

# MALAY ANNALS ON PERSIA: The Question of Royal Identity

Fuad Jabali

Sekolah Pasca Sarjana  
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta  
fuadjabali@yahoo.ca

"We are descended from Raja Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain: of the lineage Raja Nushirwan, Lord of the East and West, are we." (*Malay Annals*, 1970: 13-14)

## Abstract

*This article tries to see the important points of reading Malay Annals which can be highlighted into two points: First, genealogically and the Second, the use of religion Abraham as a way to connect their kingdoms to global communities.*

**Keywords:** *Malay Annals, Persia, Royal Identity*

## Abstrak

*Artikel ini mencoba untuk mengkaji poin penting dari membaca salah satu karya Melayu, Sulalatus Salatin yang dapat digarisbawahi pada dua poin utama, yaitu: Pertama: pada sisi geneologis dan Kedua: penggunaan agama Ibrahim (Millata Ibrahim) sebagai cara untuk mengkoneksikan kerajaannya dengan komunitas global.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Sulalatus Salatin, Persia, Identitas Kerajaan*

Reading *Malay Annals* (*Sulalatus Salatin*), one cannot fail to see two important points. *First*, genealogically, the Malay kings made their royal claim not to Islamic Arab but to pre-Islamic Persia and to non-Islamic Rome. *Second*, the use of the religion of Abraham, not the religion of Muhammad, as a way to connect their kingdoms to global communities is strikingly instructive. The Abrahamic tradition is creatively employed to make their pre-Islamic claim Islamic, while at the same time secure their place in a global world of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In this context, two connecting figures are outstanding in the Malay world: Alexander the Great (Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain) and Anushirwan (Nushirwan 'Adil). However, since the Malays' knowledge of both Alexander and Anushirwan is from Islam, the two have been Islamized before their adaptation to the Malay context.

It is well known that Alexander is mentioned not only in the Qur'an but also in Muslims' historical works. Of course the Qur'an (QS 18: 83-100) mentions only "*Dhu al-Qarnayn*" without any reference to Alexander at all, leaving Muslims, as a result, with question who actually he is. But *mufassirs* like al-Tabari does not fail to produce a *riwayah* saying that Dhu al-Qarnayn is in fact Alexander the Great, the King of Rome who established Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> Likewise are Muslim historians. They also wonder who Dhu al-Qarnayn is. While different opinions are reported (one opinion of which is that Dhu al-Qarnayn is the friend of the prophet Abraham),<sup>2</sup> historians such as al-Tabari, al-Mas'udi and Ibn Qutaybah mostly associate Dhu al-Qarnayn with Alexander the Great.<sup>3</sup> The

story of Alexander the Great is in fact so famous in Islamic history that “writers and rulers have turned to Alexander perhaps more than to any other historical king as a case study for how the character and actions of a king affect the life of a culture and its people... Muslims have looked to Alexander as a way defining their own Islamic identity.”<sup>4</sup>

Needless to say that Alexander (356 BC-323 BC) is a great king. Becoming a king at the age of 20, during his reign (around 10 years) Alexander had done so much for his kingdom, the most important of which is the invasion of the whole kingdom of Persia and put it under his might. It is for this reason that he is called kingdom of the East and the West. What Alexander did after the conquest is even instrumental in bridging the two. Not only did he integrated the Roman army into his Persian army but also, in as it is reported, carried away book on Persian learning and translated into Aramaic and Greek (Al-Tabari, 1987, vol. 4, h. 93). Some even maintain that, while he did not marry any Greek or Macedonian women, he married two Persian women and “... his marriages were designed to further a policy of orientalisation, the playing down of exclusive Hellenism and the promotion of Greco-oriental political and cultural mix” (Cartledge: 2004, 12-13).

