

SPECIAL ADDRESS

THEME: “Islamic Manuscripts ~ Landmark of the People’s Civilisation”

Knowledge Convention 2019
In conjunction with the 73rd Birthday Celebration of
His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of
Brunei Darussalam.

**Topic - “Islamic Manuscripts:
Landmark of the People’s Civilisation.”**

Presented by:
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At the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Gallery of Islamic Treasures,
26, Jalan Pengiran Babu Raja, Brunei Darussalam.

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السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَمَنْ
تَبِعَهُ وَوَالَاهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ.

In the Audience of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu‘izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar ‘Ali Saifuddien Sa’adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha binti Al-Marhum Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Muhamed Alam.

Begging your pardon,

Your loyal subject seeks permission to fulfil the wishes of this year’s Knowledge Convention Steering Committee in presenting a Special Address entitled: **“Islamic Manuscripts: Landmark of the People’s Civilisation.”** Your loyal subject also seeks permission to use the common language for simplicity.

Respected audience,

What is a manuscript? (The word) "manuscript" is of Latin origin, consisting of two words, 'Manus' meaning hand, and 'Scriptus', meaning writing. So Manuscript means an original, unpublished handwritten copy.

Currently there are about **4,733** artefacts and manuscripts in the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Gallery of Islamic Treasures whereby 1,569 of which are manuscripts, a figure that may be considered as admirable, to the extent that a well-known overseas visitor had described it as the largest manuscript collection he has ever known in the world.

Perhaps what the visitor had said is indeed true or proven because, besides their large numbers, on the average, the manuscripts here are also in perfect condition. Almost the whole Mushaf al-Qur'an manuscript, for example, is complete. We would not call it a Mushaf Al-Qur'an if it merely constitutes separated sheets, or certain verses written for decorations. Likewise, most manuscripts of books are complete rather than scraps or fragments detached from an original book.

We have many Mushaf Al-Qur'an manuscripts, the more ancient ones are 400, 500, 600, 800 years old, with two that are estimated to be 1,000 years old, both still complete and in good condition. Copies of the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*, and *Fatawa 'Alam Ghiri*, which are two big books, are also still in their complete forms. The copy of *Dalail al-Khairat* is also complete, so too are the other books.

All of these are in the form of authentic, handwritten manuscripts. Obviously, every single copy of the existing manuscripts is the only copy in the world, with its author also being the only author for each copy.

That is how unique the manuscripts are. This may also be proof that Islamic manuscripts in particular are a landmark of the people's civilisation. Hence, advanced and civilised nations admire, and are very appreciative of, manuscripts.

Just the jawi manuscripts alone have garnered admiration from the western world. According to a study, jawi manuscripts have received great attention since the 16th century, first from the Dutch scholars, then from the British followed by the European scholars as a whole.

They brought the manuscripts to their respective countries with the intention of knowing or studying, through the contents of these manuscripts, the way of thinking and the way of life of the archipelago Malays so that it would be easy for them to colonise and govern the territories they occupied.¹

Malay jawi manuscripts have, for some time now, been in the Leiden Library, British Library and the Royal Asiatic Society in London. One of the most valuable manuscripts, also found here, is the "*Hukum Qanun Brunei* " [Laws of Brunei]. According to a study, the Malay jawi manuscripts are also kept by more than 28 countries in the world.

In this building alone, there are around 1,569 manuscripts: Whether Malay, Arabic, Persian or Urdu, all of them use the 'Jawi script' (Qur'anic script). This is the amazing thing about these Islamic manuscripts, they are written in Qur'anic calligraphy. Therefore, there is no doubt that the manuscripts in this building have their own value, namely that of "Blessings and Magnificence."

Yes, from the Mushaf Al-Qur'an manuscripts to the manuscripts of books written by scholars, they all have the value of

¹ Refer to the working paper *Manuskrip Jawi*, Profesor Madya Doktor Mahayudin Haji Yahya.

blessings and magnificence. Why would they not, does not every letter of the Qur'an promise a reward? *الم*. *Alif* is one letter, *lam* is one letter, *mim* is one letter. If these three letters are read in one sentence *الم*, it will bring forth three rewards.

That is how great the Qur'anic letters are.

That is why the books written by scholars are full of Qur'anic letters. Therefore, no matter how many manuscripts there are in this building: Whether Malay, Arabic, Persian or Urdu, we will keep preserving them, we will keep revering them, and not place them at our feet, as they are all written in the Qur'anic script.

Come, let us prove the blessedness of the religious scriptures that contain the letters of the Qur'an. For example, also preserved in this Gallery of Treasures is the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* manuscript written by Imam Al-Ghazali Rahimahullah and published in the year 488 Hijrah corresponding to 1095 CE. This means that the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* is now over 900 years old. Its very long lifespan has enabled the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* to be copied by many copyists around the world.

