

**THE PROMINENCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF ABU  
HASSAN ALI AL-NADWI ON STRENGTHENING THE  
SPREAD OF DA'WAH IN MUSLIM WORLD, 1913-1999**

***Ketokohan Dan Sumbangan Abu Hassan Ali Al-Nadwi  
Dalam Pengukuhan Penyebaran Dakwah Di Dunia  
Islam, 1913-1999***

Nur Fariahah Ahmad <sup>(a)</sup> \*, Mashitah Sulaiman <sup>(b)</sup>,  
\*Corresponding author

Fakulti Kepimpinan dan Pengurusan, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia,  
Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. nurfariahah@usim.edu.my.  
Kepimpinan dan Pengurusan, Pusat Pengajian Teras, Universiti Sains Islam  
Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.  
mashitah@usim.edu.my.

***Abstract***

Abu Hassan al-Nadwi (1913-199), was indisputably one of the greatest Muslim scholars, in the second half of the twentieth century in Muslim world. He not only spread da'wah in India, but also in Muslim world, including Malaysia. His contribution in the field of da'wah and Islamic thought was significant, which greatly impact various segments of society, from public to the upper class. Al-Nadwi involvement in the field of da'wah has given encouragement to other preachers to continue spreading Islamic da'wah, in particular the question on the concept of *rabbaniyyah* in da'wah used in his life. The study on the contribution of al-Nadwi in the spread of Islamic da'wah is very important to be highlighted in Muslim society, in dealing with the challenges of da'wah in the context of multi-racial society of Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims at exploring the historical background of al-Nadwi's life as a figure who was actively involved in the spread of Islamic da'wah, in the subcontinents of India. The study also aims to identify al-Nadwi's contribution in strengthening the spread of Islamic da'wah, as well as to identify the concept of *rabbaniyyah* da'wah in al-Nadwi's life. This study was primarily utilized historical approach in conducting a

qualitative methodology, which used semi-structured interviews with experts in Islamic da'wah and thought. Content and thematic analysis from secondary sources, such as journal articles, scholarly studies, scholarly books and websites have been used in the study. Data collected from primary and secondary sources were used to understand al-Nadwi's contribution in the field of Islamic da'wah. The study revealed that al-Nadwi was a prominent Muslim figure, historian and thinker who has produced many Muslim scholars and intellectuals, not only in India, but also all over the world. In addition, he used the *manhaj* of da'wah based on the Qur'an, hadith and sirah, as well as the stories of the companions effectively.

**Keywords:** Islamic da'wah, Rabbaniyyah, Islamic history

### **Abstrak**

Abu Hassan al-Nadwi (1913-1999), merupakan seorang sarjana Muslim tersohor yang tidak dapat disangkal lagi pada separuh kedua abad kedua puluh, di seluruh dunia Islam. Beliau bukan sahaja menyebarkan dakwah di India, malah di seluruh dunia Islam, termasuk Malaysia. Sumbangan beliau dalam bidang dakwah dan pemikiran Islam sangat signifikan, sehingga memberi kesan kepada pelbagai lapisan masyarakat, daripada orang awam sehingga ke golongan atasan. Penglibatan al-Nadwi dalam bidang dakwah telah memberikan semangat kepada pendakwah-pendakwah lain untuk terus menyebarkan dakwah Islamiah, khususnya persoalan tentang konsep dakwah *rabbaniyyah* yang digunakan dalam kehidupan beliau. Kajian terhadap sumbangan al-Nadwi dalam penyebaran dakwah Islamiah sangat penting untuk diketengahkan kepada umat Islam, di sebalik cabaran dakwah dalam konteks masyarakat majmuk di Malaysia. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji latar belakang dan sejarah kehidupan al-Nadwi sebagai tokoh yang bergiat aktif dalam penyebaran dakwah Islamiah di benua kecil India. Kajian ini juga cuba mengenal pasti sumbangan al-Nadwi dalam memperkukuhkan

penyebaran dakwah Islamiah serta mengenal pasti konsep dakwah *rabbaniyyah* yang diterapkan dalam kehidupan al-Nadwi. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan histografi dalam kajian kualitatif, iaitu dengan menggunakan kaedah temubual secara semi-struktur bersama pakar dakwah dan pemikiran Islam. Analisis kandungan secara tematik daripada bahan sekunder seperti artikel jurnal, majalah, kajian sarjana, buku ilmiah dan laman web turut digunakan dalam kajian ini. Data primer dan sekunder digunakan untuk memahami sumbangan al-Nadwi dalam bidang dakwah Islamiah. Kajian mendapati bahawa al-Nadwi merupakan seorang tokoh pemikir Islam yang telah melahirkan ramai ulama dan cendekiawan muslim, bukan sahaja di India, malah di seluruh dunia. Di samping itu, beliau menggunakan manhaj dakwah yang berteraskan kepada al-Quran, hadis dan sirah serta kisah-kisah para sahabat secara berkesan.

