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The Fourfold Kalām Categorization: The Contribution of Malay Muslim Scholars to The Development of Kalām Attribute

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ABSTRACT

Despite the continuous effort by traditional Muslim Malay scholars in producing *Jāwī* texts, they are often viewed as stagnant and static which is supposedly reflected by the lack of Intellectual development in the Malay world in terms of originality and ingenuity. This, along with a strong focus on a small group of popular scholars brought about such eschewed perception towards Malay scholars. Whereas in reality there were some lesser-known groups of Malay scholars in the 20th century that contributed in disproving such perception. This paper then will shed some light on these Malay scholars, their ideas, justification of these ideas and their overall contributions. This paper employed a qualitative research method by referring to available sources like books and academic journals. Most importantly, *Jāwī* texts that are relevant to the topic will be scrutinized in order to delineate the topic at hand. The findings reveal that this group of scholars developed a unique method in expounding the *Kalām* Attribute by categorizing it into four instead of two which is the addition of *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣḍarī* on top of the mainstream *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*. This pedagogically prevents potential deviations among readers that occur as a result of literally understanding *Jāwī* texts that are prior to the emergence of these scholars.

Keywords: *Kalām* Attribute, Fourfold *Kalām* Categorization, *Kalām Nafsānī*, *Kalām Maṣḍarī*, *Jāwī* Texts.

Introduction

In Islam, the scholars indubitably play a huge role in not only safeguarding, but also disseminating religious knowledge to the people and their community. Since the time of the Prophet (PBUH), countless scholars had emerged by way of learning from their predecessors from *tābi' al-tābi'īn* (The Followers of The Followers) to *al-tābi'ūn* (The Followers) to the Companions and finally to the Prophet (PBUH). Some early scholars even migrated to other

regions away from their hometown like the Prophet's Companion Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 653) who went to Kufa after the Prophet's death. This was to make sure that the territorial expansion by the caliphate is followed by dissemination of Islamic knowledge, teaching, and learning. This is signified by the vast intellectual development in the Muslim world throughout the centuries.

Naturally, this is also the reality in the Malay Archipelago which saw the emergence of many prominent Muslim scholars like Shaykh Ḥamzah Fansūrī (d. 1607), Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658), Shaykh Muḥammad Arshād al-Banjārī (d. 1812), Shaykh Dāwūd bin 'Abdullah al-Faṭānī (d. 1847) and many others. Numerous research on these figures available today serves as testament to their prominence. This strong scholarly focus on a small number of well-known figures, however, often obscures the contributions of many other Malay scholars from later periods whose works remain understudied. Some examples are Shaykh Uthmān Jalāl al-Dīn Penanti (d. 1952) and Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah (d. 2008).

Some of these lesser-studied scholars contributed to the Islamic intellectual tradition of the Malay world through the composition of *Jāwī* texts. In the Malay world, through the countless *Jāwī* texts written by Malay scholars across centuries, the dissemination of '*aqidah* (creed) or '*ilm al-kalām* (theology),¹ along with *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *taṣawwūf* (Sufism), were more prevalent compared to other fields of Islamic sciences like *tafsīr* (exegesis), *ḥadīth* (traditions of the Prophet), and Islamic history.² This can be seen from the umpteen amounts of *Jāwī* texts in '*aqidah* or *kalām* such as *al-Dūrr al-Thamīn fī 'Aqā'id al-Mu'minīn* (*The Precious Pearl on The Creeds of The Believers*) by Shaykh Dāwūd al-Faṭānī, and *Farīdah al-Farā'id fī 'Ilm al-'Aqā'id* (*The Unique Pearl on Islamic Creed*) by Shaykh Wan Aḥmad al-Faṭānī (d. 1908) and so on. Incidentally this field has proven to be very polarizing in producing discussions and debates among scholars throughout Islamic history.

To add on to that, it is something incontestable that the '*aqidah* framework among Malay scholars is moulded by the Ash'arite creed, through al-Imām al-Sanūsī's (d. 1490) *Umm al-Barāhīn* (*The Foundational Proofs*), specifically the twenty attributes of Allah which are categorized into one *Nafsīyyah* (Self-Signifying) attribute, five *Salbīyyah* (Negating) attributes, seven *Ma'ānī* (Qualitative) attributes and finally seven *Ma'nawīyyah* (Predicative) attributes.³ Among all these attributes, this article will only focus on the *Kalām* attribute.

The *Kalām* attribute is one of the twenty attributes of Allah and these attributes have been systemized by al-Imām al-Sanūsī⁴ in his *Umm al-Barāhīn* which contains Ash'arite creed and '*ilm al-kalām*. The attribute is categorized under the seven *Ma'ānī* attributes and it is listed as the last one. Although, this sequence in listing them does not mean that there is an order to it or one attribute only comes after the other, in which there is precedence and succession,

¹ '*Aqidah* pertains to affirming obligatory beliefs for every *mukallaf*. This is also shared by '*ilm al-kalām* but with the addition of bringing forth arguments to prove those beliefs and expelling doubts. See: Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Kenapa Perlu Belajar Ilmu Kalam? Membungkam Falasi Penolakan Ilmu Kalam*, trans. Muhammad Hakim Ismail (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM Press, 2023), 7.

² Che' Razi Jusoh, *Sharḥ: The Tradition of Commentary in Malay-Jawi Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Jawi Malaysia, 2024), 88.

³ Che' Razi Jusoh, *The Malay Exposition of al-Sanūsī's Umm al-Barāhīn* (Selangor: Islamic and Strategic Studies Institute Berhad, 2016), 5.

⁴ Mustafa Kamal Amat Misra et al., "Analysis On Ash'arīrah And Ibādīyah On The Attributes Of God," *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)* 12, no. 10 (2021): 7667, <https://turcomat.org/index.php/turkbilmat/article/view/5678>.

because Allah is *qadīm* (pre-eternal) and likewise His attributes are the same.⁵ Thus, it is impossible that His attributes can be predated by nonexistence as signified by the idea of precedence and succession.

Kalām or *‘ilm al-kalām* on the other hand, which was defined by al-Imām ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1356) in his *al-Mawāqif fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām (The Stations in The Science of Theology)* as “the science through which religious doctrines can be proven by bringing forth arguments and expelling doubts”.⁶ It was said to be named as such because early Muslim scholars’ discussions on the *Kalām* attribute can be said to be the foundation of *‘ilm al-kalām*.⁷ In fact, this attribute is arguably the most contentious in the history of intellectual development in the Muslim world, compared to other attributes, as it entails divisive discussions and opinions among the various theological schools like the Ash‘arites and Mu‘tazilites.⁸

Other than that, more deviant understandings like the Mu‘tazilites and the Qadarites emerged due to over-reliance on mankind's intellect,⁹ which in turn required the early scholars like al-Imām Ibn Kullāb (d. 855), al-Imām al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 857), al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 936), al-Imām Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013) to develop their own methodology in *‘ilm al-kalām* to refute those deviations. A famous example of this is al-Imām al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) refutation of the twenty philosophical doctrines in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah (The Incoherence of The Philosophers)*; of which seventeen of them were condemned as heretical innovations and three as totally opposed to Islamic beliefs.¹⁰

While in terms of the *Kalām* attribute itself, there was the dispute between *Ahl al-Sunnah* and Mu‘tazilites who claimed that al-Qur‘ān is a *makhlūq* (creation) of Allah and this dispute culminated in the famous *Miḥnah* (inquisition) of the Abbasid caliphate. Another example is the debate between scholars on the question whether what was heard by Prophet Moses during his dialogue with Allah at Mount Sinai was *Kalām Nafsī* (Speech Attribute) or *Kalām Lafzī* (External Speech).

In the context of the Malay world, one of the notable issues is the categorization of *kalām* into four, (instead of the mainstream Ash‘arite categorization into two), by some Malay Muslim scholars like Tuan Guru Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī (d. 1991) also known as “Ayah Dir Sekam” and Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah. This was later followed by their students and later scholars like Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī (d. 1991). Thus, this paper will venture into unveiling the explanations behind such a decision.

⁵ Che’ Razi Jusoh, *The Malay Exposition*, 57.

⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al-Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām* (Beirut: Ālam al-Kutub), 7.

⁷ Ḥasan Maḥmūd al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Madkhal Ilā Dirāsah ‘Ilm al-Kalām* (Pakistan: Idārah al-Qurān wa al-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyah, 2001), 22.

⁸ Mohd Fakhrudin Abdul Mukti, “The Background of Malay Kalam With Special Reference to the Issue of the Sifat of Allah,” *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam* 3, no. 1 (2002): 10, <https://fiqh.um.edu.my/index.php/afkar/article/view/6016>.

⁹ Mansor Dahlan and Faizuri Abd Latif, “Translation Concept of Salbiyyah and Ma‘ani according to Sheikh Wan Ismail Al-Fatani (Pak Da Ail) in His Work Bakurah al-Amani,” *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam* 18, (2016): 201-202, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.sp2016no1.8>.

¹⁰ Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of The Philosophers*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), xv.

Problem Statement

It is apparent that the discussion centers around the *Kalām* attribute, a subject of contentious debates throughout the history of *‘ilm al-kalām*. This new categorization of *kalām* into four elicited criticisms by some regarding its questionable source and doubtful necessity because Muslim scholars usually categorize the attribute into two instead of four. For example, Ustaz Nik Muhammad Nazimuddin from Kelantan.¹¹ Plus, the discourse is related to Allah’s divinity and His attributes which constitute the foremost set of knowledge in Islam that strictly disallow any incorrect understandings like that of the Mu’tazilites.

Therefore, examining the *Jāwī* texts of its propagators and relevant *kalām* texts is crucial in this study in order to identify the origin for its conception and the reasons leading to it. This is necessary because as is consistent with the definition of *‘ilm al-kalām*, the issue of *kalām* categorization then requires proofs to justify itself insofar as this new categorization can be defended and is relevant in disproving doubts and protecting the creed of *Ahl al-Sunnah* against deviant understandings of the attribute.

