



THE LANGUAGE DELIVERY MASTERY IN MUHAMMAD ZAINI ABDUL GHANI TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani is a renowned religious scholar in South Kalimantan, recognized for his profound theological knowledge and ability to convey monotheistic teachings in an accessible manner. Rooted in the Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah tradition, his approach aligns with al-Sanusi's scholarship and the Sifat Twenty teachings of Utsman bin Abdullah. This study explores his theological contributions and their impact on religious education and communal unity. Using a qualitative method, including textual analysis and historical research, the findings highlight his ability to bridge theoretical monotheism with practical application, fostering a strong faith and social harmony. His emphasis on moderation and unity reinforces Islamic values and strengthens community bonds. The study concludes that his teachings provide a balanced and practical approach to Islamic theology. Future research should compare his theological perspectives with other scholars and analyze their relevance in contemporary Islamic discourse.

Keywords: *Islamic Theology, Teaching Method, Language, Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic theology has undergone significant philosophical shifts, leading to the emergence of rational thinking within the Islamic tradition. Islamic theologians have played a pivotal role in this evolution by promoting rationality, a spirit that continues to shape theological discourse today (Ilhamuddin, 1997; Nasir et al., 2023; Maria et al., 2023). These thinkers introduced a methodical approach to the study of Islamic faith, encouraging deep philosophical reflections that often extended beyond traditional theological boundaries. During the zenith of theological studies,

these scholars often occupied prominent positions within the government, with rulers providing essential resources and opportunities for intellectuals to expand their scholarly work. This patronage helped foster a vibrant intellectual culture, where reason and faith could coexist and develop alongside one another (Nasution, 1985; Nasrudin, 2021; Salim, 2021; Nasution & Nirmala, 2022).

Theology, as the study of God and divine principles, has always been central to Islamic science. It has prompted profound debates and intellectual engagements across centuries. These theological inquiries continue to evolve in tandem with the changing tides

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of human thought, as scholars have wrestled with questions concerning the nature of divinity, existence, and the human soul. The importance of theology lies not only in the academic analysis of divine attributes but also in its practical influence on human behavior. As a discipline that examines the relationship between humans and God, theology directly shapes how individuals live, act, and interact with their communities. Therefore, it has long been a source of intellectual curiosity and moral guidance.

The persistent interest in theological discourse among Muslim intellectuals is due to its exploration of divinity and the intricate relationship between God and humanity—an area that has historically provoked unresolved questions (Hakim, 2022). Moreover, theology serves as a foundation for an individual's ethical framework and shapes their values, worldview, and actions. This aspect of theology makes it relevant across generations, as each era faces new challenges and seeks guidance from the timeless principles found in sacred texts. The discourse surrounding theological issues in Islam is as much about guiding behavior and action as it is about answering metaphysical questions.

In the context of this study, the researcher has chosen to focus on a prominent religious figure from South Kalimantan—Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani, known as Abah Guru or Guru Sekumpul. Abah Guru is widely respected for his charisma and profound knowledge of Islamic teachings, particularly in the fields of theology and the nature of spirituality. His teachings,

which blend theological depth with practical application, have gained a significant following. He has earned respect not only from his direct followers but also from other ulama and officials, all of whom acknowledge his contributions to the preservation and dissemination of Islamic knowledge (Azhari et al., 2022; Lahmar, 2020).

Abah Guru's legacy is rooted in his lineage as a descendant of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, who is affectionately known as Datuk Kalampayan. This lineage is important because it connects Abah Guru to a long tradition of Islamic scholarship in South Kalimantan. Abah Guru has dedicated his life to reviving and perpetuating the religious knowledge and practices imparted by Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, ensuring that the teachings of his ancestor remain vital and relevant for contemporary Muslims. His role as a religious figure is not merely as a spiritual leader, but also as a teacher who continually strives to deepen the understanding of Islamic teachings within his community (Nasikhin & Shodiq, 2021) (Januar, 2023).

The depth and breadth of Abah Guru's teachings are marked by a steadfast reliance on the core sources of Islamic knowledge—the Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This emphasis on the foundational texts of Islam highlights his commitment to maintaining the authenticity and integrity of Islamic teachings. Furthermore, Abah Guru's approach to theology is deeply connected to practical life and everyday actions, which makes

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his teachings resonate with a wide audience. His intellectual pursuits reflect not only a commitment to preserving the teachings of his ancestors but also a dynamic approach to religious education that adapts to contemporary challenges (Jihan et al., 2023; Fadlillah, 2023). This allows his followers to engage meaningfully with the Islamic tradition.