The same grandeur is attributed to Anushirwan, who became the king of Persia more than 800 years after Alexander death. Like Alexander, Anushirwan put the east and the west once again under one kingdom, his kingdom. What is more, since part of Nushirwan’s life is much closer to the Prophet’s (the Prophet was born in the end of Nushirwan’s reign) (al-Tabari: vol. 5, h. 154), Nushirwan’s picture is much clearer compared to Alexander’s. Al-Tabari, for example, explains in detail the things that Nushirwan have done to strengthen his kingdom. Centralizing kingdom, he summoned the nobles to work with him for dealing with problems including Mazdachism, restored order, issued regulations for the betterment of women and children, and improved public facilities such as bridges, irrigations, and temples. The people had recognized his “excellent judgment, knowledge, intelligence, bravery, and resolution, combined with his mildness and clemency toward them.”<sup>5</sup> It is only after having established strong foundation internally that he dealt with the Cesar. He invaded much of the eastern and the western parts of the Roman Empire (including Anatolia and Alexandria) so that forced the Cesar to make truce with him. Like Alexander, he is not only a powerful king but also a lover of knowledge. His reign “was a cultural climax of the history of the Sasanian empire...It was under him that Iran was developed into a center of the exchange of learning between East and West” (Robinson, 2010: 110). He introduced foreign game into Persia, promoted scholarship and arts, welcome the Neo-platonic philosophers after the closing down of their school in Athens (Robinson, 2010: 126).

The similarity between Alexander and Nushirwan is in fact not limited to their ability to politically and culturally connect West and East. Their relationship is seen by some as deeper than that: They come from the same family. Curiously, al-Tabari (1987: vol. 4, h. 90-91) narrates the following story to this effect:

“Some authorities on ancient history assert that this Alexander who fought the younger Darius was are bilious brother of his and that the older Darius had married Alexander’s mother, the daughter of the Greek king, and that her name was Helen (Hali). She was carried to her husband, the elder Darius, but when he found her foul of odor and perspiration, he sought a way to encounter it. Authorities agreed that she was to be treated with an emulsion of a tree called *Sandar* in Persian. It was steamed and she bathed with it, and much of the foul odor was removed, but not all of it. Because of that he refrained from being with her. Finding her loathsome, he returned her to her people. She had become pregnant by him, however, and gave birth while among her people, to a boy. She name him after herself and after the tree in whose effusion she had bathed in order to cure he malodorousness—Helen Sandarus. That is the origin of the name of Alexander.”

Thus Alexander, the daughter of the mother with the bad odor, is the half-brother of Darius the king of Persia. Alexander's father is Darius's father, whose name is also Darius (the father's name and son's is similar). We might not want to see this information seriously—we might not be surprised if this story is circulated by the Persians who wanted to cynically annex the realm of Roman Empire to the Persian and to degrade them at the same time—but not for the Persians such as Firdawsi. Like many other Persian historians, he entertained himself with the idea that Alexander's father was indeed an Iranian king. Al-Nizami (another Persian writer died between 1180-1209) even wrote an Alexander romance called *Iskandarnamah* (Weinfield, 2008: 108-110). The point is that Alexander has become part of the Iranian consciousness. Once Persia is connected with Malay, the consciousness is transferred. Being a romance, however, the historical Alexander is diminished.

How Alexander and Anushirwan made their way to Malay? First of all, just like any other kings, the Malay kings found it challenging to find justification for their claim. What should people accept him as a king in the first place? If he was a son of a king, then he is there automatically to be a king. What happen if you are not a descendant of a king? How could someone be the first king at all? Although Angku Djatmaka, the forefather of the kings of Banjar, is already powerful but, nonetheless, he cannot claim himself to be the king. He even warned his two children not to be one because there is no royal blood in them otherwise they will be exterminated: "*Dan engkau Ampu Madastana dan Lambu Mangkurat, jangan engkau hendak menjadi raja, sumpahku engkau menjadi binasa karena asal kita ini bukan asal raja.*"<sup>6</sup> Thus the two was asked to meditate (*tapa*), to be deeply connected to the heaven, to the creator of the universe, so that, once they got the sign from God, they could lay their claim by any means as super human being, approved by God to lead the ordinary people. For the Malay kings the challenge is even greater. They are conscious that they were thrown into the Malay world that had been part of the global community. They have to find a way to legitimate their kingship not only the local but also the global subjects living in their realm: the Indians, the Persians, the Arabs, the Spaniards, etc. Claiming to be the descendants of Alexander and Anushirwan is the wise and effective way. Not only did they inherit the quality of the two kings but also strengthen their claim as the king of the East and West. Thus, whoever, coming from the West and the East—meaning, the whole world—must recognize them as the legitimate kings. Whether they succeeded in getting the recognition is another thing.