Significance of The Study

The importance of this study lies in the fact that so far, there does not seem to be any in-depth research done on this topic and its related figures, like Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah¹² and Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī. As for Ayah Dir Sekam, despite already having some research done on his *Jāwī* texts and thoughts like his writings on *mutashābihāt* (ambiguous) verses and his application of *manṭiq* (logic),¹³ these researches unfortunately do not include this categorization of *kalām* into four.

¹¹ Nik Muhammad Nazimuddin bin Nik Ibrahim, *Ṣifāt Kalām Allah Mengikut Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah* (Kota Bharu: ABK Bakti Enterprise, 2014), 17-21.

¹² Abdul Latif Mohd @ Mohamed and Muhammad Ariff Asyraf Suhaini, “Analysis On The Discussion Of 13 Attributes Of Allah Swt According To Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah In Persediaan Bagi Sekalian Mukallaf,” *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 26, no. 1 (2025): 77-100, <https://journal.unisza.edu.my/jimk/index.php/jimk/article/view/961>; and Ezad Azraai Jamsari and Fazlini Mohd. Zain, “Peranan Dan Sumbangan Tuan Guru Haji Abdullah Bin Haji Abdul Rahman Dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Kelantan,” *Prosiding Nadwah Ulama Nusantara (NUN) III Ketokohan Dan Pemikiran Ulama Melayu*, 198-212; and Farhah Zaidar Mohamed Ramli, Mohd Hasbie Al-Shiddieque Ahmad, and Siti Mursyidah Mohd. Zin, “The Genealogy of Sanad Hadith of the Kelantanese Prominent Scholar Tuan Guru Haji Abdullah Lubok Tapah (1933-2008),” *HADIS* 7, no. 14 (2017): 1-23, <https://hadis.uis.edu.my/index.php/inhad/article/view/23>; and Muhyiddin Abdullah, Muhammad Adib Samsudin, and Mohammad Zaini Yahaya, “Pemikiran Fiqh Tuan Guru Haji Abdullah Lubok Tapah,” *Prosiding Nadwah Ulama Nusantara (NUN) IV: Ulama Pemacu Transformasi Negara* (2011): 334-344.

¹³ Ahmad Hafiz Ali Makdom et al., “The Methodology of al-Qiyas al-Iqtirānī by ‘Abd al-Qādir Wangah in Describing The Attribute of Qidam’s Burhān in Taqrīb al-Ikhwan,” *Islam Universalia: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2021): 476-492; and Nor Zuhairah Zulkiflee and Wan Mohd Fazrul Wan Razali, “Methodologies of The Ahl Sunnah’s Scholars in Understand Mutashabihat Verses According to Risalah Manhaj Ahl Sunnah: An Analysis,” *Sains Insani* 7, no. 1(2022): 82-90, <https://sainsinsani.usim.edu.my/index.php/sainsinsani/article/view/148>; and Nur Shazwani Ahmad Fadzli, Engku Ibrahim Engku Wok Zin, and Mohd Safri Ali, “Use of The Logical Analogy (Al-Qiyās Al-Mantiqī) Method When Discussing Ma’ānī Attributes According to The Taqrīb Al-Ikhwān fi Ta’allum ‘Aqā’id Al-Īmān Scripture,” *KQT EJurnal* 4, no. 2 (2025): 58-78,

<https://ejurnal.kqt.edu.my/index.php/kqt-ojs/article/view/89>; and Syed Salim Syed Shamsuddin, “The Integration of Usul al-Fiqh, Usul al-Din and Mantiq in Jawi Theological Writings to Understand the Mutashabihat Texts: An Overview from the Book Risalah Manhaj Ahli Sunnah by Tuan Guru Haji Abdul

Therefore, this paper will venture into exploring this matter in question in order to highlight and preserve the legacy of these Malay Muslim scholars, their thoughts and their unique contribution in further developing the discussion on the *Kalām* attribute in the Malay Archipelago. It will also resurface and bring these Malay scholars back into the limelight to be memorialized in the hall of fame as prominent Malay scholars. On top of that, the unveiling regarding this topic will serve as a valuable reference which will delineate the topic at hand.

Research Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research method by referring to available sources like books, academic journals, and articles that are related to the topic. *Jāwī* texts by the propagators of this new *kalām* categorization such as *Mabḥath al-Kalām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām (The Topic of Discourse in The Science of Theology)* by Ayah Dir Sekam, *Risalah Persediaan Bagi Sekalian Mukallaf (Preparatory Treatise For Every Mukallaf)* by Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah will be expounded using a descriptive and analytical approach to identify the explanations for this fourfold categorization of *kalām* that is upheld by these *Jāwī* texts.

In addition, secondary sources will also be used to highlight the historical background of the relevant Malay Muslim scholars thereby simultaneously underlining the historical aspect of this fourfold categorization of *kalām*. Plus, the historical context of the time pertaining to the intellectual development of the region will also be put into consideration to better understand the rationale behind this fourfold categorization of *kalām*. Thus, these plethora of sources will surely contribute to this study in delineating the contribution of Malay muslim scholars to the development of *Kalām* Attribute.

The Historical Background of The *Kalām* Attribute

Short History of The *Miḥnah*

Concurrent with early Islam territorial expansion, the assimilation of Greek texts and philosophy into Muslim intellectualism gave birth to various scholars with differing thoughts. One of the earliest theological controversies was that of the Qadarites that strongly advocates human free will against the traditionalists that advocate divine predestination.¹⁴ Other theological issues include *Ru'yah Allah* (beatific vision of Allah), *Ṣifāt Allah* (Allah's attributes), *al-Manzilah Bayna Manzilatayn* (the intermediary position between two positions). Regardless, the issue related to the *Kalām* attribute is the Mu'tazilites' claim of the createdness of al-Qur'ān which orchestrated one of the darkest pages in Islamic history known as the *Miḥnah*.

One of the main perpetrators of it was Aḥmad ibn Abī Du'ād (d. 854), a Mu'tazilite chief judge during the Abbasid Caliphate that was said to be the first to claim that al-Qur'ān is created. His high position and influence on the Caliph enabled this inquisition throughout his incumbency whereby anyone who rejects this belief will be punished or at worst, killed. For example, al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) who was imprisoned and tortured, while al-Imām

Qadir Bin Wangah," *Sains Insani* 4, no. 2 (2019): 1-16, <https://sainsinsani.usim.edu.my/index.php/sainsinsani/article/view/98>; and Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali et al., "Laysa Kamithlihi Shay'un: The Interpretation of Mutashābihāt Verses and Traditions by 'Abd al-Qadir Wangah in Risālah Manhaj Ahl Al-Sunnah," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam Special Issue 1*, (2020): 1-24, <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/afkar/article/view/24135>.

¹⁴ Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism: A Short Introduction* (England: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 2.

al-Shahīd Aḥmad bin Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī (d. 846) was killed. This inquisition ended when Caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. 861) came into power and returned to backing *Ahl al-Sunnah*.¹⁵

This inquisition painted a clear picture of the extremity of this theological dispute that surrounded the *Kalām* attribute back in its early days. This issue and all other theological issues were refuted by *Ahl al-Sunnah* scholars that also had to develop their own methods and arguments in using *'ilm al-kalām* like al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and al-Imām Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944).¹⁶ The painstaking struggle and perseverance of *Ahl Sunnah* scholars in protecting the religion was nothing short of admirable and inspiring.

Thus, here we can see the importance of *'ilm al-kalām* in refuting these theological deviations and defending the creed of *Ahl Sunnah* to the point that al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī wrote *Risālah Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* (*Treatise on The Permissibility of Dealing With The Science of Kalām*) which is a treatise that defends the necessity of *'ilm al-kalām* against those that denounce it as being too philosophical and foreign to Islamic sciences. This is continued by his students and later scholars that followed him like al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bāhilī (d. 980), al-Imām Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī and many more.

The *Kalām* Attribute of Allah Malay *Jāwī* Texts

In the discussion of the *Kalām* attribute, the Ash'arites categorize it into two categories namely *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*.¹⁷ Both are usually mentioned in the context of explaining certain issues like whether al-Qur'ān is *qadīm* or *makhlūq*, to explain what was heard by the Prophet Moses when he was summoned by Allah at Mount Sinai, and what was heard by Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) during *al-Mi'rāj* (the ascension) when the Prophet (PBUH) and his *ummah* was enjoined by Allah to perform fifty daily prayers which ultimately was reduced to five daily prayers.

In the case of *Jāwī* texts, the exposition of the *Kalām* attribute naturally does not steer away from the Ash'arites framework since *'aqīdah* or *kalām Jāwī* texts are influenced by al-Imām al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn*. Thus, *Jāwī* texts that discuss the categorization of *kalām* also only mentioned these two categories of *kalām*. Furthermore, *Jāwī* texts in the context of this *kalām* categorization can be divided into: 1) *Jāwī* texts that do not mention and discuss the categorization of *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*, and 2) *Jāwī* texts that mention and discuss this categorization.¹⁸

This is because *Jāwī* texts of the first division were written by their authors simply as *'aqīdah* texts meant for the common people and beginner students. Thus, these texts do not elaborate extensively on deeper discussions. For example, *Miftāḥ al-Murīd fī 'Ilm al-Tawḥīd* (*The Key of Acuity on The Science of Unity*) by Tuan Minal (d. 1913), *Bidāyah al-Mubtadī wa 'Umdah al-Awlād* (*The Beginner's manual and The Children's Guide*) by an anonymous author, *Uṣūl al-Dīn I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (*Principles of Islam Creeds of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*) by Tuan Mukhtār Bogor (d. 1930) and many others.

¹⁵ Dāwūd bin 'Abdullah al-Faṭānī, *al-Dūrr al-Thamīn fī 'Aqā'id al-Mu'minīn* (Selangor: al-Hidayah Publication, 2023), 108-109.

¹⁶ Delia Putri et al., "Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Pemikiran Ilmu Kalam," *Jurnal Intelek Dan Cendekiawan Nusantara* 1, no. 6 (2024): 11258-11259, <https://jicnusanantara.com/index.php/jicn/article/view/2398>.

¹⁷ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20: Suatu Pengenalan Asas* (Selangor: Galeri Ilmu Sdn. Bhd., 2025), 187.