**Katakunci:** Dakwah Islamiah, Rabbaniyyah, Sejarah Islam

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study focus on the prominence and contribution of Abu Hassan Ali Al-Nadwi on strengthening the spread of da'wah in Muslim World, 1913-1999. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, his companions, *taabi'in* and *tabi 'al-taabi'in* the role of the scholars is significant to carry the trust and responsibility of spreading Islam to all mankind. The greatness and height of knowledge to ensure the continuity of da'wah and the message of the prophets and messengers to be continued and can be implemented on this earth. The knowledge acquired by scholars is the result of their diligence and efforts in seeking knowledge and does not make that knowledge a storage material but is poured out to students and anyone who wants to study with them.

Later, the role of students becomes a continuation of the dissemination of knowledge to society and it continues from generation to generation. These scholars were born in society as pillars and upholders of Islamic knowledge and its values, educating generations of Muslims and Muslims to know God and

master the basic knowledge of Islam and deepen the knowledge of the language of the Quran well (Ismail, 1996). This study discusses about one of the leading Islamic preachers, namely Sheikh Abu Hassan Al-Nadwi, as a great scholar originated from India, and a scholar who has mastered various fields of knowledge.

Starting with theology, interpretation of the Quran, expertise in hadith, fiqh, history, Arabic, English and Persian literature. He was a “teacher”, it is also said that he almost mastered the whole field of Islamic knowledge. He was held in high esteem in terms of his knowledge so that al-Nadwi was admired and respected not only by the surrounding society but also respected by the world community at large. He was also hailed as the best scholar in 20th century India.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are various studies have been done by academics and scholars on the stature and contribution of Abu Hassan al-Nadwi in the various forms of approaches they use. Most of al-Nadwi's works were translated into English. In general, research or writing on the figure of Abu Hassan al-Nadwi has been abundant in markets located around the world. Some are original text and others cover various points of view. Among the writers who are considered important in discussing al-Nadwi's role and contribution in this study are Zulkifli al-Bakri ( 2016 ) Mohd Rumaizuddin Ghazali (1974), Ahmad Fahmi Zamzam (2000), Azhari Setiawan (2017), Mulyadi Ibrahim (2020), and Ata Ur Rahman (2016).

Zulkifli al-Bakri's writings are important because he narrates al-Nadwi's personality from various aspects. His notes were written and published in scientific books. The approach in his writing is that he wants to bring the community closer to know al-Nadwi more closely and be a guide for present and future generations. Thus, some writings that touch specifically on the personality of al-Nadwi have been clearly stated ( Zulkifli,2016).

Writing the life history of al-Nadwi is very important in living the journey of his life from childhood to the end of his life. The research writing of several writings has noted the personality of al-Nadwi. The life history of a person who had a great impact in the spread of da'wah delivered by al-Nadwi. The author narrates the

activities of al-Nadwi throughout the story of his life who spent a lot of time preaching and good. Various differences in the delivery of information sources were obtained between the authors based on previous studies. This is because the source of the findings obtained is not related to the original material ( Shamsul Azhar,2017).

Al-Nadwi's mastery in the field of religious knowledge, philosophy and vision of the Islamic movement throughout the country has supported the works that have been produced by al-Nadwi. The focus of his writing is in the fields of history, hadith, tafsir, da'wah, autobiography, literature, education and children's books. He wrote using Arabic and Urdu, then translated extensively into English. The number of books written by him was 60 in Arabic and when mixed with small pamphlets it reached 176 books (Zulkifli,2016). The legacy of his writing is a form of al-Nadwi's attention to Muslims, not only to the Muslim community in India but around the world.