But still how the descendants of Alexander and Nushirwan found their way to Malay? "The lineage of the Malay kings goes back to Sri Tri Buana who himself was a descendant of Alexander the Great. He came to the island of Andelis, which was ruled by the Demang of Lebar Daun" (Malay Annals, 1970: xxxii). This is the first line of the *Malay Annals*. It is a direct and bold statement of the Malay kings' legitimacy as the heir of Alexander. What follows is the complicated and subtle narration in which diverse genealogies in time and places and different cultures are blended and thus Malay becomes the melting pot of the best cultural and genealogical lineages. Alexander the Great, the story goes, defeated the king of India Raja Kinda Hindi; being captured alive, the former "ordered him to accept the True Faith ... and became Muhammadan, embracing the religion of Abraham" (Malay Annals, 1970: 2). Alexander the Great is then married by Nabi Khidliir to Raja Kinda Hindi's daughter Syahrul Bariyah, according to the ordinance of Abraham, gave birth to Raja Aristun, who later married the daughter of the Raja Turkistan, and gave birth to Raja Aftas (Malay Annals, 1970: 3-5). One of the descendants of Raja Aftas, Raja Ardashir-I Papagan married a daughter of Raja of East and West Raja Nushirwan 'Adil (Malay Annals, 1970: 5). The idea is that Malay kingdoms are the continuation or the extension of Alexander the Great's kingdom. What is more is that they are connected not only to Rome (through Alexander the Great) but also to Turkistan (through Aristun's wife), to Persian (through Papagan's wife) and to India (Raja Kinda Hindi).

The royal genealogy continues. It is also told that Raja Shulan, a descendant of Raja Nushirwan 'Adil, "was a mighty Raja, to whom all the Rajas of Sind and India and all the Rajas of the regions below the wind were subject" (Malay Annals, 1970: 6-7) (*Zir bad* is the Persian words refer to the *land below the wind* which is Andalis (Malay Annals, 1970: xxxii), which is Malay. This means that Malay is already part of Alexander the Great descendants' kingdom). The grandson of Raja Shulan, i.e. Raja Chulan, succeeded him and "his kingdom even greater than his grandfather's, for the whole of India and Sind was subject to him and every prince of East and West was his vassal. It was only China that refused to acknowledge his suzerainty" (Malay Annals, 1970: 9-10). On the way to conquer China, he stopped at Temasek (it was Sri Tri Buana who changed the name from Temasek to Singapore) where, knowing that, thanks to the Chinese trick, he could not go to China, he went into the sea to find a country Dika, half of the inhabitants of which are Muslims (Malay Annals, 1970: 20). There he married Mathabu'l-Bahri, the daughter of Raja Aftabu'l-Ard the King of Dika, and had three sons, whom before leaving them, back to Temasek, Chulan said to Raja Aftabu'l-Ard "When these sons of mine come to manhood, I pray you send them to the earth so that the kingdom of Raja Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain may not pass away but may continue for all time" (Malay Annals, 1970: 12). Later these three sons appeared in Bukit Si Guntang Palembang and made a clear statement, "We are descended from Raja Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain: of the lineage Raja Nushirwan, Lord of the East and West, are we" (Malay Annals, 1970: 13-14). While the eldest was made Raja at Minangkabau and the second at Tanjong Pura, the youngest remained in Palembang and married the daughter of Demang Lebar Daun and made him Raja of Palembang, the title of whom was Sri Tri Buana. Hence the first line of the genealogy of the Malay Kings in the beginning of the *Malay Annals* says, "The lineage of the Malay kings goes back to Sri Tri Buana who himself was a descendant of Alexander the Great" (Malay Annals, 1970: xxxii).