¹⁸ This division is from the first author's conclusion after reading multiple relevant *Jāwī* texts.

On the other hand, *Jāwī* texts of the second division were written by Malay scholars intended for advanced students at which point these *Jāwī* texts are no longer just *‘aqīdah* texts, but they are also *kalām* texts. The difference being that *‘Aqīdah* pertains to affirming obligatory beliefs for every *mukallaf*. This is also shared by *‘ilm al-kalām*, but with the addition of bringing forth arguments to prove those beliefs and expelling doubts.¹⁹

Therefore, these texts venture into deeper discussions in expounding its content like the categorization of *kalām*, *dalīl tafṣīlī* (detailed proofs) for the twenty attributes of Allah, *ta‘alluq* (linkage or function or connection) of the attributes, disagreements among scholars such as whether the *Wujūd* attribute is *‘ayn al-Mawjūd* (essential existent) or other than it, the attribute of *Idrāk* and so on.

This can be further divided into three subcategories, the first are *kalām* texts that explicitly discusses *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*, meaning that these texts explicitly mention both of the terms. Examples of such *Jāwī* texts are *‘Aqīdah al-Nājīn fī ‘Ilm uṣūl al-Dīn (The Creed of The Triumphant on The Principles of Islam)* by Tuan Minal and *Sirāj al-Hudā (The Lantern of Guidance)* by Shaykh Muḥammad Zayn al-Dīn al-Badawī al-Sumbawī (Cir. 19th Century).

The second subcategory are *kalām* texts that do not explicitly mention the terms *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*. Yet, the understanding from its discussions indubitably points to explanations of both like *Bidāyah al-Hidāyah (The Beginning of Guidance)* by Shaykh Muḥammad Zayn bin al-Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn (Cir. 18th Century) and *al-Dūrr al-Thamīn* by Shaykh Dāwūd al-Faṭānī. Thus, it mentions both *kalām* categories only implicitly.

The third subcategory are *kalām* texts that not only mention the two *kalām* categories that are followed by most *Jāwī* texts, but they went further and added two more categories which are known as *Kalām Nafsānī* (Internal Speech) and *Kalām Maṣdarī* (Connection of Speech). Some examples of such *Jāwī* texts are *Mabḥath al-Kalām* by Ayah Dir Sekam, *Risalah Persediaan* by Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr fī Ma‘rifah Allah al-Qadīr (The Enlightening Lantern in Knowing Allah The Almighty)* by Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī and so on.

That being said, this categorization is merely on the basis of whether the *kalām* categorization is mentioned or not, just because a *Jāwī* text mentions the categorization does not necessarily mean it also includes all the previously stated deeper discussions because naturally whatever the text presents is up to the author depending on what the author considers important to mention and easy to understand for the readers.

Similarly, just because a *kalām* text does not discuss the *kalām* categorization does not disqualify it from being considered as *kalām* text. For example, *Farīdah al-Farā‘id* by Shaykh Wan Aḥmad al-Faṭānī, *Risālah al-Tawḥīd (Treatise on Unity)* by Ustaz ‘Abd al- Yaḥyā and Ustaz ‘Umar Yūsuf, and *Qawām al-Dīn (The Pillars of The Religion)* by Tuan Guru Aḥmad Hāshimī (d. 1993) are *kalām* texts but it does not mention the *kalām* categorization. In order to understand this different categorization, we must first look at the historical background of when this different method in expounding the *Kalām* attribute started.

The first Malay Muslim scholar that expounded the *Kalām* attribute in a different manner compared to his predecessors was Shaykh Ismā‘īl bin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Faṭānī (d. 1965), or “Pak Da Eil”. He was born in the year 1882 in Bendang Daya village, Pattani. His intellectual

¹⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Kenapa Perlu Belajar Ilmu Kalam?*, 7.

background started with his father as his earliest teacher who was a scholar more popularly known as Tok Bendang Daya Muda (d. 1895). In 1895, he travelled to Mecca with his father where he lived and studied under his two uncles Shaykh Muhammad Zayn (d. 1908), Shaykh Wan Dāwūd (d. 1936) and Tuan Mukhtār Bogor. After spending the rest of his life teaching in Mecca, he nurtured many students who also became scholars like Tuan Guru Hassan Mak Enggol (d. 1969), Tuan Guru 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad Arshad al-Faṭānī better known as Tok Guru Dala (d. 1975), Ayah Dir Sekam, Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah,²⁰ Tuan Guru Salleh bin Musa (d. 2016) and many others.

Meanwhile, in terms of writings he wrote *Bākūrah al-Amānī* that was completed in 1917 and its commentary *Tabṣirah al-Adānī bi Alḥān Bākūrah al-Amānī (Elucidating The Public on The Meanings of The Compulsory Knowledge)*, completed in 1939. Moreover, his *Bākūrah* was also controversial among *pondok* students at that time due to his different method in expounding the *Ma'ānī* attributes compared to *Jāwī* texts prior to *Bākūrah*.²¹ It differed in that Pak Da Eil used the "pe" prefix in translating the *Ma'ānī* attributes like *Qudrah* as "Pekuaasa". Hence, these two *Jāwī* texts were the first to expound the *Kalām* attribute by translating it as "Pekata" while its *ta'alluq* as "berkata".

In the same year he wrote *Bākūrah*, he also produced another *Jāwī* text named *Īdāḥ al-Marām li Taḥqīq Subul al-Salām (Clarification of The Objectives in Achieving The Paths to Peace)*. Three decades later in 1950, his student Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir bin Ismā'īl al-Sanawī (d. 1978) wrote a commentary on it titled *Miṣbāḥ al-Ghulām Sharḥ Īdāḥ al-Marām (Lantern of youths Commentary on The Clarification of The Objectives)*.²² These *Jāwī* texts also apply the different translation method that was started by *Bākūrah*.

Thus, this new method of translation is called "ṭarīq Pak Da Eil" meaning Pak Da Eil's way or method as he was the one that founded it.²³ This greatly influenced his students like the aforementioned Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Sanawī, Ayah Dir Sekam and Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah. Later it can be seen that his students actually further developed this *ṭarīq* on top of Pak Da Eil's different translation for the *Ma'ānī* attributes, specifically the *Kalām* attribute and its *ta'alluq*.

Ayah Dir Sekam was a scholar born in 1921 in the Sekam village. He studied under local scholars in Pattani and Kelantan such as Tuan Guru Abdullah Tahir Bunut Payong (d. 1961) and Tuan Guru Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Waḥhāb al-Fūsānī al-Faṭānī (d. 1996). In 1951, he travelled to Mecca for five years and studied under scholars like Pak Da Eil. Upon returning to his hometown, he founded a *pondok* and taught there until his passing in 1991. His decades of teaching produced many scholars like his son in law Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī, Tuan Guru Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad Kubang Pasir al-Faṭānī (d. 2020), Tuan Guru Baba Ghazali Sekam and many others. Compared to his teacher and other classmate Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah, Ayah Dir Sekam was relatively a more active writer. He wrote twelve texts on various topics ranging from *'aqīdah*, *kalām*, *manṭiq*, and *fiqh*.²⁴ To put it into

²⁰ Ahmad Fathi al-Faṭānī and Abdul Ghani Yakob al-Faṭānī, *al-Nuḥḥah al-Rabbānīyyah fī Siyar 'Ulamā' al-Faṭānīyyah* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia Berhad, 2016), 98-103.

²¹ Mansor Dahlan and Faizuri Abd Latif, "Translation Concept," 208-209.

²² Mashidi Sali Salih and Mujahid Mustafa Bahjat, "Wan Ismail bin Wan 'Abd al-Qadir al-Fatani Wujūduhu fī Nashr 'Ilm al-'Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah," *Jurnal Usuluddin* 39, (2014): 195, <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JUD/article/view/7478>.

²³ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat* 20, 63.

²⁴ Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali et al., "Laysa Kamithlihi Shay'un," 8-10.

perspective, Pak Da Eil produced at least the three mentioned texts, Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah only produced two texts while there are also those that did not left any *Jāwī* texts like Tuan Guru Hassan Mak Enggol and Tok Guru Dala.

Among the twelve texts of Ayah Dir Sekam, four of them mentioned the four *kalām* categorizations. Those texts are *Mabḥath al-Kalām* completed in 1954, *Asās al-Itiqād li Ḍu'afā' al-Bilād* (*The Fundamentals of Beliefs For The Common People of The Region*) in 1957, *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-Īmān* (*Easing The Brethrens in Learning The Creeds of Faith*) in 1959, and *Tashīl al-Ḍu'afā' wa Radd Ba'd Aqwāl al-Sufahā'* (*Easing The Common and Refuting Some Claims of The Ignorants*) in 1965.

Another Pak Da Eil's student that was influenced by his *ṭarīq* is Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah. He was the son of a famous scholar Tuan Guru Abdul Rahman Lubok Tapah (d. 1989). He was born on 11th February 1933 in Pondok Lubok Tapah village. The first twenty years of his life was spent learning Islamic sciences from his father. In 1953, he travelled to Mecca to pursue his studies for fourteen years. During these years, he spent the entirety of it focusing on seeking knowledge to the point that it was said he never missed his classes except when illness befell him. He also learned from Muslim scholars like Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mandilī (d. 1965), Shaykh Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al-Mashāt (d. 1979), Shaykh Muḥammad Yaṣīn al-Fādānī (d. 1990) and so on. He returned to his hometown in 1967 and taught at his father's *pondok* called Pondok Lubok Tapah, which was founded in 1932, until he passed away on 19th March 2008. In terms of writings, he only authored *Risalah Doa-Doa* (*Collection of Prayers*) in 1965 and *Risalah Persediaan* in 1969 which is the *kalām* text that followed Pak Da Eil's *ṭarīq*.²⁵

After these early main propagators of the fourfold *kalām* categorization, it noticeably gained couple other followers like Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī in his *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, and Tuan Guru Abdul Wahab bin Abdullah of Songkhla in *Kharīdah al-Kharā'id fī Bayān al-'Aqā'id* (*The Peerless Pearl in Explaining Islamic Creed*).