The approach of da'wah brought by al-Nadwi is a comprehensive manhaj of da'wah and tarbiyah. Al-Nadwi began teaching at Darul Ulum, Nadwatul Ulama in 1934 for the subject of tafsir and Arabic literature. In 1943, he founded the Center for Islamic Studies-Studies of the Quran and Sunnah, the Humanitarian Association between Muslims and Non-Muslims (India) in 1959 (al-Qaradawi,2000:26-28) . According to al-Nadwi an understanding of the fundamentals of theology and da'wah will make a preacher preach because God, not for personal gain or the like. Preaching is for the good of all human beings by calling to the path of Allah not for the benefit of others (al-Qaradawi,2000:26-28).

In addition to al-Nadwi's personal contributions, he also preached using questioners by producing books in large numbers then speech papers with an estimated 200 pieces in Arabic and 300 in Urdu (Syed Muhammad Rabey, 2014: 219). In this case, his work has also been reprinted for translation into the world's major languages. This actor has proved that al-Nadwi's prowess in spreading the message of Islam through the production of works as a public reader even for future generations. The production of works in the field of literature is one of al-Nadwi's great contributions. In addition, al-Nadwi not only focuses on writing in

the field of literature, but also sirah al-nabawiyah, historical sources, works specifically for children. In addition, the autobiographical work is also an effort to share about his life in seeking knowledge and preaching. He hopes that all his efforts can be continued by other writers. In addition to al-Nadwi's efforts in producing quality works, he also actively championed the idea of Islamic Literature in congregation (Zulkifli,2016).

Finally, the reduction of the wealth of the thinkers of al-Nadwi should be explored further in order to be used as a reference and guide to serve in the field of da'wah. The establishment of *Rabitah al-Adab al-Islami al-Alamiyah* as well as discourses related to Islamic Literature that began in the 1980s era was al-Nadwi's greatest contribution along with other scholars (Ahmad Fahmi,2000).

### **3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This research aims to study in more depth the historical background and contributions of Muslim figures in the field of da'wah. Al-Nadwi is one of the many scholars who travel for the purpose of preaching, seminars, muktamar, pilgrimage and strengthening the Islamic brotherhood among the scholars. For more than half a century, he walked and traveled preaching to all corners of the world. Wherever he went, the task of conveying the message of Islam was his first task (Ahmad,2000). in this case, al-Nadwi looks at the problems that occur in society and needs spiritual replenishment as well as guidance to return to the right path. This is because the background history of the figure is very important to be highlighted because it can be used as an effort to introduce al-Nadwi to the community. In addition, it can provide an overview of the involvement of figures from the beginning in the spread of Islamic da'wah.

In addition, be able to know the concept of *rabbaniyyah* da'wah applied in the life of al-Nadwi in spreading Islamic da'wah. According to al-Nadwi, Muslims need preachers who have the personality of the Qur'an, learn and teach the Qur'an and are wise. He mentioned that this fact has been abandoned by Muslims, this has led to a spiritual crisis in which a number of Muslims become someone who loves property, has widespread social and moral ills

(al-Nadwi,1996:10). Thus, the current study analyses the implementation of *rabbaniyyah* concept in the life of al-Nadwi.

Furthermore, this study was also conducted to identify the contribution of al-Nadwi in strengthening the spread of Islamic da'wah. Through this study, the community can evaluate and find out the extent of the contribution of figures in the spread of da'wah not only at the state level but around the world (Zulkifli,2016). Indirectly, this study can show how the change and progress of Muslims with the effectiveness of his preaching through the contributions given to Islam.

### **3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the historical background of al-Nadwi, and his life?
2. How is the concept of *Rabbaniyyah* da'wah applied in the life of al-Nadwi?
3. What is the contribution of al-Nadwi in strengthening the spread of Islamic da'wah?

### **3.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the historical background of al-Nadwi 's life as a dynamic figure who actively involved in the spread of Islamic da'wah in the subcontinents of India.
2. To analyse the concept of *Rabbaniyyah* da'wah in al-Nadwi's life.
3. To analyse al-Nadwi's contribution in strengthening the spread of Islamic da'wah in Muslim world.

### **3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Through this study, it is possible to know and get to know more deeply the personality of al-Nadwi, a respected Islamic preacher. To develop a new framework in the writing or study of Islamic preachers in the Islamic world by taking into account the aspects of education, writing the work of a figure, the involvement of a figure throughout his life history and so on. Furthermore, this will evoke a sense of love for scholars by approaching the writing of their work holistically. The efforts of leading researchers in the

involvement of the spread of Islamic da'wah will facilitate the community to continue to make scientific research.