The blood connection does not stop here. Later Talai Pachudi the grand granddaughter of Raja Chulan, the granddaughter of his son (Raja Adiraja Rama Mudaliar), the daughter of his grandson (Jambuga Raja Mudaliar) was married to Tri Buana grandson (the son of his son Paduka Sri Pikrama Wira) Raja Muda with the title of Sri Rana Wikerma (Malay Annals, 1970: 24). Raja Chulan is the descendant of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain, so is Sri Tri Buana, since the marriage is then actually between the descendants of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain, it is doubled the claim. Later, Sultan Mansur Syah of Melacca also married Radin Galon, the daughter of Batara (king) of Majapahit and this Batara is not other than the son of Raja of Tanjong Pura (the descendant of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain),<sup>7</sup> who married the daughter of the previous Batara of Majapahit. The (first?) Batara of Majapahit, it is even said, had also connected to Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain through his marriage with the daughter of the Raja of Tanjong Pura (Malay Annals, 1970: 21). This is to say, Majapahit is connected to the descendant of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain by two marriages: to the daughter of Raja Tanjong Pura and the son of Raja Tanjong Pura later.

It is not necessary to see Hikayat as the work as history as the traditional historians understand it. As a way to interpret history, Hikayat, among other things, has a 'rubber-time' quality, where time is flexible, blended, expanded, and thus historical actors are put under one single big time, in which their roles can be exchanged, depending on the writer of Hikayat' worldview. The point is, the marriage between Sultan Mansur Syah of Melacca to the daughter of Batara of Majapahit is the marriage between two descendants of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain. The strength goes to Sultan Melacca: they are the places where the various branch of the family of Iskandar Dzulkarnein meet. The descendant of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain through the Raja of Pagar Ruyong is also put under the power of Malacca kings through marriage. It was told that Maharaja Permaisura, descendant of Raja Pagar Ruyong, who ruled Siak, refused to acknowledge the king of Melacca Sultan Mansur Syah. While

Maharaja Permaisura was killed, his son Megat Kudu, was captured, brought to Melacca, married to the daughter of Sultan Mansur Syah, and made the Raja of Siak (Malay Annals, 1970: 88-89).

As we can see, the narration above puts so much emphasis on Alexander the Great. But we have to immediately remember that, taking Persian narrative into account, he is believed to be a descendant of Persian king. And, since the Malay is closely connected to Persia, the idea that Alexander is related to, even subjugated by, Persian kingdom is presence in the Malay. The ambiguous statement quoted above is telling a lot: "We are descended from Raja Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain: of the lineage Raja Nushirwan, Lord of the East and West, are we."

But making the connection to Alexander and Anushirwan had also leaved them with an even greater challenge. The Malay kings are Muslim, while Alexander and Anushirwan, living before the Prophet, or know nothing about the Prophet, are not Muslims. How could be the Muslim kings used the non-Muslim kings as their source of their legitimation? The answer is: The Abrahamic religion.

### Abrahamic Tradition

Right from the beginning, the *Malay Annals* makes a clear statement that Alexander the Great's religion is Islam according to Abrahamic tradition "*Islam, di dalam agama Nabi Ibrahim*". The Qur'an (3:67) indeed says that Abraham is neither a Jew nor a Christian but a Muslim, which implies that the religion of Abraham is also Islam. Accordingly we can differentiate two levels of Islam: the Islam of Abraham and that of Muhammad. Since Abraham is the father of Musa, Isa and Muhammad; then his Islam also includes Judaism, Christianity and Islam (of Muhammad). In other words, the Islam of Abraham is wider and bigger than the Islam of Muhammad, which does not always include Judaism and Christianity in it.

However, in order to enrich our discussion, there is other way to read the text. When Abraham called himself a Muslim, it can be also read that all the prophets are actually Muslims. Thus, God has only one religion that is Islam. But if 'to reveal' means to inject an abstract values or realities into a certain time and a certain place, or to give the form to these abstract values or realities, or to translate this abstracts into socio-cultural, and political, forms; then this pre-revealed Islam is an abstract realities. To simplify the matter, we could differentiate between Islam as an objective and Islam as a noun. The Islam of Abraham is Islam as an objective reality before revelation—then we call it islam (with small 'i')—and the Islam of Muhammad is as a noun—then we call it Islam (with capital 'I').

Being associated with Islam, Abraham becomes the symbols of unity between different monotheistic religious traditions, even outside Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The association of the Malay Kings with Abrahamic Tradition provides room for them to connect themselves with a cosmopolitan Melaccan community, including the significant number of the Indians (especially Kelings), who played a significant role in politics and economy of the Malays. The dynamics of the Persian influence in Malay can be further explored through an event in the night of the Portuguese attack to Melacca.