There were people in history who had disrespected the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*. During the reign of Ali bin Yusuf Al-Murabithi in Cordoba, the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* was ripped / torn and even ordered to be burned. This came to the knowledge of its author, Imam Al-Ghazali *Rahimahullah*. This imam then supplicated:

“O Allah, I ask that You tear their kingdom as they have torn the Ihya Ulum ad-Din, and wipe out their country as they have burned to dust the Ihya Ulum ad-Din.”

Respected audience,

The do’a [supplication] of this Imam was answered. In the end, the Kingdom of Ali bin Yusuf Al-Murabithi collapsed and the country was lost when it fell into the hands of others.

This is historical proof of the blessedness of *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*. Here, we are pleased to mention a piece of good news: other people, other rulers, may rip/tear and burn the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*, but, far from ripping or tearing, let alone burning the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*, Alhamdulillah, our sovereign, the ruler of Brunei Darussalam, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu’izzaddin Waddaulah, has instead built a magnificent building, the pride of Brunei Darussalam, to house and to preserve the *Ihya Ulum ad-*

Din, and in fact, not just the *Ihya Ulum ad-Din* but many other books, as a sign of his reverence for religious books. The benefits from all of these are not solely for His Majesty alone, rather they will be the nation's heritage and legacy, passed down from generation to generation, and may in fact be shared by anyone from the international community.

In addition to the *mushaf* manuscripts and religious books, in this Gallery of Treasures there are also several *athar* [relics] or artifacts attributed to the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam* and his companions, some of which are considered original while others are replicas. Among these relics or artifacts is the noble hair of the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*, a picture of the Prophet's turban and sword, a replica of his sword as well as the swords of some of the great companions. All these relics, especially the noble hair of the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*, have their own value, the value of "Blessings and Magnificence."

Therefore, in *ahadith* [prophetic traditions] narratives, one of which is the *hadith* of al-Bukhari, it is stated that the companions *Radhiallahu `anhum* had scrambled to the barber to get the cut hair of the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*. A *hadith* of Muslim also narrates that while shaving, the Prophet himself would give his hair to his friend Abu Talhah and say:

أَقْسَمَهُ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

Meaning: *Distribute this hair among the people O Abu Talhah.*

Hence it is not surprising that until today, there are still some who claim to have kept the noble hair, which they have inherited from generation to generation.

Among the proofs of the blessedness of the hair of the Prophet *Sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam* is the narration of Abdullah bin Mauhib, he said: “My family once told me to meet Ummu Salamah, the wife of the Prophet *Sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam*, with a bowl of water. Ummu Salamah received me with a vessel containing the hair of the Prophet *Sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam* in her hand.” As was common then, when a person has eye problems or any kind of illness, that person will send water to Ummu Salamah and Ummu Salamah will then soak the hair of the Prophet *Sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam* in the said water to be taken by the patient as medicine.

That is one (proof). Another (proof) concerns a narration, also about the hair of the Prophet *Sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam*, relating to the notable companion Khalid bin Al-Walid. This

companion longed for martyrdom in jihad but his longing was unfulfilled, it did not materialise. Despite the many wars he participated in, he continued to return home safely, with victory. This companion was described by the Prophet as سيف الله (Sword of Allah) meaning the defender of His religion. Yes, he was a true warrior, a commander who was not afraid to die, in fact he had even hoped to die in jihad.

In a battle that he led, he was seen wearing a قَلَنْسُوَّة (helmet). As the battle raged fiercely, suddenly the helmet on Khalid's head fell to the ground. Upon realising this, Khalid made every effort to retrieve the fallen helmet, ignoring the possible consequences of his actions.

After the war, the companions came forward and denounced Khalid's actions because what he did could endanger his life. They said, “What’s a helmet compared to life?”

Khalid explained:

"لَمْ أَفْعَلْهَا بِسَبَبِ الْقَلْنَسُوءِ بَلْ لِمَا تَضَمَّنَتْهُ مِنْ شَعْرِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ لِئَلَّا أُسَلَبَ بَرَكَتَهَا وَتَقَعَ فِي أَيْدِي الْمُشْرِكِينَ."^٢

Meaning: *"I did not behave thus simply for a helmet but because the noble hair of Rasulullah Sallallahu'alaihi wa sallam was in the helmet and I did not wish to lose the barakah from it or that it should fall into the hands of the mushrik (polytheists)."*

Allahu Akbar! Thus was Khalid! Clearly here, Khalid was not concerned about losing his life as long as he was able to save the hair of Rasulullah Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam. This narration also proves that in whatever battle he participated, Khalid, the renowned commander, would always have the hair of Rasulullah Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam with him, kept in the helmet he wore. Why? Because Khalid was very passionate about and yearned for blessings, specifically during crucial moments in battles.