### **3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The arrival of al-Nadwi in the spread of Islamic da'wah had a great impact in the Islamic world. This study analyzes the prominence, concept of *rabbaniyyah* da'wah and al-Nadwi's contribution in strengthening the spread of Islamic da'wah. The scope of the study was limited by the discovery of more robust sources other than those available on the website. This study is only through interviews of experts in the field of da'wah, internet sources based on past studies and scholarly studies. Furthermore, this study did not specify a target or location as it was limited based on previous study sources. Therefore, it takes some time and requires careful examination based on the referenced source until the source is from an authentic and accurate source.

## **4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design**

This study primarily utilized qualitative methodology in data collection and data analysis According to Creswell J.W (2005), research design is a specialized approach that includes data gathering, data analysis and report writing as part of the research process. Qualitative research is multimodal in nature, with an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject. This implies that qualitative researches examine things in their natural setting, attempting to comprehend or interpret events in terms of the meanings ascribed to them by individuals. This study was primarily utilized historical approach in conducting a qualitative methodology, which used semi-structured interviews with experts in Islamic da'wah and thought. Content and thematic analysis from secondary sources, such as journal articles, scholarly studies, scholarly books and websites have been used in the study. Data collected from primary and secondary sources were used to understand al-Nadwi's contribution in the field of Islamic da'wah.

### **4.2 Data Collection**



Data collection is the process of collecting and preparing data to be processed to obtain the desired results. Data collection is very important to get accurate information. In addition, data collection is also intended to keep records, select important information or to communicate information to others. Researchers used thematic analysis of secondary materials such as articles, journals, magazines, scholarly studies, scholarly books and websites.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of storing data systematically. The data obtained will be read, compiled, evaluated and divided according to the respective studies. This method is a data analysis that involves writing conclusions and making comparisons from the study data.

## **5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

His real name is Abu al-Hassan Ali bin Abd al-Hayy bin Fakhruddin al-Hasani. He was born on November 24, 1914 in Kalan, Raeberily, Uttarpradesh province, India. He is of Arab descent who has long migrated to India. He was given the name Ali, while Abu Hassan was his nickname ( Zulkifli,2016). His descendants are of Arab descent, although he has long settled in India. He has strength by abiding by Islamic law. It is said that his descendants reached Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan al-Muthanna ibn al-Imam al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. Therefore, his family is known as Hasaniyah. His father was named Sayyid Abdul Hayyi bin Sayyid Fakruddin al-Hassani ( Zulkifli,2016 ).

Born on December 22, 1869 AD, his father was a historical figure, book author and great scholar in India. His father died when he was 10 years old in the year 1341H/1923M. His mother was named Sayyidah Khairun Nisa 'who was a memorizer of the Qur'an, a pious, wise and writer and poet who was admired by women, especially in India (Muhammad Ijtiba' al-Nadwi, 2001). The descendants on his mother's side are also from the pious group, Dhia 'al-Nabi bin Said al-Din bin Ghulam Jailani bin Muhammad Wadih bin Muhammad Sabir bin Ayatillah bin Sheikh al-Kabir Alamallah bin Muhammad Mua'zam. Next was to meet the lineage between mother and father (Zulkifli,2016).

Al-Nadwi's education went through four stages starting from the home educated by his mother, education from the scholars, formal education and perseverance he learned. His mother had taught him the Quran. His life as a child was quite different from other children his age. Reading books is his favorite thing compared to playing games like a normal child. Al-Nadwi began studying the Quran at home and joined the kuttab at his village mosque. His Quran teacher was Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Nadwi. He also deepened his knowledge of tajwid by reciting hafs and his teacher was Asghar Ali. Al-Nadwi studied with Sheikh Khalil al-Ansari, Sheikh Abdul Hayyi al-Faruqi, and Haidar Hassan Khan to study tafsir using al-Baidawi's tafsir (Majdhub, 1986:136).

Furthermore, he also learned tafsir al-Quran as a whole from Sheikh Ahmad Ali Lahore in 1932. Al-Nadwi never lost touch in studying al-Quran. In addition to studying the Qur'an and tafsir, he has also studied the science of hadith, deepened the story of the Prophet, logic, fiqh and faith, as well as language. He has mastered various languages and dialects that he has mastered well namely Arabic, English and Urdu (al-Salmani, 2004: 44).