In a more recent context, other Muslim scholars influenced by this is Tuan Guru Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī in *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd fī Ma'rifah al-'Aqā'id* (*Summary of The Unity of Allah in Learning Islamic Creeds*), Tuan Guru Baba Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Ma'māwī al-Faṭānī in *Risālah Anak Kunci Bagi Pintu Bākūrah al-Amānī* (*Treatise: Key to Understanding The Compulsory Knowledge*), Tuan Guru Baba Abu Qutaybah Rashidi al-Faṭānī in *al-Irshād ilā Asās al-Itiqād* (*Guidance to The Fundamentals of Beliefs*), *Faṭḥ al-'Azīz bi Sharḥ al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* (*The Glorious Opening: Commentary on The Enlightening lantern*) and Ustaz Muhadir bin Haji Joll in his *Sifat 20: Suatu Pengenalan Asas* (*The 20 Attributes: a Basic Introduction*) and *Ilmu Tauhid: Ilaḥiyyat, Nubuwwat & Sam'iyyat*.

Thus, here we can see the passing down of this *ṭarīq* from a scholar to another scholar that was started by Pak Da Eil's *Bākūrah* and its commentary *Tabṣīrah al-Adānī* until now such as the aforementioned scholars, including also Tuan Guru Salleh Musa (d. 2016), Tuan Guru Baba Ismail Sepanjang, Baba Ghazali Sekam, Tuan Guru Ahmad Ridoudin and so on. This *ṭarīq* then is a piece of knowledge that has survived for over eighty years and upheld in the writings of its propagators and not only that, throughout the decades, it was also further developed by its followers into becoming the fourfold *kalām* categorization.

²⁵ Abdul Latif Mohd @ Mohamed and Muhammad Ariff Asyraf Suhaini, "Analysis," 80-83.

The Fourfold Categorization of The *Kalām* Attribute

The *Kalām* Attribute

The *Kalām* attribute or speech is a meaning that self-subsists within the Divine Entity and manifests in diverse expressions. It is dissimilar to the genus of letters and sounds and it is transcendent beyond being qualified with *taqdīm* (forwarding), *ta'khīr* (delay), *kull* (wholeness), *ba'd* (someness), *lahn* (intonation), *i'rāb* (inflection), and all other types of modifications.²⁶ To add on to that, the attribute is also incompatible with *sukūt* (silence), which is the leaving off of speech while yet having the power to speak.²⁷ His speech is also free from any hidden defects applicable to human beings making Him incapable of speaking, such as *kharas* (being mute) or *ṭufūliyyah* (being too young).²⁸

This attribute is among the seven *Ma'ānī* attributes, so it has *ta'alluq* which can be defined as a connection of an attribute to something. For example, *Qudrah* and *Irādah* attributes have a connection with the action to create or not to create *al-mumkināt* (the possibilities) but both do not have a connection with *al-wājibāt* (the necessities) and *al-mustaḥīlāt* (the impossibilities).²⁹ To illustrate, among matters of possibilities is the pouring down of rains, the births and deaths of His creations. However, some people may ask a doubtful question, for instance, can Allah create a second God? This question is invalid because there being a second God, creator or sustainer for this universe is among the impossibilities, while the *Qudrah* and *Irādah* attributes have a connection only with the possibilities.

As for the *Kalām* attribute itself, it is connected to all of the necessities, the impossibilities and the possibilities just like the connection for the attribute of *'Ilm*.³⁰ The difference between the two connections is *'ilm* attribute's is *inkishāf* (encompassing) meaning that Allah knows everything and nothing is hidden or unknown to Allah's *'ilm* while *Kalām* attribute's is one of *dalālah* (indication) and informing.

Example of this speech indicating what is necessary as in al-Qur'ān: "Say: "He is Allah, the One." (al-Qur'ān, 112:1). As for His speech indicating what is possible: "And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses. The choice is not theirs. Glorified and Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him" (al-Qur'ān, 28:68). Next is His speech indicating what is impossible: "If there were gods besides Allah in them (the heavens and the earth) they would have both fallen into corruption." (al-Qur'ān, 21:22).³¹

Regarding the *dalīl naqlī* (textual proof) and *dalīl 'aqlī* (rational proof) that Allah possesses this *Kalām* attribute is the verse: "...And Allah spoke directly to Moses." (al-Qur'ān, 4:164) while in Ḥadīth the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) said: "There is none of you except that his Lord shall speak to him on the Day of Judgement, there not being between them (Allah and him) any translator or a veil to cover him."³² The *Ahl al-Sunnah* scholars are in unanimous

²⁶ Sa'īd Foudah, *A Refined Explanation of The Sanusi Creed The Foundational Proofs*, trans. Suraqah Abdul Aziz (Rotterdam: Sunni Publications, 2018), 93.

²⁷ Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam*, trans. Earl Edgar Elder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 60.

²⁸ Allie Khalfe, *An Outpouring of Subtleties Upon The Pearl of Oneness Volume 1: Divinity* (Rotterdam: Sunni Publications, 2019), 234.

²⁹ Che' Razi Jusoh, *The Malay Exposition*, 56.

³⁰ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20*, 185.

³¹ Sa'īd Foudah, *A Refined Explanation*, 97.

³² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Bāb Qawl Allah Ta'ālā: "[Some]*

agreement (*ijmā'*) that Allah speaks with the pre-eternal and beginningless speech³³ or attribute of *Kalām*.

On the other hand, the rational proof is if Allah does not possess the *Kalām* attribute, it would necessitate that Allah would possess its opposite which is *bukm* (mute). This is impossible for Allah because mute is among imperfect attributes that would entail that Allah needs one who can remove them, and being in need negates self-sufficiency, and negation of self-sufficiency is impossible.³⁴ Thus, if this imperfect attribute is impossible for Allah, therefore Allah possesses its opposite which is the *Kalām* attribute.

The Two Mainstream *Kalām* Categories

As mentioned, the Ash'arites categorize *kalām* into two categories namely *Kalām Nafsī* and *Kalām Lafzī*. Such categorization can be found in various mainstream works of the Ash'arite school such as *Tuḥfah al-Murīd 'alā Jawharah al-Tawḥīd* by al-Imām al-Bayjūrī (d. 1860). This is naturally also followed by Malay Muslim scholars in their writings like '*Aqīdah al-Nājīn* by Tuan Minal, *Hidāyah al-Mutafakkirīn fī Taḥqīq Ma'rifah Rabb al-'Ālamīn (The Guide For Those Who Contemplate in Knowing The Lord of The Worlds)* by Shaykh Ḥusayn Nāṣir bin Muḥammad Ṭayyib al-Mas'ūdī al-Banjārī (d. 1936), *Paku Iman dan Simpulan Iman (The Peg of Faith and The Knot of Faith)* by Tuan Guru Chik bin Ahmad al-Qadaḥi (d. 2002). Since these two categories are the mainstream categorizations by most scholars, it is impertinent to explain them before the discussion moves to the two new additions that are upheld by some other Malay Muslim scholars that have been stated previously.

Kalām Nafsī

Kalām Nafsī, or *Kalām Ismī*, refers to the *Kalām* attribute of Allah that is pre-eternal and self-subsists within the Divine Entity. It is dissimilar to the genus of letters and sounds; it is not thick or thin or long or short, and it is one and not many,³⁵ and it is transcendent beyond being qualified with all other properties of *kalām ḥādīth* (created speech). It is connected to all of the necessities, the impossibilities and the possibilities like the '*ilm* attribute,³⁶ with this attribute Allah speaks whether it signifies His commands, prohibitions and so on.³⁷ This attribute being necessary for Allah means Allah is not attributed with its opposite, which is being mute³⁸ or other deficiencies that may impair the *Kalām* attribute of Allah.

Kalām Lafzī

Contrary to *Kalām Nafsī*, *Kalām Lafzī*, refers to the *Kalām* that has voices and letters, and it is created. It includes al-Qur'ān and all other revealed scriptures from Allah to His Messengers. However, it is not permissible to say that al-Qur'ān is created except in the context of teaching in order to avoid someone mistakenly thinking that the statement "al-Qur'ān is created" refers to al-Qur'ān in the sense of *Kalām Nafsī* aspect, that which is pre-eternal and not created.³⁹ It is

faces, that Day, will be radiant, Looking at their Lord", no. 7443 (Damascus-Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002), 1838-1839.

³³ Sa'īd Foudah, *A Refined Explanation*, 97.

³⁴ Sa'īd Foudah, *A Refined Explanation*, 154.

³⁵ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan Bagi Sekalian Mukallaf* (Pasir Mas: Pondok Lubok Tapah, n.d.), 21.

³⁶ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20*, 185.

³⁷ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 21-22.

³⁸ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20*, 194.

³⁹ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 23.

important to understand that al-Qur'ān is pre-eternal, and rather what's created is our recitation of al-Qur'ān (which is what *Kalām Lafzī* refers to).

Meanwhile, the classification of this *kalām* into *amr* (commands), *nahy* (prohibitions), *wa'd* (the promise), and so on are the meanings that are signified by *Kalām Lafzī*. Thus, these revealed scriptures indicate only some of *Kalām Nafsī's* meanings, because its meanings include all of the necessities, the impossibilities and the possibilities in detail while the revealed scriptures only indicate some of the necessities in detail, and all of the necessities in general and it is likewise for the impossibilities and the possibilities.⁴⁰ Plus, if these revealed scriptures indicate all of *Kalām Nafsī's* meanings, that would mean Prophet Muḥammad's (PBUH) knowledge is equal to Allah, which is impossible and such belief may lead to apostasy.⁴¹ To put it into perspective, the verse: "Do not go near adultery. It is truly a shameful deed and an evil way." (al-Qur'ān, 17:32) and we understand from it is the prohibition of not just committing adultery but to even go near it. If Allah removed the *ḥijāb* (veil) from us, this is also the meaning that we will understand from *Kalām Nafsī*.⁴²

The Additional *Kalām* Categories

Pak Da Eil in *Tabṣīrah al-Adānī* set the foundation for *Kalām Maṣdarī* by differentiating between the *Kalām* attribute and its *ta'alluq*. It is then followed by his students, who further developed it into these two categories, such as Ayah Dir Sekam in his writings. Plus, one other student, Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah in *Risalah Persediaan*. Other figures influenced by this method are Tuan Guru Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī, Tuan Guru Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, and in a more recent context is Ustaz Muhadir bin Haji Joll.