Sultan Ahmad Syah then sent out men to assemble all his forces and bid them get ready their arms. That night the war-chiefs and the young nobles were waiting in the hall of audience, and the young nobles said, "Why do we sit here idly? It would be well for us to read a tale of war that we might profit from it." And Tun Muhammad Unta said, "That is very true, sir. Let us ask the Raja to give us the Story of Muhammad Hanafiah." Then the young nobles said to Tun Aria, "Go, sir, and take this message to the Ruler, that all of us crave form him the Story of Muhammad Hanafiah, in the hope that we

might obtain profit from it, for the Franks are attacking tomorrow." Tun Aria accordingly went into the palace and presented himself before Sultan Ahmad, to whom he addresses the young nobles' request. And Sultan Ahmad gave him the Story of Hamzah saying, "We would give you the story of Muhammad Hanafiah did we not fear that the bravery of the gentlemen of our court falls short of the bravery of Muhammad Hanafiah! But it may be that their bravery is such as was the bravery of Hamzah and that is why we give you the story of Hamzah" (Malay Annals, 1970: 162-163):

Tun Aria then left the palace bearing the Story of Hamzah and he told the young nobles what Sultan Ahmad had said. At first they were silent, but presently Tun Isak Berakah replied to Tun Aria, "Represent humbly to the Ruler that he has spoken amiss. If he will be as Muhammad Hanafiah, we will be as war-chief Bania' (Beniar): if his bravery is as that of Muhammad Hanafiah, ours will be that of war-chief Bania'." And when Tun Aria took this message from Tun Isak Berakah to Sultan Ahmad, the king smiled and gave them the Story Muhammad Hanafiah instead.

While I have seen this particular event to as battle ground between remembrance and amnesia: how a history is forgotten and remembered,<sup>8</sup> here I want to highlight that the author of *Malay Annals* mentions Hikayat Amir Hamzah in this context is not insignificant. Hikayat Amir Hamzah is all about the adventures of Amir Hamzah (the uncle of the Prophet) to conquer the existing powers before him in the name of Abrahamic religion. The hikayat begins in the court of the Persian King Kobat Syahril in Madain, where the prime minister ("the head of all ministers" whose number is 44) Alkis Menteri murdered Khoja Bakhti Jamal, the only Muslim minister, a descendant of prophets; and ends with the conversion of Hamzah to Islam in Madinah. Since Hamzah only converted to Islam of Muhammad in the last part of his life, what is his religion before? For whom he fought his long fights against the mighty kings throughout his life before finally came to Madinah to declare his Islam before Muhammad? The answer is straight forward: for the sake of the Islam of Abraham. It has become a norm in the Hikayah Amir Hamzah, that every time his enemies were defeated they would ask to declare Abrahamic formula as their way of conversion to the islam of Abraham: They should witness that God is One and Abraham is God's Friend "*Bahwa Allah Taala Tuhan yang Esa dan Agama Nabi Allah Ibrahim Khalilullah sebenar-benar agama*". It is to be noted that similar Abrahamic formula is also abundant in the Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain. Thus both Hamzah and Alexander the Great belong to the same religion: the religion of Abraham.

How Persian king is connected to Hamzah and, thus, to the religion of Abraham? It is Khoja Buzurjumbur Hakim the son of Khoja Bhakti Jamal, the new Prime Minister, who named King Kobat Syahril's new-born baby Nushirwan Adil, and who protected Amir Hamzah from Kobat Syahril's order: to split the belly of all pregnant women in Mecca to kill the will-be-born babies. It is foreseen that one of these babies—who is later known as Amir Hamzah—would become the enemy of his son future king Nushirwan Adil. Khoja Buzurjumbur Hakim was sent to Mecca to execute the order, but instead of doing what the Persian king asked to do, he protected the baby Amir Hamzah. With this introduction, in more than 600 pages the Hikayat tells the story of the encounters between Amir Hamzah and different kings—especially Nushirwan Adil and his son Raja Harmansyah—until finally Amir Hamzah went to Medinah to meet the Prophet submitting to the Prophet teaching by reciting *Shahadah*. The fact that the Hikayat Amir Hamzah also portrays Nushirwan Adil as Hamzah's enemy does not eliminate neither Hamzah's royal connection to Nushirwan nor Nushirwan's connection to islam. In fact from other Malay work, for example, we know that Nushirwan Adil is in fact treated like a devout Muslim.<sup>9</sup>

