Thomson	بيكد	beget/begot
ميقيل	Michael	اغكلوه چينيس	Angglo Chinese
متيوس	Mathews	كولج	College

Table 1: Some examples of new style of Jawi writing found in *Hikayat Abdullah* (Source: Hashim Musa. 1997)²³

Hashim has further commented that *Abdullah's* style of Jawi writings was a bit different from the other scholars of his time and this marked the new transitional period of new Jawi of late 19th century to the early 20th century in the history by a group of learned Malays who were exposed to the impact of Europe.²³ He also insists that on the other hand, for those who were trained under the traditional religious literature, the old spelling system of Jawi was extensively applied in their usage until the advent of early 20th century.

He was also very influential in knowing what he writes and also very creative to write what he witnessed from the local people especially things that were peculiar to him. Therefore, it was like reading a commentary on particular subjects with special reference on the moral values of his stories. Thus, he

²³ Hashim Musa. *Epigraphy Melayu: Sejarah Sistem Tulisan dalam Bahasa Melayu*. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1997), 218.

does not subscribe himself towards something ambiguous and unknown rather he writes on true stories and facts. He was also noted with the style of his writing of being colloquial in nature. He has also departed from the traditional way of writing, inserting his critical view particularly on some traditions that he deemed as imprudent primarily those that impede the Malays from creative thinking and progress.

Christian-Muslim Relations in the Nineteenth Century

Keasberry and Munsyi, the works of both were influential in Malay Literary works as it came up with some intriguing argument. Many argue that he was too much inclined on the negative side, that people wonder why he has to translate the Bible. They also held the opinion that he was so desperate to revolutionize the Malay minds in supporting the British. However, Munsyi as many people can hardly agree on, has strong faith on his fellow Muslims that they should not be threatened with anything even by reading the Bible. This is also provided with the fact that Malay Muslims will never abandon their religion. This has been supported by several important scholars that the Malays were very strong in their faith and religion. As remarkably indicated by Winstedt, he argues that there were no Christian Malays during that time.²⁴ Dodsworth also is of the opinion that Christian's endeavors particularly on Keasberry's writing and translating efforts were fruitless to the Malays since a considerable number of Malays were still illiterate. He also observes the fact that "even in the early part of the nineteenth century genuine dialogue between Christian and Muslim did take place."²⁵ In addition, what inspired him to endeavor on such effort was the fact that he treated the Bible as a book of knowledge rather than as a sacred text.²⁶

²⁴ Richard Winstedt. *A History of Classical Malay Literature...*

²⁵ Marmaduke Dodsworth, *The Assimilation of Christianity by the Malays of the Malay Peninsula*, (M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago., 1928, 39 cited in Michael S. Northcott, "Christian-Muslim Relations in West Malaysia", *MW*, LXXXI, 1, 1991, 50.

²⁶ Lecture Notes, 15th May 2012

Abdullah 'Munysi' -a title indicated his long career- became a teacher of a number of Christian priests such as Benjamin Keasberry and William Milne. Although Muslim co-operations and efforts were immaterial and strongly discouraged by the local communities during these days, Abdullah Munysi, a Malacca man stood firm on his religion and gave tremendous help to the Christian activities and individuals. Northcott in his review on the delightful Christian-Muslim relation in the nineteenth century credited a high respect to him in which he states that "the close relationship which he developed with Milne and the later work of the mission, while he remained an orthodox and learned Muslim is a remarkable example of inter-religious co-operation and dialogue from nineteenth century Malacca."²⁷ Indeed, he was also keen to study the language of the foreigner when attending the Bible class of William Milne. In exchange, he has to help Milne to translate the Bible, which he thought he could do better in the translation from the Dutch translation of the Gospel in Malay. Free English lessons were meaningful to him, that he learned not only the language, but the way how they thought and of course their attitude towards knowledge.²⁸

Conclusion

Munysi Abdullah, as a great thinker and scholar in the Malay World he has set the standard of being religious yet critical in his approach. In fact, he had to find some ways to deliver it to the Malays particularly on the traditions that are not compatible with his progressive mode of thinking. To him, the traditions that weight no values mainly those which impede the Malays from thinking forward should be criticized since it has huge impacts on the Malays and how they think. Therefore, as a scholar who was severely trained by his father, he would stand up for anything that he thought to be good or right. Thus, he was an ordinary man with extraordinary view and vision for his nations and their future condition. The Malays should not

²⁷ Northcott, *Christian-Muslim Relations...*, 50.

²⁸ <http://www.sabrizain.org/malaya/malays3.htm>

be left behind in any aspect of life rather they have to struggle and work hard for their future generations. This is the very tone of his writing that throughout his life he had worked on.

Thus, in order to examine his contribution in the Malay literary works it would be a very tough responsibility since he was not only engaged with the everyday's affairs of the Malays. He was in fact criticized for his endeavors to help Milner and other missionaries translating their sacred book as it appears to confuse and provide detrimental implications to the Malays. Thus, the controversy he was living in will be continuously discussed in such debates even though he was declared as firm believer by many of his companions and opponents. Yet, what is more profound is his message in many of his books that remind the Malays of their identity, religiosity, nationality and responsibility towards life and knowledge. This is more meaningful to be discussed rather than on something which is unjustifiable for discussion. As a scholar, he would never regret on whatever he had in life. He would be remembered for his friendly-style of writing, yet influential and meaningful. Some tortures and sarcastic lines can be hardly accepted if he was considered as an outsider. But, if Munsyi Abdullah was to be recognized as an influential and distinguished figure of the Malay, his writing would be one that inspiring and full of meanings.

As many of the scholars who would apply literature for development, Munsyi Abdullah was undeniably one of them who set the example during the crucial time. At that time, whereby racial and political instability were dominant, he made the attempts to make the Malays realize and understand. He attempted to lay down all the reasons and factors that contributed to the physical hindrance and mental stagnant of the Malays. He would trace the roots of the problem and discuss it through his own stories. This can be traced from his true *hikayat* and how he presented it to the audience so that they can ponder on the moral of the story. As a Father of Modern Malay Literature he would try to bring some new refreshing approach of writing which will not be so old-fashioned and rigid.

To many Malays, he has contributed something very original and significant. In order to find this quality in many writers and scholars who can foresee confidence and supremacy in the Malay traits is of rare occasion. Therefore, Munsyi Abdullah was truly a scholar and very devoted person in the history that has both the Islamic and Malay roots. He can never be denied an important place in the Malay history as he is the renowned Father of Modern Malay Literature.

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