Later, in addition to his formal education, during his stay at Nadwatul Ulama, he also talked a lot with scholars throughout India. Among them are Sheikh Khalil bin Muhammad al-Yamani (Arab), Sheikh Khawwajah Abdul Hayy Farouqi (Tafsir), Sheikh Sayyid Muhammad Talhah (Nahu). After graduating from Nadwatul Ulama, he continued his studies at Lucknow University in August 1927 in the field of Arabic literature. Al-Nadwi was the youngest and most outstanding student in 1929. He then continued his studies in Lahore for a year, and became acquainted with the famous poet, Muhammad Iqbal. Al-Nadwi then returned to Lucknow again to observe the study of hadith. Sheikh Haidar Hassan Khan al-Tunki was one of the teachers of talaqqi al-Nadwi in the study of hadith. The six main books of hadith are Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Tirmizi, Sunan Abu Daud Sunan Ibn Majah, and Sunan al-Nasa'i (Zulkifli, 2016).

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

Islam is a religion that completes the whole of human life. Islam will return man to nature, to save man from ignorance and darkness. The spread of Islamic da'wah brought by Abu Hassan al-

Nadwi was not only in India but he spread da'wah all over the world. His involvement in the world of Islamic da'wah by using the rabbaniyyah approach. Yusuf al-Qadrawi has described al-Nadwi as divine, Islamic, Qur'anic, Muhammadani, and a natural scholar. Al-Nadwi is considered rabbani because he is a scholar who is committed to knowledge, deeds and da'wah. Al-Nadwi has good and praiseworthy morals, is not involved in matters of heresy or problems in faith or behavior (al-Qadrawi, 2001: 40).

Moreover, al-Nadwi's writings are said to have a spirit. This is because his own morals have influenced his writing and influenced the reader (Zulkifli, 2016). In conclusion, al-Nadwi's contribution in the spread of Islam is so great that Islam is famous and respected to this day. This is because, al-Nadwi together with other Muslim figures in the production of their works and writings. As a result of their writing, the community makes it a place of reference and a repository of knowledge. Therefore, make these Islamic figures as idols and good followers for us to continue to succeed and be able to continue their struggle in spreading the message of Islam.

## REFERENCES

- Zamzam, A. F. (2000). Abu Al-Hasan'Ali Al-Hasani An-Nadwi: Keperibadian, Sejarah Hidup dan Perjuangan. *Jurnal Usuluddin*, 11, 79-92.
- Monang, S. (2018). Reconstruction of Western Civilization Viewed by Sayyid Abū al-ʿasanās' Alī al-Ḥasanī al-Nadwī. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 1-12.
- Setiawan, A. (2017). Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasani an-Nadwi Tentang Keruntuhan Peradaban, Pandangan Hidup, dan Pendidikan Islam. *Tasfiah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 1(2), 277-304.
- Ibrahim, M. (2020). Rekontruksi Tazkiyah al-Nafs Menurut Abu Hasan al-Nadwi. *At-Tafkir*, 13(1).
- Mohd Shahrizal, N. (2011). Manhaj Sastera Islam menurut kaca mata Shaykh Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi. *Jurnal dinika*, 9(2), 179-192.
- Ghazali, M. R. (2016). Pemikiran Tasawuf dan Kehidupan Kerohanian Menurut Abu Hasan Ali Al-Nadwi (1914-1999):

Satu Analisis: Tasawwuf and the Spiritual Life according to Abu Hasan Ali Al-Nadwi: An Analysis. *'Abqari Journal*, 8(1), 121-142.

- Kamil, I., Hafidhuddin, D., Mujahidin, E., & Tamam, A. M. (2021). Konsep tarbiyyah ruhiyyah Abu Al-Hasan Ali Al-Nadwi. *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(2), 272-289.
- Bakri.Z.M. , (2016). *Maulana Syeikh Abi al-Hassan Ali al-Nadwi*. Seremban: Pustaka Cahaya Kasturi Sdn. Bhd.
- Rumaizuddin Ghazali, *Biografi Agung Abu Hassan Ali Al-Nadwi*, Grup Buku Karangkrak Sdn.Bhd.
- Nasir, M. S., & Teh, K. S. M. (2021). Pandangan al-Nadwi Tentang Kepentingan al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah dalam Pendidikan Kanak-Kanak: Al-Nadwi's View on the Importance of al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah in Children's Education. *Journal of Quran Sunnah Education & Special Needs*, 5(1), 227-242.
- Nasir, M. S., & Teh, K. S. M. (2021). Faktor-Faktor Pembentukan Pemikiran al-Nadwi Terhadap Gagasan Sastra Islam. *RABBANICA-Journal of Revealed Knowledge*, 2(1), 65-88.