The presence of Khoja Buzurjumbur Hakim and his son Khoja Bhakti Jamal as the head minister of the Persian king highlights that Persian kingdom had already 'contained' Islam. The decision of Khoja Buzurjumbur Hakim to adopt Amir Hamzah as his son, and the marriage of Alexander

with Nushirwan Adil's daughter strengthens the relation between Islam and Persian kingdom. Once again, Hikayat Amir Hamzah provides cosmological/theological ground to connect the Malay Kings with Abraham. The first Malay King is said to have been a descendant of Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain and, since Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain was already a follower of Abrahamic Religion, i.e. islam, then the first Malay King is actually already muslim (with 'm' not 'M'). The conversion of Tri Buana to Islam is then the conversion from islam to Islam. It seems that, however, this conversion does not mean to cut him from islam either. It merely connects the kings with both islam and Islam; and hence, with the two i/Islands they could connect to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamic traditions and non-Islamic traditions (islamic traditions).

Being a new king, Tri Buana needs a lot of resources to build his power and for this purpose he needs certain legitimacy to what he did. Every beginning is difficult and always involves delicate negotiations with diverse community groups with their different religious/unreligious traditions. For this purpose the forerunner always needs a bigger worldview to accommodate differences. In the Malay context, it would also be great—and this is what the hikayat tries to picture—if the king did it in the context of religious justification. He is doing it for the sake of Islam, to prepare the coming of Islam; to bring the existing kings to accept muslims or to move from islam to Islam. For this purpose the connection between the king with Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain on one hand and Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain with the religion of Abraham on the other is critical. And the connecting literature is Hikayat Amir Hamzah; and the connecting figure is of course Amir Hamzah. Tri Buana is just like Amir Hamzah, the one who prepare the way for the rise of Islam.

### **Persia and Islamic 'Orthodoxy'**

It is important to think that Melacca flourished because of the support of Pasai. The king of Melacca asked the king of Pasai to send Arabs, Persians and others to settle in Melacca. Merah Silu the founder of Samudra Pasai, the hikayat tells, is converted to Islam by the Prophet through his dream, and also taught by the emissary sent to Pasai from Mecca (Malay Annals, 1970: 31-33). It is reported that after the death of Merah Silu the Aceh people can speak Arabic (Malay Annals, 1970: 36). Of course it needs more reading to fully understand this episode, but it is suffice to say here that there are some grounds to associate Pasai with Mecca/Arab/Islam and Melacca with Persian/Indian/Abrahamic traditions.

But of course eventually the king of Melacca converted to Islam too. And the way of conversion is just like the king of Samudra Pasai's: it is the Prophet who came to him in his dream, teaching him *Shahadah* and he was circumcised when he was dreaming. The Prophet also told him that there will be ship coming from Judda. This is to connect Malacca with Arabian Islam. Makhdum Sayyid Abdul Aziz, who came with the ship, instructed him about Islam. "...the Bendahara and the chiefs embraced Islam; and every citizens of Melacca, whether of high or low degree, was commanded by the Raja to do likewise (Malay Annals, 1970: 43). But unlike Samudra Pasai, which is Islamized from Mecca right from the beginning (the name Sayyid Abdul Aziz reveals that he is an Arab, a descendant of the Prophet, a sayyid), Malays were Islamized latter after defeated by Majapahit, and moved to Melacca. When Melacca flourished at the time of Sultan Muhammad Syah, the first Malay king converted to Islam, the tribute is not to the Prophet Muhammad but to Iskandar Dzu'l-Karnain (Malay Annals, 1970: 49).