Kalām Nafsānī

Kalām Nafsānī refers to the meaning of *Kalām Nafsī*, it is pre-eternal, without voices and letters but unlike *Kalām Nafsī* that is one and *wujūdī* (existential), *Kalām Nafsānī* is many⁴³ and *amr i'tibārī* (mentally posited things).⁴⁴ This is what is meant by the verse: "...the Words of Allah would not be exhausted." (al-Qur'ān, 31:27). It is understood as Allah having the will to speak, and the meanings of His Speech like commands, prohibitions and so on.⁴⁵

This means it is referring to the *madlūl* (the indicated meanings)⁴⁶ or *muta'allaq* (objects of *ta'alluq*) of the *Kalām* attribute which as mentioned earlier is all of the necessities, the possibilities and the impossibilities that can be various in terms of what it signifies like verse: "Do not go near adultery. It is truly a shameful deed and an evil way." (al-Qur'ān, 17:32) indicates Allah's commands unto us, and thus the meanings can vary depending on what it signifies. That is why in this regard it is considered as many, because it refers to what is signified by His Speech, and not *Kalām Nafsī* (the attribute itself that is one).

⁴⁰ Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ Jawharah al-Tawḥīd* (Cairo: Kashīdah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2024), 110-111.

⁴¹ Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ Jawharah al-Tawḥīd*, 123.

⁴² Zayn al-'Ābidīn bin Muḥammad al-Faṭānī, *'Aqīdah al-Nājīn fī 'Ilm uṣūl al-Dīn* (Selangor: al-Hidayah Publications, 2014), 87.

⁴³ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22.

⁴⁴ Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd fī Ma'rifah al-'Aqā'id* (Pattani: Maṭba'ah Bin Halābī, n.d.), 34.

⁴⁵ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22.

⁴⁶ Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Ma'māwī al-Faṭānī, *Risālah Anak Kunci Bagi Pintu Bākūrah al-Amānī* (Pattani: al-Madrasah al-Ma'māwīyah al-Dīniyyah, 2024), 4.

Therefore, Allah possessing *Kalām Nafsī* denies Allah being mute and since this *Kalām* is pre-eternal, thus Allah also pre-eternally has the meanings that will be conveyed to His servants which denies Allah being silent⁴⁷ with these meanings including, for example, al-Qur'ān in the *Kalām Nafsī* aspect, and all of the aforementioned *muta'allaq* of the *Kalām* attribute. Thus, when these meanings are conveyed through the revelation of al-Qur'ān and then recited, it is called *Kalām Lafzī*. However, the meanings that are signified by *Kalām Lafzī* are only some, and not all of *Kalām Nafsī's* meanings. The key here is to understand that *Kalām Nafsānī* has no words and voices as it is pre-eternal since this *Kalām* is the meaning of *Kalām Nafsī* (that is also pre-eternal and without voices and letters) unlike *Kalām Lafzī* that is created, has voices and letters.

Kalām Maṣḍarī

Kalām Maṣḍarī, similar to *Kalām Nafsānī*, is also *amr i'tibārī* but it is created.⁴⁸ It refers to the *ta'alluq* of *Kalām Nafsī* or the act of speaking itself.⁴⁹ That is, Allah speaks with *Kalām Nafsī* to His servants whether it is His commands or prohibitions and so on in that it is audible to His servants. This is like what happened to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) during the event of *al-Mī'rāj* and when Allah called upon Prophet Moses at Mount Sinai. At this point, what was heard by both Prophets was *Kalām Lafzī* that has voices and letters that were created by Allah like one's recitation of al-Qur'ān, because what has voices and letters is *Kalām Lafzī* and not *Kalām Nafsī*.

The Rationale of The Fourfold *Kalām* Categorization

The Issue of Literalist Understanding

The catalyst that prompted Pak Da Eil to develop his own *ṭarīq* in expounding the *Ma'ānī* attributes was the tendency among his students to understand *Jāwī* texts and some of their explanations in a literal manner. Usually, the problem of literalist understanding refers to the *mutashābihāt* verses in al-Qur'ān. But in the context of *Jāwī* texts, this issue also occurred because of the problem of *Jāwī* texts in translating its Arabic counterpart from whence *Jāwī* texts are based on. Most Malay scholars wrote in *Jāwī* as it was the writing system at the time, and their target audience were the Malay people. Plus, *Jāwī* texts serve as introductory texts for students who are not yet proficient in Arabic, once they become proficient in Arabic they can simply go straight to reading Arabic texts. Meanwhile, only a few wrote in Arabic like Shaykh Muḥammad Nawāwī al-Jāwī al-Bantanī (d. 1879).

This literalist tendency may be rooted in the spread of the *Wahhābī* movement in the Malay world through the emergence of *Kaum Muda* in the early 20th Century pioneered by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi (d. 1934) and Shaykh Ṭāhīr Jalāl al-Dīn (d. 1956). The teachings of *Wahhābī* were rejected by many Malay scholars at the time because of their rigid literalism, misunderstanding of *mutashābihāt* verses and other issues that were against the established religious practices in the Malay world that is based on Ash'arite theological school and the *shāfi'i* school in *fiqh*. Although their base of operation was in the west coast of Malaysia,⁵⁰ it has also permeated into

⁴⁷ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-Īmān* (Pattani: n.p., n.d.), 23.

⁴⁸ Abdul Aziz bin Ismail al-Faṭānī, *Risālah al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr fī Ma'rifah Allah al-Qadīr* (Pattani: Maṭba'ah Bin Halābī, n.d.), 27.

⁴⁹ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22: Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Ma'māwī al-Faṭānī, *Risalah Anak Kunci*, 4.

⁵⁰ Mohd. Sobri Ellias et al., "The Malay Scholars' Rejection of Wahhabi Ideology: A Critical Analysis," *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication (IJLGC)* 10, no. 40 (2025): 413-420,

the east coast, namely Pattani and Kelantan in which the propagators of the fourfold *kalām* categorization resided.

The problem then started when this literalist tendency was not only applied in *mutashābihāt* verses, but it also seeped into understanding *Jāwī* texts. Thus, some Malay students started to understand *Jāwī* texts literally which led to incorrect understanding of those texts. Among the issues that occurred were, of course, the *mutashābihāt* verses. This can be seen from the fact Ayah Dir Sekam wrote a treatise in 1985 named *Risālah Manhaj Ahl al-Sunnah (Treatise on Ahl al-Sunnah Method)* specifically discussing *mutashābihāt* verses because some of his students were very inquisitive on the topic.⁵¹

He then also wrote *Risālah Irshād al-Jāwīyyīn ilā Sabīl al-‘Ulamā’ al-‘Āmilīn (Guidance For Malays to The Path of Righteous Scholars)* in 1989 in which he refuted the *Wahhābī*'s teachings on issues like celebrating *mawlid* (the Prophet's birthday), *tawassul* (supplicating Allah by means of an intermediary), *tabarruk* (seeking blessings from Allah through an intermediary), and the *mutashābihāt* verses,⁵² warning his readers against such teachings. This spread of *Wahhābī* ideology was supported by Shaykh ‘Uthmān Jalāl al-Dīn Penanti in *Maṭāli’ al-Anwār wa Majāmi’ al-Azhār (The Dawn of Lights and the Meadows of Blossoms)*, where he mentioned that in 1343 Hijri (around 1924) *Wahhābī* supporters took control of Mecca and Medina. Several years after in 1351 Hijri (around 1932) he returned to the Malay Archipelago and found the people were divided and in disputes.⁵³

Many other Malay scholars also expressed their opposition against the *Wahhābī* ideology like Shaykh Aḥmad al-Faṭānī in *Ḥadīqah al-Azhār (Garden of Flowers)*, Shaykh ‘Uthmān Jalāl al-Dīn Penanti in his other book *al-Durrah al-Nāfi’ah fī Ashrāṭ al-Sā’ah (The Beneficial Pearl on Signs of Judgment Day)*, Shaykh Muḥammad Shāfi’ bin ‘Abd Allah Rangkul Langgih al-Faṭānī (Cir. 20th Century) in *Pelita Penuntut (Lantern for Students)* and so on.⁵⁴

Another issue that happened was the question whether the impossibilities are pre-eternal or created. This again, happened due to the literal understanding of some *Jāwī* texts like *Sirāj al-Hudā*. In the year 1375 Hijri, Malay students in Mecca had debates on this issue to the point that in the month of *muḥarram* 1376 Hijri (in 1956), Malay scholars in Mecca gathered to solve the issue. It ended with the scholars agreeing that the impossibilities are neither pre-eternal nor created. They also rejected the literal meaning of those *Jāwī* texts pertaining to this issue.⁵⁵ Here, it was highlighted by Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah (who was one of the propagators of the fourfold *kalām* categorization) that this issue occurred because literal understanding of some *Jāwī* texts like *Sirāj al-Hudā*.

This is further illustrated by some scholars that wrote on this issue. For example Pak Cu Him Gajah Mati (d. 1968) in *Faṭḥ al-Jalīl wa Shifā’ al-Ghalīl (The Glorious Opening and the Soothing of The Thirst)*, Ayah Dir Sekam in *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān, Tashīl al-Ḍu’afā’, Wasā’il ‘Ilm al-Kalām wa Ra’fah wa Raḥmah li al-‘Awwām (The Tools of ‘Ilm al-Kalām and Compassion and*

<https://gaexcellence.com/ijlgc/article/view/5351>.

⁵¹ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Risālah Manhaj Ahl al-Sunnah* (Johor Bahru: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 2018), vii.

⁵² Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Risālah Irshād al-Jāwīyyīn ilā Sabīl al-‘Ulamā’ al-‘Āmilīn* (Pattani: Percetakan Saudara Farīs Faṭānī, n.d.), 10-23.

⁵³ Mohd. Sobri Ellias et al., “The Malay Scholars’ Rejection,” 414.

⁵⁴ Mohd. Sobri Ellias et al., “The Malay Scholars’ Rejection,” 415-418.

⁵⁵ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 49.