This study aims to examine the mastery of language in the delivery of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings, particularly how his communication skills contribute to the clarity, depth, and accessibility of his theological discourses. Abah Guru's ability to convey complex theological ideas through accessible language has made his teachings understandable to people from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of education. By analyzing his teaching methods, this research will shed light on how Abah Guru uses language as a tool to convey complex theological concepts, making them accessible to a wide audience, while maintaining the authenticity of the Islamic tradition. Furthermore, this study will explore how Abah Guru's mastery of language has helped foster a deep understanding of Islamic theology within his community and beyond, ensuring the continued relevance of his teachings in an ever-changing world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW***Theology***

Theology comes from the word "theos" which means God, and "logos" which means science or discourse. Thus, theology can be interpreted as the science that studies God, as well as the

doctrines and beliefs about Him from various religious groups or individual thinkers. In Greek, theology is called "theologia" which refers to the science that connects the divine world with the physical world, and discusses the nature and will of God. It also includes systematic efforts to convince, interpret, and justify beliefs about God. The term theology itself does not come from the Islamic tradition, where the more commonly used terms are tauhid science or kalam science (Abdullah, 2021).

Kalam Science

Theology is also known as the science of monotheism because the term monotheism means one or Esa, which aims to affirm the oneness of Allah in His Essence and actions, and to make Allah the ultimate goal of all things. In addition, theology is also called the science of aqid or the science of ushuluddin, because the main focus of its discussion is the issue of belief which is the basis of religious teachings. Theology is also called theology because its thinkers use their reason to understand religious texts and defend their beliefs (Abdullah, 2024).

Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

Aswaja is a combination of the words ahlussunnah and ahlujamaah (Robi, 2024). In Arabic, the word ahli means adherent, sect, or madhab. While al-sunnah, in addition to meaning hadith, also means good behavior that is commendable or reprehensible. This word comes from the word sanna which means path.

In general, al-sunnah refers to the path of the Prophet SAW and his companions, including aspects of knowledge, deeds, morals, and various other aspects of life. Based on this explanation, ahlussunnah can be interpreted as people who follow the

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sunnah and adhere to its teachings in everything done by the Prophet SAW and his companions, and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment (Abdullah, 2021). The term Aswaja itself only became known after the words of the Prophet SAW, as narrated in the hadith by Abu Daud, as follows:

God willing اللهُ عَلَى افْتَرَقُوا اللهُ God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing on behalf of

Meaning: Know that the people before you from among the People of the Book were divided into 72 groups, and my people will be divided into 73 groups, 72 groups in hell, and 1 group in heaven. They are Al Jama'ah (HR. Abu Daud 4597, dihasan Al Albani in Sahih Abi Daud).

The term contained in this hadith is not Aswaja, but al-Jama'ah as the only group that survived hell. However, according to the ulama, what is meant there is Aswaja because they adhere to the beliefs of the companions of the Prophet SAW (A. R. Abdullah, 2021).

Traits of Twenty

In general, Allah has all the attributes of perfection and is Most Pure from all attributes of deficiency. Allah's attributes can be divided into three categories: (1) mandatory attributes, (2) impossible attributes, and (3) probable attributes. Mandatory attributes are attributes that are definitely possessed by God and impossible not to possess. The scholars of the Science of Tawhid have formulated that there are 20 mandatory attributes for Allah.

The division of mandatory attributes for Allah can be divided into four categories, namely:

1. The attribute of Nafsiyah, which is something that is obligatory for the Essence of Allah to have the attribute

of Wujūd (existence), whose existence is not caused by any cause. This attribute of Nafsiyah only has one attribute, namely Wujūd.

2. The attribute of Salbiyah, which is an attribute that negates (negates) all attributes that are not worthy of Allah. The attribute of Salbiyah has five attributes, namely: Qidam, Baqa, Mukhālafatu lil hawādis, Qiyāmuha ta'ala bi nafsīhi, Wahdaniyah.
3. Ma'ani Attributes, namely all the existent attributes that stand on the Essence of Allah that exists, which requires that Essence to have a characteristic with a law of Ma'nawiyah attributes. These Ma'ani Attributes include seven attributes, namely: Qudrah, Irādah, 'Ilmu, Hayāt, Sama', Bashār, Qalām.
4. The Ma'nawiyah attribute, which is something that is permanent (tsabit) for the Essence of Allah has the Ma'nawiyah attribute. Therefore, there is a strong bond between the Ma'ani attribute and the Ma'nawiyah attribute. And this Ma'nawiyah attribute includes seven attributes, namely: Qadīran, Murīdan, 'Alīman, Hayyan, Samī'an, Bashīran, Mutakallīman (Adenan et al., 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a field research method with a qualitative research type and a descriptive approach that aims to describe the phenomenon in detail. The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. The aim of this research is to find out the theology of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani and the teachings of the twenty characteristics conveyed by Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM***Theology of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani***

This study aims to explore the profound theological teachings of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani, particularly his emphasis on the science of monotheism as an essential part of everyday life. According to Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani, there are three key branches of knowledge that every Muslim should study and implement: the science of monotheism, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and tasawuf (Sufism). Among these, he places the science of monotheism at the forefront, considering it the most vital as it directly correlates with one's faith and belief in Allah. He asserts that true belief in Allah forms the core foundation of a Muslim's life and is crucial in understanding the purpose of existence and fostering a deeper connection with God. Additionally, Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani teaches that every aspect of life, whether moments of happiness or hardship, should be perceived as expressions of Allah's will. His concept of wahdaniyah, or the belief in the absolute oneness of Allah as the only ruler in the universe, urges Muslims to recognize that every action and event is part of Allah's divine decree. This perspective encourages gratitude for blessings and patience during trials (Putra et al., 2020).

Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings underscore the importance of comprehending monotheism not just as a theoretical concept but as a practical guide to life. The science of monotheism that he advocated involves belief in the One God, encompassing His Essence, Attributes, Names, and Actions, forming the foundation of a Muslim's behavior and decisions. According to his teachings, a Muslim must continuously be aware that everything happening in the world is a manifestation of Allah's will and destiny. This awareness shapes

their approach to daily life, fostering an unwavering trust in Allah's plan. His emphasis on the practical application of monotheism highlights its relevance in shaping both personal and social behavior.

Moreover, Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings extend beyond the personal and spiritual dimensions to include social and health-related aspects. He also emphasized the importance of sincere worship, such as the five daily prayers, burdah (a form of prayer), ratibul (a devotional prayer), and simtuduror (celebrating religious occasions). All these practices are grounded in the principle of monotheism, reflecting the interconnectedness between spiritual belief and daily actions. His teachings are deeply relevant and practical for all segments of society, whether they are farmers, government officials, or clerics. This universality of his teachings allows people from various walks of life to apply the concepts of monotheism to their daily routines and interactions.

The effectiveness of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings lies in their simplicity and clarity of language, making them accessible to a wide audience. His ability to communicate profound theological concepts in simple terms allowed people from diverse backgrounds to easily understand and integrate these teachings into their lives. The mastery of language in his delivery played a pivotal role in making the complex science of monotheism comprehensible and relatable. This clear and simple approach in conveying his messages demonstrates his profound understanding of how language can bridge the gap between deep theological knowledge and the everyday lives of Muslims.

Although his teachings were easily understood by many, the journey

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to spreading them was not without challenges. Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani encountered resistance from certain groups, especially those who perceived his focus on monotheism as too radical or heretical. His emphasis on the deep and comprehensive understanding of wahdaniyah led to misunderstandings, with some critics feeling uncomfortable with his approach to Islamic theology. Nevertheless, his ability to communicate these ideas effectively through language allowed him to reach a broad audience, overcoming some of the opposition by appealing to the hearts and minds of his followers (Lesiana et al., 2023; Mardhiyah et al., 2023; Saimon et al., 2023; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

This study will delve deeper into how Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's mastery of language contributed to the effectiveness of his teachings. It will analyze how his linguistic style—characterized by clarity, simplicity, and relevance—enhanced the delivery of complex theological ideas. The study will also explore the cultural and social impact of his language use, examining how his words facilitated the spread of monotheism and the principles of Islamic teachings among different communities. Ultimately, this research will shed light on the crucial role that language delivery plays in shaping the reception and practice of theological ideas, especially in a diverse society.

Teachings of the Twenty Characteristics of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani

This research analyzes Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings of monotheism which were conveyed through recitations using the book "The Nature of Twenty" by Habib Utsman Betawi. He teaches the attributes of Allah with an in-depth approach,

explaining one or two attributes in each recitation to ensure detailed understanding. The main focus of his teachings is the importance of studying the correct creed, especially the teachings of Ahlusunnah Wal Jama'ah.

Through the book "Sifat Dua Puluh", he taught the obligatory and impossible attributes of Allah, which are the basis for knowing Allah. His teachings are not only theoretical, but also applicable, by connecting the attributes of Allah with daily life, such as remembering Allah in every activity, being grateful, and being patient. This approach also emphasizes the importance of tawakal (surrender) in every aspect of life and self-control in facing trials.

Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's teachings of monotheism are very relevant in strengthening the faith of Muslims, protecting them from deviant teachings, and helping them practice monotheism in practical life. In this way, his teachings have a positive impact in shaping the morals of Muslims and deepening their understanding of divinity, so that Muslims' daily lives become closer to Allah.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani's theology emphasizes monotheism as the core of religious life, encompassing Allah's actions, names, attributes, and Essence. His teachings align with Ahlusunnah Wal Jama'ah, particularly the Ash'ari school, rooted in the Qur'an, hadith, and scholarly consensus. A key aspect is the emphasis on the twenty

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attributes of Allah, deepening faith and encouraging remembrance of Allah through gratitude and patience.

This research has theological, social, and educational implications. Theologically, it strengthens faith and prevents doctrinal deviations. Socially, it fosters patience, reliance on Allah, and gratitude, promoting harmony. Educationally, it supports Islamic studies by providing a structured understanding of monotheism.

To maximize its benefits, the Muslim community should deepen their understanding of these teachings, while educational institutions can integrate them into curricula. Scholars and religious leaders should further disseminate and contextualize his theology. Future research may compare his theology with other scholars, explore its socio-historical impact, and examine its relevance in modern challenges like globalization and digital spirituality. Expanding this research will enhance understanding and application of his theological contributions in contemporary society.

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