The different orientation of Pasai Arabian-oriented orthodox Islam versus Melacca Indo-Persian oriented Islam can be seen from questions asked by the king of Melacca to the king of Pasai. One day it is said, a certain Maulana Abu Bakar came to Melacca, bringing a book *Durr Manzum*, and on the request of Sultan Mansyur Syah, he instructed him the content of the book. Only after learning

the book that Sultan Mansyur Syah decided to send it to Pasai to see if the doctrine explained in it was approved by Pasai. Interestingly, to the emissary that the Sultan Mansyur Syah sent to Sultan Pasai he instructed, "You are to ask the divines of Pasai this question, 'those that are in heaven and those that are in hell—do they abide for all time in heaven and do they abide for all time in hell, or not?' Whoever can answer this question you can give him these seven tahils of gold dust and these two women slaves; and the answer that is given to you, you are to honour with beat of drum and bring back here." After the question is posed to the king of Pasai, he ordered to summon a certain Tun Makhdum Mua to answer it, saying "We desire that you furnish the answer to this question, that we may not be put to shame." What is the answer of Tun Makhdum Mua?: "Those in heaven abide there forever, those in hell abide there forever." And Tun Bija Wangsa [the one sent by The Sultan of Melacca], answered, "Is there no other possible view?" "There is not," said Tun Makhdum Mua, "for that accords with the text of the Koran 'for ever do they remain.'" The answer is obvious, and, as a people of Tun Makhdum Mua said, of course there is no need for the Melaccan king to trouble sending emissary to Pasai simply to get the obvious answer. But the reason given by Tun Makhdum Mua is also interesting: it is what the Qur'an said. Since he is chosen by the king of Pasai to answer the question, he must be a very important ulama, representing the best view of the Melaccan Islam, and the king warned him not to put the king to shame. Although the answer did not meet the expectation of sultan of Melacca's envoy, it nonetheless represents the nature of the Islam adopted by the Pasai Muslims: 'orthodoxy'. Everything should be based on the immediate understanding of the Qur'an. No further contemplation is needed. Having warned and, actually, enlightened by his people, Tun Makhdum Mua approached the Melaccan messenger in private, 'Just now when you asked me that question before the whole assembly I gave the answer you heard. And now that we are by ourselves I will tell you the true answer is. It is this ...' (Malay Annals, 1970: 92-94).

The fact that the true answer is given in private indicates the sensitivity of the answer. Of course it is not easy for Tun Makhdum Mua to ask the king to provide him another ensemble to provide the true answer, and he might not want it at all either, that is why he did it in private. The *Malay Annals* only provides three dots ("...") instead of explaining what the true answer is. It is not known whether the original writer of the *Malay Annals* himself or the later scribe who omitted the answer, but it certainly indicates the sensitivity of the answer. 'Sensitivity' means it contradicts the literal understanding of the Qur'an, as it is originally spoken by Tun Makhdum Mua. But it is precisely this kind of answer that the Sultan of Melacca expected to hear. Once again, we can see the different religious orientation of Pasai and Melacca. While Pasai represents the Arabian-oriented-'orthodox' Islam, Melacca Indo-Iranian 'un-orthodox' oriented Islam. Maulana Abu Bakar, the religious instructor of Sultan Manshur Shah, it is reported, approved the answer given by the Pasai. It is to remember that since Maulana Abu Bakar does not have the title of sayyid, he is not a descendant of the Prophet; probably he is not an Arab either. The title 'Maulana' is commonly used among Indian Muslims (Malay Annals, 1970: 92-94).

Another incident reported by *Malay Annals* could further clarify the different religious orientation of Pasai and Melacca. It is reported that the Kadi of Melacca is actually Kadi Yusuf the great-grandson of Makhdum Sayyid 'Abdul 'Aziz who brought Islam to Melacca. When the text says, "Kadi Yusuf did not go to Maulana Abu Bakar for instruction because he himself was a profound scholar" means a lot in this context (Malay Annals, 1970: 94). It indicates the existence of two different orientation of Islam: Indo-Persian-'un-orthodox-oriented Islam represented by Maulana Abu Bakar and Arab-'orthodox'-oriented Islam represented by Kadi Yusuf the great grand-son of Makhdum Sayyid Abdul 'Aziz.