Mercy for the Common People), *Tabyīn Kadhb al-Muftarī Fīmā Yata'allaq bi al-Bārī* (*The Clarification of The Fabricator's lies concerning the Creator*) and Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah in *Risalah Persediaan* in which he said that during the time he wrote this text in 1389 Hijri (around 1969), this issue was still being discussed⁵⁶ in his hometown Kelantan, even though ten years prior the issue was already discussed by Malay scholars in Mecca.

The key takeaway from what have been discussed is that in the 20th century of the Malay world, there were issues that emerged which warranted discussions and clarifications by Malay scholars. These issues were the *mutashābihāt* verses, the question whether the impossibilities are pre-eternal or created, and finally the *Kalām* attribute which will be elaborated in the next section. The root cause of all these three issues was literalist tendency. For the first issue, it occurs in understanding Quranic verses while for the remaining two they occur in understanding *Jāwī* texts.

Pak Da Eil's *Bākūrah al-Amānī* which marks the foundation of his *ṭarīq* was also completed in the early 20th century. This *ṭarīq* was built to correct the incorrect comprehension of his students regarding the *Kalām* attribute that happened due to literalist understanding of *Jāwī* texts. This surge of literalist tendency in this century surely did not happen without a reason. Thus, when examining the intellectual history of the Malay world, it can be observed that this literalist tendency can be traced back to the early 20th century which saw the spread of the *Wahhābī* movement that promotes rigid literalism.

All in all, it is evident that the emergence of this *ṭarīq* did not come out of a vacuum, just as with all earlier traditions of Islamic thought. Rather, when understood within its historical and intellectual context, this *ṭarīq* can be seen as both a reaction to and a solution for the pre-existing misunderstandings among his students concerning the *Kalām* attribute and the overly literalist interpretation of *Jāwī* texts.

The Additional *Kalām* Categories to Prevent Incorrect Understandings

In the midst of all those issues, the reason that led Pak Da Eil to develop his *ṭarīq*, specifically the “pe” prefix translation, while his students added *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣdarī*, were to avoid incorrect understandings of the *Kalām* attribute that were born out of literal understanding of some *Jāwī* texts. There are two reasons, one for each *Kalām*. The reason for the former is to avoid the understanding that Allah speaks forever at all times. The reason for the latter is to differentiate between the *Kalām* attribute itself and its *ta'alluq*.

These two reasons were also the reason Pak Da Eil developed his *ṭarīq* to translate the *Ma'ānī* attributes with “pe” prefix like “Pekata”, as translation for the *Kalām* attribute contrary to *Jāwī* texts prior to him that do not apply this prefix. Pak Da Eil uses this prefix because other translations like “berkata” may give the incorrect understanding that Allah speaks forever at all times.⁵⁷

To illustrate, the statement “Allah berkata selama-lamanya” (Allah speaks forever) is problematic because for instance, when Allah summoned Prophet Moses at Mount Sinai or the example in verse: “And remember when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam,” so they all did but not *Iblīs* who refused and acted arrogantly, becoming unfaithful.” (al-Qur’ān,

⁵⁶ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 44.

⁵⁷ Mansor Dahlan & Faizuri Abd Latif, “Translation Concept,” 223; and Mohd Zaidi Abdullah, *Pegangan Sejati Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah: Suatu Keluhuran Dan Kemurniaan Pegangan Hidup* (Kuala Lumpur: Syathariyah Niagajaya Sdn Bhd, 2000), 169.

2:34). If Allah speaks forever, doesn't that mean since then until now Allah still commands the angels and Iblīs to prostrate before Adam?⁵⁸ But if Allah doesn't speak at all times, doesn't that also mean there are times Allah doesn't speak or is silent? Such is the problem caused by literally understanding "berkata selama-lamanya". This understanding that Allah speaks forever is incorrect and dangerous as it is actually the understanding of the Mu'tazilites because to them, these Commands are pre-eternal which necessitates that they remain until now or *bāqī* (everlasting).⁵⁹

Therefore, followers of this *ṭarīq* explained that what is actually meant by "berkata selama-lamanya" are two things: 1) Allah forever possesses the *Kalām* attribute and 2) Allah pre-eternally has the meanings that will be conveyed to His servants⁶⁰ which refers to *Kalām Nafsānī*. Ayah Dir Sekam added that because according to Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī⁶¹ (d. 1390), it is impossible for Allah to be silent as in leaving off of speech while yet having the power to speak, not in the sense of Allah not possessing the *Kalām* attribute. Meanwhile Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah referred to Shaykh Ramaḍān Afandī⁶² (d. 1571) in mentioning the same thing. It is also mentioned by Shaykh Muḥammad Nawāwī al-Jāwī al-Bantānī, and he called it *sukūt nafsī, sukūt nafsānī*.⁶³ Other scholars have also referred to it as *sukūt bāṭinī* (Internal Silence).⁶⁴

This *sukūt* also means that Allah does not pre-eternally have the speeches or not having the will to speak despite being able to, which is impossible for Allah.⁶⁵ So, Allah having *Kalām Nafsī* denies this *sukūt*, because speaking by His *Kalām Nafsī* must entail that Allah pre-eternally has the meanings that will be conveyed and this, for the lack of better words, "preparation" is called *Kalām bāṭinī* (Internal Speech) that denies the aforementioned *sukūt bāṭinī*.⁶⁶ Hence, *Kalām* can also be categorized with *Kalām Nafsānī* as *Kalām bāṭinī* is its synonym.

In support of this Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah added the verse:⁶⁷ "He regulates all affairs, from the heavens to the earth." (al-Qur'ān, 32:5) to indicate that Allah does not have

⁵⁸ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 17-18; and Mohd Zaidi Abdullah, *Pegangan Sejati*, 168-169.

⁵⁹ Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid al-Juz' al-Rābi'*, taḥqīq 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayrah (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1998), 162.

⁶⁰ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 17; and Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Asās al-I'tiqād li Ḍu'afā' al-Bilād* (Pattani: n.p, n.d), 18-19; and *Mabḥath al-Kalām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām* (Pattani: Percetakan Saudara Farīs, n.d), 11; and *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān*, 23-24; and Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd*, 34; and Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20*, 186.

⁶¹ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Asās al-I'tiqād*, 18-19; and Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah* (Gujarat: Idārah al-Ṣiddīq Dābīl, 2018), 213-214.

⁶² Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 18; and Ramaḍān Afandī, al-Kastalī, and al-Khayālī, *al-Majmū'ah al-Saniyyah 'alā Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah*, taḥqīq Mur'ī Ḥasan al-Rashīd (Turkey: Dār Nūr al-Ṣabāḥ, 2012), 300.

⁶³ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 18; and Muḥammad Nawāwī al-Jāwī, *Sharḥ Tijān al-Darārī 'alā Risālah al-Bājūrī fī al-Tawḥīd* (Istanbul: al-Maktabah al-Hāshimiyah, 2013), 29.

⁶⁴ Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, Ṣadr al-Warā al-Qādirī al-Miṣbāḥī, and al-Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dahlawī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah Ma'a Ḥāshiyatuhu Jam' al-Farā'id bi Inārah Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id wa Yalīhimā Sharḥ Mizān al-'Aqā'id* (Karachi: Maktabah al-Madīnah, 2012), 160.

⁶⁵ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 18; and Muḥammad Nawāwī al-Jāwī, *Sharḥ Tijān al-Darārī*, 29.

⁶⁶ Ramaḍān Afandī, al-Kastalī, and al-Khayālī, *al-Majmū'ah al-Saniyyah*, 301.

⁶⁷ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22.

sukūt but instead Allah pre-eternally has the speeches like His commands, prohibitions and Allah have the will and ability to speak. Hence, if Allah neither speaks at all times nor does Allah is silent (as it is impossible), the solution then is the aforementioned meanings of *Kalām Nafsānī*. Thus, Allah is not silent because of the *Kalām* attribute itself as well as *Kalām Nafsānī*.⁶⁸

Ayah Dir Sekam, taking from *Tawḍīḥ al-‘Aqā'id (Explanations on Islamic Creed)*, further added that this is also the meaning of *ta'alluq tanjīzi qadīm* (pre-eternal effective connection) which is the connection of the *Kalām* attribute (in terms of commands and prohibitions) even though creations that are injuncted with them (*mukallāf*) have not yet existed.⁶⁹ Hence, Allah pre-eternally has these speeches that will be conveyed to His servants in the future and this is what is referred to as *Kalām Nafsānī*. Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah also mentioned the verse: "...the Words of Allah would not be exhausted." (al-Qur'ān, 31:27) to indicate *Kalām Nafsānī*.⁷⁰ This is then followed by Ustaz Muhadir bin Haji Joll in his two books.⁷¹

To draw an easier example, humans have *ḥadīth al-naḥs* (inner speech) which is also named as *Kalām* that is without voices and letters as based on an Arabic poem:⁷²

"الكلام لفي الفؤاد وإنما جعل اللسان على الفؤاد دليلاً"

It means that "*Kalām* is in the heart, and the tongue indicates what is in the heart" while for Allah it is called *Kalām Nafsānī*. This is not to say that both are the same as *Kalām Nafsānī* is pre-eternal while *ḥadīth al-naḥs* is created. It is merely that *Ahl al-Sunnah* uses this Arabic poem to refute the Mu'tazilites that say it is impossible for *kalām* to be without voices and letters.⁷³

The above are explanations for the second meaning of "berkata selama-lamanya". As for the first one, what is meant by that sentence is that Allah forever possesses the *Kalām* attribute as mentioned by al-Imām al-Sanūsī,⁷⁴ it does not mean that Allah speaks forever. It can also be understood as "Allah sentiasa ber-Pekata"⁷⁵ that have the same meaning. This leads to the reason behind *Kalām Maṣḍarī*.

Among the twenty Attributes of Allah, the *Ma'ānī* attributes (except *Ḥayah* attribute) have *ta'alluq*. All these attributes are *wujūdī* in the sense that they can be perceived by the

⁶⁸ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Asās al-I'tiqād*, 18; and *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān*, 23; and Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd*, 34; and Abdul Wahab bin Abdullah al-Faṭānī, *Kharīdah al-Kharā'id fī Bayān al-‘Aqā'id* (Pattani: n.p., n.d.), 50.