In sha' Allah, soon, we will together perform tabaruk (obtain blessings) from this noble hair in the building that we are now at.

² Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Aziz Juned, "Bertabaruk Dengan Atsar-Atsar Prophet Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam."

Before that, we will move on to talk about the Turban and the Sword of Rasulullah *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*, both of which equally pertain to blessings.

During the time of the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*, a battle called the “Battle of Khandaq” took place. Khandaq means wide trench or ditch. The Muslims dug this ditch all around Madinah to prevent the polytheist armies from infiltrating and attacking the Muslims in the city. However, one of the leaders of the polytheist armies, by the name of `Amru bin Abdi Wad, managed to cross the ditch on horseback. From his horse, he shouted:

“Hey Muhammad! You think, people from amongst you who are killed will enter paradise while those who are killed from amongst us will enter hell. Indeed, I long for hell. Are there none amongst you then longing to enter paradise? Come on! Come on! Whoever wants to fight me, come forward!”

Such was the arrogant challenge from `Amru, the commander of the polytheists. He challenged any Muslim to fight him, one to one.

Yes, who, among the Muslims, was willing to take up this challenge? The challenge to fight the famous commander known to be skilled. Who?

For a while, no one came forward. But then, to everyone's surprise, an inexperienced young man, who did not seem to know anything about weapons, suddenly came forward.

Who was that young man? He was Ali bin Abi Talib. He requested permission from Rasulullah *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam* to face the much feared enemy. But, Rasulullah *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam* said:

"إِجْلِسْ أَنْتَ يَا عَلِيَّ ، إِنَّكَ مَا تَزَالُ فِي زِمْرَةِ شَبَابِكَ."

Meaning: "You sit down, O Ali! You are still too young."

But Ali insisted that he be allowed to meet the challenge of the villainous foe. Th Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam* then approached Ali. He took his turban off his head, put it on Ali's head and gave his own sword to Ali, supplicating:

"يَا رَبِّ إِنَّكَ أَخَذْتَ مِنِّي حَمْزَةَ يَوْمِ أُحُدٍ ،

فَاحْفَظْ عَلِيًّا هَذَا الْيَوْمَ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

Meaning: *O my Lord, You took Hamzah from me on the Day of Uhud (in the battle of Uhud) so protect Ali on this day O Lord of the Universe.*

Ali started to move towards the enemy. The enemy was on horseback while Ali was standing on the ground.

Seeing someone coming, Amru, the villainous foe, asked: "Who are you?" Ali replied: "I am Ali, son of the uncle of the Prophet *Sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam*, Abu Talib.

Upon hearing that, the enemy laughed loudly and said: "You, an inexperienced boy, want to fight me? Clearly Muhammad and his men do not value you for they allow you to be food for my sword. Go away! Leave! Ask someone else to replace you. "

But Ali replied: "It is true, they have sent me, because I am not important to them."

The enemy said: "No! I do not wish to kill you O Ali because your father was my friend."

Ali said: "But I am determined to fight you, unless you revoke your intention to kill the Prophet *Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* and recite the *shahadah*:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.

The enemy said: "No! Never! I will not say it even if my head is in the fire."

And thus began the fight between the Qurashi lion named Amru and the inexperienced young man named Ali. By the will of Allah, the inexperienced young man, who was adorned by the Prophet with his turban and equipped with his sword, succeeded in defeating the hungry lion.

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، والله الحمد.

Thus is the historical account on the turban and the sword of the Prophet *Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Why did the Prophet take off his turban and put it on Ali? And why did he also give his own sword to be used by Ali? Why? The answer is because the Prophet was fully aware that Ali was in need of supplies, he was also in need of an ally or a friend. The supplies were in the form of "Blessings" while the friend or ally was in the form of a "Weapon."

Both of these were needed by the inexperienced Ali in order to face a very formidable and seasoned foe. The result was Masha Allah, with the blessings of the turban as a supply, and the blessings of the sword as an ally, by His Will and Power, Allah bestowed victory upon Ali, the inexperienced young man.

In sha' Allah, we will also be able to see pictures of the Prophet's turban and his sword, as well as replicas of his sword and the swords of the great companions, in this Gallery of Treasures later.

Begging your pardon your Majesties, that is all. Your humble servant seeks forgiveness for any error or impropriety throughout this presentation.

والله ولي التوفيق والهداية ،
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

DarulIfta,
State Mufti's Department
Brunei Darussalam.
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