The choice of Sultan to ask Abu Bakar not Kadi Yusuf for religious instruction shows the religious affiliation of the Sultan toward non-Arabian-oriented Islam. Kadi Yusuf was aware of that. Later on, he went to Maulana Abu Bakar for religious instruction and, as a result, he felt that he did not fit with the office of Kadi anymore. He resigned from the office and substituted by his son Kadi Menua (Malay Annals, 1970: 94). If the function of Kadi is to provide religious guidance for people, including the traders, to settle their disputes, and to live, according to Shari'ah then the Kadi's main concern is basically Islamic law. The king, on the other hands, somehow has more concern other than Islamic law. 'Alauddin Ri'ayat Shah, who asked to write the *Malay Annals*, was still called 'Shadow of God upon Earth" by the *Malay Annals'* author- and therefore it can show that the Islamic law-oriented Islam, or the 'orthodox' Islam - cannot fully accommodate the realm of the Malay kingdom. It is the 'un-orthodox' Islam, represented by Maulana Abu Bakar, that can do the job. The position of Abu Yusuf is somehow resumed after he himself became a sufi (Malay Annals, 1970: 124-125). Having ceased as Kadi, his behavior is reported strange. He did not allow kite to fly above his home. Once he refused Sultan Mahmud to come to his house because he thinks the Sultan does not fit for him, a fakir. Thus his title is now 'Maulana' ("Maulana Yusuf"), this is the title that his instructor Abu Bakar had. He called himself "Fakir", a title closely linked to Sufi. He refused the Sultan because, in the gate keeper's words, "only fakir can see fakir." Only after the Sultan returned to Maulana Yusuf's house without his escorts, bringing book, and call himself 'fakir' ("Tell Maulana Yusuf that Mahmud a fakir come") then he could he accept Sultan Mahmud in his home, receiving his instruction. It means now, his religious orientation fits the king's need. This is Maulana Abraham's Islam. He is powerful enough to have the Sultan come to his home to receive his instruction.

### Concluding Remark

*Malay Annals* is an effective and a creative instrument for the Malay kings to claim for globalization, in which Persia, as well as Rome, is one of the major players. In the hands of the Malay writer Rome, the other global players, is in fact neutralized by Persian hegemony, using the intricacy of genealogical apparatus. The Persian historian predecessors have paved the way for this purpose.

Hikayat Amir Hamzah, as well as other hikayah, collaborates the idea that the Malay kings were genealogically connected to the world kingdoms. Through the Hikayat, Amir Hamzah and the Melaccan kings are connected to Iskandar Dzulkarnaen and Anushirwan. And more importantly is the fact that both Iskandar Dzulkarnaen and the kings of Malays before Islam, as well as Amir Hamzah, are connected through one religion: the religion of Abraham, to which Muhammad is also belong. The affiliation of the Malay kings to Abraham does not only provide a religious/Islamic justification to the pre-Islam Malay and but also enables them to have more flexibility to include more religious groups (Christians, Jews and others) into their realm.

*Wallahu A'lam bi al-sawab*

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Al-Tabari, *Tafsir al-Tabari*, (N.p.: al-Maktabah al-Tawfiqiyah), 16:15. For more discussion on Alexander in Quranic exegeses, see Paul Weinfield (2008: Chapter II).

<sup>2</sup> See al-Tabari (1987: vol. 2, h. 23).

<sup>3</sup> Al-Tabari (1987, vol. 4, h. 87-98) for example, has a special section on the battle between Darius and Alexander and Persia after Alexander conquered Persia.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Weinfield, *The Islamic Alexander*, vii, ix.

<sup>5</sup> See Al-Tabari (1987: vol. 5, h. 154-157). For a further analysis for Anushirwan's reform see Robinson (2010: 122, 123, 127, 128, 129).

<sup>6</sup> Johannes Jacobus Ras, *Hikayat Banjar*, diterjemahkan oleh Siti Hawa Salleh (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1990), 237.

<sup>7</sup> See Malay Annals (1970: 63). Raja Tanjung Pura is the brother of Sri Tri Buana, the founding father of Malay kingdom (Malay Annals, 1970: 5).

<sup>8</sup> "In the Memory of *Ahl al-Bayt*: The 16<sup>th</sup> Century Malay *Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyah*" forthcoming.

<sup>9</sup> It is reported that Harun al-Rasyid saw the body of Nushirwan Adil is still intact. Quoting the saying of the Prophet, his religious advisor say that this is because Nushirwan is a just ruler, hence his body will be protected even from the hell fire. See Bukhari al-Johari, *Tajussalatin* (1979: 58).