⁶⁹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jazīrī, *Tawḍīḥ al-‘Aqā'id fī ‘Ilm al-Tawḥīd* (Egypt: Maktabah al-Irshād, n.d.), 124; and Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Asās al-I'tiqād*, 18-19; and *Tabyīn Kazb al-Muftarī Fimā Yata'allaqu bi al-Bārī* (Pattani: Pustaka Farīs, n.d.), 37; and *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān*, 24.

⁷⁰ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22.

⁷¹ Muhadir Haji Joll, *Ilmu Tauhid: Ilahiyat, Nubuwwat & Sam'iyat* (Selangor: Galeri Ilmu Sdn. Bhd., 2024), 224; and *Sifat 20*, 188.

⁷² Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 25; and Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd*, 34.

⁷³ Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad al-Bājūrī, *Ḥashiyah al-Bājūrī ‘Alā Kifāyah al-‘Awwām fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām*, taḥqīq Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2007), 139-144; and Muhadir Haji Joll, *Ilmu Tauhid*, 239-239; and *Sifat 20*, 187.

⁷⁴ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 18; and Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Mabḥath al-Kalām*, 11; and Abdul Wahab bin Abdullah al-Faṭānī, *Kharīdah al-Kharā'id*, 51; and Muḥammad bin Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Kubrā*, taḥqīq Anas Muḥammad ‘Adnān al-Shsharfāwī (Syria: Dār al-Taqwā, 2019), 377.

⁷⁵ Muhadir Haji Joll, *Sifat 20*, 186.

senses while their *ta'alluq* are *amr i'tibārī*. The usual translation before Pak Da Eil, did not have a system in differentiating between the *Ma'ānī* attributes themselves and their *ta'alluq*. Therefore, when translating the *'Ilm* attribute for example, they use "mengetahui" while for its *ta'alluq* they also use "mengetahui".⁷⁶ The same translation is used for two different things which leads to problems above like "berkata selama-lamanya". The issue with this is that it actually refers to the attribute itself, not its *ta'alluq*. This subsequently led Pak Da Eil to develop his *ṭarīq*.

By applying his *ṭarīq*, it differentiates between the two through the usage of different translation for both. The translation for the *Ma'ānī* attributes is preceded with "pe" prefix like "Pekata" while translation for its *ta'alluq* is without the prefix like "berkata".⁷⁷ So, if the sentence is changed to "Pekata selama-lamanya" or "ber-Pekata", it wouldn't lead to the aforementioned problems because the meaning now is Allah possesses the *Kalām* attribute forever, which is correct, and not Allah speaks forever.

To add on to that, the "berkata" translation also may lead to the Mu'tazilite understanding that Allah does not possess the *Ma'ānī* attributes because according to them if Allah possesses these pre-eternal attributes, it will lead to *ta'addud al-qudamā'* (multiplicity of pre-eternals) due to these attributes being *wujūdī*.⁷⁸ So, using the "berkata" translation to indicate the attributes may lead to the same understanding that the attributes aren't *wujūdī* because as mentioned this translation does not indicate these *wujūdī* attributes, but instead it indicates their *ta'alluq*. It is apparent from this that the application of this *ṭarīq* prevents from such incorrect understandings of the *Ma'ānī* attributes, specifically the *Kalām* attribute.

Plus, this distinction between the attributes themselves and their *ta'alluq* is important because what is obligatory for every *mukallaf* to believe in is that Allah possesses the attributes and not their *ta'alluq*. As such, the "ber" translation would not fulfil this obligation for *mukallaf* unless religious teachers specifically explain that what is meant by "berkata", for example, is the attribute and not the *ta'alluq*. In which case then, it is way easier and practical to just use the "pe" translation as it already distinguishes between the two properly. Of course, this is for the laymen or beginner students that are not proficient in Arabic. But for advanced students that are proficient in Arabic, they can simply go straight to Arabic texts without having to occupy themselves with this *ṭarīq*.

To add on to that, this distinction is also to avoid the incorrect understanding that denies *Kalām Lafzī* from the statement "Allah berkata tanpa huruf dan suara" (Allah speak without letters and voices) which seemingly rejects the existence of *Kalām Lafzī*. In actuality, the meaning of that sentence is to say *Kalām Nafsī* is without letters and voices.⁷⁹ But since *Jāwī* texts prior to Pak Da Eil do not use the "pe" prefix to specifically mean *Kalām Nafsī*, readers may misunderstand it to mean denying *Kalām Lafzī* instead. Hence, by applying the "pe" translation for *Kalām Nafsī*, followers of the *ṭarīq* are able to avoid this misunderstanding.

Consequently, a new problem rises to the equation. The proof that Allah possesses the *Kalām* attribute is the verse: "And to Moses Allah spoke directly." (al-Qur'ān, 4:164) and the

⁷⁶ Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Zayn al-Faṭānī, *Farīdah al-Farā'id fī 'Ilm al-'Aqā'id* (Selangor: al-Hidayah Publication, 2021), 27.

⁷⁷ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat* 20, 72-74.

⁷⁸ Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Sifat* 20, 67.

⁷⁹ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Mabḥath al-Kalām*, 11; and *Tashīl al-Ḍu'afā' wa Radd Ba'd Aqwāl al-Sufahā'* (Pattani: n.p., n.d.), 9-10.

event of *al-Mi'rāj*. The Muslim scholars are divided into two opinions in explaining what was heard by both prophets.⁸⁰ The first is the opinion of al-Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, al-Imām al-Ghazālī, and so on that say what both prophets heard was *Kalām Nafsī* (that is without voices and letters).

But according to the *ṭarīq*, the verse is translated to “Allah berkata-kata kepada Musa” (Allah speaks to Moses)⁸¹ as it does not make sense to translate it in Malay and understand it as “Allah Pekata kepada Musa” (Allah the *Kalām* attribute to Moses). As mentioned, the word “berkata” has been assigned to *Kalām Maṣdarī*. In which case, the “berkata” translation which corresponds to *Kalām Maṣdarī* that creates *Kalām Lafzī*⁸² (by which the Prophet can hear Allah's Speech) is now incongruent with this first opinion that says the Prophet heard *Kalām Nafsī* that is pre-eternal and without voices and letters, while “berkata” or ultimately “perkataan” is created and with voices and letters. Plus, if they were to stick with the first opinion while translating the verse as “berkata”, then that would completely go against their established system whereby the *Kalām* attribute is “Pekata” while *Kalām Maṣdarī* is “berkata”.

Therefore, another characteristic of the followers of this *ṭarīq* is they follow the second opinion⁸³ in this issue, the opinion of al-Imām Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, al-Imām Abū Ishāq al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 1027) and so on.⁸⁴ They say what the Prophet heard was not *Kalām Nafsī* but *Kalām Lafzī* that was created by Allah with voices and letters that indicates *Kalām Nafsī*, because what does not have voices and letters cannot be heard.⁸⁵ This then, is now congruent to the translation “berkata” of the Quranic verse.

Incidentally, another question arises, if what Prophet Moses heard was *Kalām Lafzī* like Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), then what is the point of Prophet Moses' epithet “*kalīm Allah*”? The answer is because Prophet Moses heard voices that indicated *Kalām Nafsī* without the intermediary of any of His creations. Plus, Allah spoke to Moses without the intermediary of scripture or angels on many occasions contrary to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) that only occurred during the event of *al-Mi'rāj*.⁸⁶ It was for this reason that Prophet Moses was given that epithet.

Be that as it may, it is important to note that among *Jāwī* texts that were influenced by this *ṭarīq*, not all of them necessarily mention all of its three characteristics of using “pe” prefix in translating the *Ma'ānī* attributes, the fourfold *kalām* categorization and preferring the second

⁸⁰ ‘Abdullah bin Ḥijāzī al-Shsharqāwī, *Hāshiyah al-Shsharqāwī ‘Alā Sharḥ al-Hudhudī ‘Alā al-Sanūsīyyah*, (ed.) Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir Naṣṣār (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥsān, 2022), 262; and Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Ilmu Tauhid*, 228; and *Sifat* 20, 189.

⁸¹ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 19; and Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Faṭānī, *Khulāṣah al-Tawḥīd*, 36; and Abdul Wahab bin Abdullah al-Faṭānī, *Kharīdah al-Kharā'id*, 50; and Abu Qutaybah Rashidi Abdul Rahman al-Faṭānī, *al-Irshād ilā Asās al-I'tiqād* (Pattani: Saudara Farīs faṭānī, 2023), 175; and *Faṭḥ al-'Azīz bi Sharḥ al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* (Pattani: Saudara Farīs faṭānī, 2023), 190.

⁸² Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 22-23.

⁸³ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 24; and Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān*, 25; and *Tashīl al-Ḍu'afā'*, 9; and Abdul Wahab bin Abdullah al-Faṭānī, *Kharīdah al-Kharā'id*, 48; and Abu Qutaybah Rashidi Abdul Rahman al-Faṭānī, *al-Irshād*, 175.

⁸⁴ ‘Abdullah bin Ḥijāzī al-Shsharqāwī, *Hāshiyah al-Shsharqāwī*, 262; and Muḥadir Haji Joll, *Ilmu Tauhid*, 228; and *Sifat* 20, 189.

⁸⁵ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 20.

⁸⁶ Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad Zarrūq al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ 'Aqīdah al-Ghazālī*, taḥqīq Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir Naṣṣār (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥsān, 2025), 143-144.

opinion in the issue of what was heard by both Prophets. For example, *Pelita Suluhan Pada Bicara Mengenal Tuhan (The Enlightening Lantern in Knowing God)* by Tuan Guru Ismail bin Mahmud Yala (d. 2016) and *Sifat Dua Puluh Pada Ilmu Tauhid (The 20 Attributes on The Science of Unity)* by Puan Guru Wan Yah binti al-Qāḍī Wan Abdul Rahman al-Faṭānī only contains the first characteristic. This is because both works were meant for common people and beginners. Indeed, knowledge regarding whether al-Qurʾān is pre-eternal or created is not obligatory, suffice to believe that it comes from Allah and revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) in Arabic.⁸⁷

Risālah Anak Kunci Bagi Pintu Bākūrah al-Amānī by Tuan Guru Baba Ahmad al-Maʾmāwī al-Faṭānī does not mention the third characteristic. Other than that there are also *ʿUmdah al-Ṭālib al-Mujtahid fī Sharḥ Farīdah al-Farāʿid (Commentary on The Unique Pearl For Diligent Students)* by Tuan Guru Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Faṭānī that does not mention *Kalām Nafsānī* and the second opinion, *Patī Farīdah al-Farāʿid (Commentary on The Unique Pearl)* by Tuan Guru Nik Abdullah al-Jambuwi (d. 1972) only has the first characteristic, *Qalāʿid al-Jawāhir fī Sharḥ Farīdah al-Farāʿid (Strings of Jewels Commentary on The Unique Pearl)* by Tuan Guru Abu Qutaybah Rashidi al-Faṭānī does not have the second characteristic because these are commentary on *Farīdah al-Farāʿid*, a *Jāwī* text prior to Pak Da Eil and naturally does not follow the *ṭarīq* in the first place.

Also, a more different work compared to others, *Pegangan Sejati Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah: Suatu Keluhuran Dan Kemurniaan Pegangan Hidup (Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah's beliefs: The Noble And Pure Way of Life)* by Ustaz Mohd Zaidi Abdullah (d. 2022), who was a student of Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah. This work contains the first characteristic only, as it is not a *Jāwī* text but a more modern book that also focuses on defending *Ahl al-Sunnah* creed and warning his readers against dangerous ideologies that were becoming rampant among Muslims like secularism, orientalism, post-modernism.⁸⁸ Thus, it discusses the twenty attributes of Allah very briefly.

Development Within The *ṭarīq* Itself

In truth even within the *ṭarīq* itself, there was a bit of development. What is meant by this is, this *ṭarīq* as it is now known is not what it was like when Pak Da Eil first introduced it. Hence, his students contributed to developing and further defining the *ṭarīq*. This can be seen from three aspects: 1) the usage of *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣḍarī* as new technical terms, 2) Following the second opinion in the case of the third characteristic, and 3) further defining the “pe” prefix translation.

It has been established that the followers of this *ṭarīq* categorizes *kalām* into four, and they arrange it starting from the first *Kalām Nafsī*, *Kalām Nafsānī*, *Kalām Maṣḍarī* and finally *Kalām Lafzī*. But during its early conception, the early *Jāwī* texts that were influenced by this *ṭarīq* neither explicitly use the terms *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣḍarī* nor arrange it as above. Indeed, their explanations definitely point to both, but the terms themselves as they are now known were not mentioned explicitly.

In Pak Da Eil's writings, the closest he has ever mentioned that insinuates towards *Kalām Nafsānī* is that *Kalām* attribute is not like *ḥadīth al-nafs*. Whereas Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir bin Ismāʿīl al-Sanawī mentions it as “perkataan yang *nafsīyyah*” or “*kalimāt* Allah yang

⁸⁷ Saʿad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʿid al-Nasafīyyah*, 218.

⁸⁸ Mohd Zaidi Abdullah, *Pegangan Sejati Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah*, 11-22.

nafsiyyah". That being said, in *Miṣbāḥ al-Ghulām*, he mentioned that according to his teacher Pak Da Eil, *kalām* can be understood in four meanings⁸⁹ as in the fourfold categorization. Ayah Dir Sekam also mentioned that Pak Da Eil said that "mesedia perkataan" (preparing words) can be considered as "berkata" (speaking)⁹⁰ which is *Kalām Nafsānī*. Either way, Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah contributed in this manner by being the first to use *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣḍarī* as specific terms and arrange them systematically in his *Risalah Persediaan*.⁹¹

As for the second aspect, even Pak Da Eil himself chose the first opinion in regard to what was heard by both Prophet Moses and Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was *Kalām Nafsī*, in fact, he did not even mention that there is a second opinion.⁹² His student Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Sanawī also followed his teacher's example.⁹³ As such, the first to prefer the second opinion was Ayah Dir Sekam in his *Mabḥath al-Kalām*.⁹⁴ It can be observed that these two Pak Da Eil's students did not merely blindly follow their teacher, but they also have their own contributions in expanding this *ṭarīq*.

The third aspect can be traced back to Pak Da Eil where he mentioned that in introducing his different translation for the *Ma'ānī* attributes, the Arabic words for the seven attributes have two meanings: *ma'nā ismī* (meaning referring to the attribute) and *ma'nā maṣḍarī* (meaning referring to the connection) and his "pe" translation corresponds to the first meaning that refers to the attributes themselves (that are *wujūdī*) while the second meaning refers to the *ta'alluq* (that is *amr i'tibārī*).⁹⁵

Ustaz Mohd Zaidi Abdullah then, conform it within the modern Malay language by affirming that *ma'nā ismī* corresponds to "kata nama" (or noun) while *ma'nā maṣḍarī* corresponds to "kata terbitan" (derived words)⁹⁶ and this is also done by Ustaz Muhadir Haji Joll.⁹⁷ Meanwhile there are some others that assign *ma'nā maṣḍarī* to "kata kerja" (verb).⁹⁸ Incidentally, some others prefer "kata nama terbitan" that corresponds to *ma'nā ismī* while "kata kerja terbitan" corresponds to *ma'nā maṣḍarī* instead of simply "kata nama", "kata terbitan" or "kata kerja".⁹⁹

This translation method is then also named *iṣṭilāḥī* method that translates *ma'nā ismī* which produces the "pe" translation while *Jāwī* texts that do not follow the *ṭarīq* and use other translations, they used a method named *mafhūmī* method whereby the translation it produces corresponds to *ma'nā maṣḍarī*.¹⁰⁰

⁸⁹ 'Abd al-Qādir bin Ismā'īl al-Sanawī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Ghulām Sharḥ Ṭdāḥ al-Marām* (Pattani: n.p., 1950), 20.

⁹⁰ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Tabayīn Kazb al-Muftarī Fīmā Yata'allaqu bi al-Bārī*, 36; and *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān*, 23.

⁹¹ Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, *Risalah Persediaan*, 21-23.

⁹² Ismail bin Abdul Qadir al-Faṭānī, *Syarah Bakurah al-Amani* (Selangor: al-Hidayah House of Publishers Sdn. Bhd, 2020), 32-33.

⁹³ 'Abd al-Qādir bin Ismā'īl al-Sanawī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Ghulām Sharḥ Ṭdāḥ al-Marām*, 19-20.

⁹⁴ Abdul Qadir bin Wangah al-Faṭānī, *Mabḥath al-Kalām*, 20.

⁹⁵ Ismail bin Abdul Qadir al-Faṭānī, *Syarah Bakurah al-Amani*, 33-34.

⁹⁶ Mohd Zaidi Abdullah, "Al-'Ilm, al-Ma'qūlāt dan al-ḥikmah dalam Pemikiran Ulama Melayu: Satu Penelitian Awal," *AFKĀR* 6, (2005): 174, <https://mjs.um.edu.my/index.php/afkar/article/download/2247/536>.

⁹⁷ Muhadir Haji Joll, *Sifat* 20, 74.

⁹⁸ Mansor Dahlan, and Faizuri Abd Latif, "Translation Concept," 212.

⁹⁹ Abdul Latif Mohd @ Mohamed and Muhammad Ariff Asyraf Suhaini, "Analysis," 97.

¹⁰⁰ Mansor Dahlan, and Faizuri Abd Latif, "Translation Concept," 211-212.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research and for the continued development of *Jāwī* texts studies in the Malay world. First, it is recommended that the works of Muslim Malay scholars such as Ayah Dir Sekam, Tuan Guru Abdullah Lubok Tapah and their students to be edited and transliterated into Romanised Malay. This would make their contributions more accessible to a wider audience be it researchers, Islamic studies students or laymen Muslims because reading in Romanised Malay is easier than reading in *Jāwī*.

Second, contemporary Muslim scholars and religious teachers should consider the contextual application of this fourfold categorization when teaching *‘aqīdah* to laymen audiences or specifically Islamic studies students as there are still many traditional institutions like *pondok* or mosques that use *Jāwī* texts as textbooks. Although, while the categorization can serve as a valuable pedagogical tool, its usage should remain sensitive to the students’ level of understanding to avoid unnecessary complexity or confusion.

Next, as this article focuses only on expounding the fourfold *kalām* categorization itself, future studies can be done regarding those that reject this categorization, their reasoning and arguments. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between those that accept and reject this categorization would certainly also contribute to the Malay world studies.

Finally, this study recommends sustained efforts by academic institutions, research centres, and Islamic authorities to document, preserve, and systematise the intellectual heritage of Malay Muslim scholars. Doing so not only safeguards their legacy but also affirms the dynamic and adaptive nature of traditional Islamic scholarship in responding to theological challenges across time and place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the fourfold *kalām* categorization that is propagated and promoted by some Muslim Malay scholars is a testament to their deep knowledge and their mastery over the vast ocean of *‘ilm al-kalām*. The conception of this new categorization is the product of those Malays scholars’ sense of responsibility, as individuals entrusted with knowledge, they are the ones that must safeguard the *‘aqīdah* of the laymen Muslims from being influenced by any incorrect understandings that may emerge concomitant with the march of time. It can also be observed that the historical development of that time specifically, the spread of *Wahhābī* ideology and tendency towards literal understanding that affected the domain of *pondok* and Malay students, is also a factor for this new categorization as it is a reaction of that tendency.

Therefore, these Malay scholars must not be underestimated as mere village *ustaz* that is stagnant and resistant to change. But instead, they must be commended for their ingenuity, their effort in combating this issue, and successfully creating a concept that is unique to the Malays and *Jāwī* texts. The addition of *Kalām Nafsānī* and *Kalām Maṣḍarī* serves not as an innovation outside the Ash’arites tradition, but as a pedagogical refinement intended to prevent misunderstanding and to safeguard the creed of *Ahl al-Sunnah*. This then also testify against any postulation that scholarship and intellectuality among traditional Malay scholars is static albeit them being forgotten and buried by baseless preconceived notion of their static nature and lack of research value.

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