



Bustan al-Salatin

A Malay Mirror for Rulers

Jelani Harun



Bustan al-Salatin **(The Garden of Kings)**

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Jelani Harun



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List of Manuscripts

MS 1	Manuscript UM 41	64
MS 2	Manuscript Raffles Malay 8	65
MS 3	Manuscript Klinkert 14	66
MS 4	Manuscript Cod. Or. 1694	67
MS 5	Manuscript SOAS 36500	68



Foreword

B*ustan al-Salatin*, which was composed in Aceh between 1638 and 1641 by the famous theologian, historian and Sufi Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri, is an outstanding work of traditional Malay literature and a genuine encyclopaedia of history and *adab*. However, because of the enormous length of *Bustan* and numerous obstacles on the path of its student, this work remained virtually unstudied until the present time. The book of the talented scholar Dr. Jelani Harun is therefore the long-awaited, pioneering research into Sheikh Nuruddin's masterpiece, which is intended to fill this lacuna in Malay studies.

This book which is based on the examination of more than 30 manuscripts of *Bustan* cannot fail to impress the reader by its multifaceted approach. Jelani Harun studies key-problems of the philology of *Bustan*, its Arabic and Persian sources, Persian patterns of Universal History and didactic 'mirrors for kings' which underpin the work by Sheikh Nuruddin, its historical and *adab* aspects as well as its impact on traditional Malay literature in general and writings of Sheikh Nuruddin's successors in particular. Especially interesting are Jelani Harun's observations on the structure of *Bustan* which closely connects its historical and didactic parts; on the Islamic doctrine of the Divine Plan as the foundation of Universal History in which Sheikh Nuruddin, the first among scholars, incorporates the history of the Malay world; on the *Bustan* conception of justice as a core of the royal power, which determines rules of the behaviour of the king and his high officials.

Jelani Harun also lets the reader admire numerous edifying stories and anecdotes of Nuruddin's work, which not only illustrate these rules, but also turn *Bustan*

into a wonderful flower-garden of literature. The book by Jelani Harun is rich in knowledge and fresh ideas, new findings and earlier unknown facts. From now on it will be impossible to write about Islamic literature of the Malay world without reference to this thoughtful and erudite book.

· Professor Dr. Vladimir Braginsky
SOAS, University of London

Preface

This book is text-orientated, and based particularly on the work of *Bustan al-Salatin* by Nuruddin al-Raniri, a masterpiece, and is the longest text ever written in the history of traditional Malay literature. *Bustan al-Salatin* consists of seven books (Books I–VII) and contains obvious features of universal history and *adab* writings. This book demonstrates that *Bustan al-Salatin* may be classified as the first integral work of universal history and a didactic mirror in traditional Malay literature.

This book focuses on two major topics of discussion: universal history and *adab* writings (mirror) as two basic components which form *Bustan al-Salatin*. The discussion on the concept of universal history is mainly based on Books I–II of the text whereas that on the concept of the mirror is based on Book III. However, in order to obtain a whole picture of the author's view of universal history and mirror, some aspects of *adab* writing in Books IV–VII are also included. In this way, all aspects of Nuruddin al-Raniri's view of universal history and *adab* are analysed from a wider perspective. The major idea that runs through the whole text is that of a Divine Plan in history. Proceeding from this, Nuruddin al-Raniri logically treats all the aspects of historical and *adab* narrations in Books I–VII, from the Creation to the Day of Resurrection. History in this sense is seen by him as a realisation of God's Plan (Divine Plan) in the metaphysical dimension.

This book also pays much attention to the creator of *Bustan al-Salatin*, Nuruddin al-Raniri, a scholar from India. During his sojourns and service as an advisor to Sultan Iskandar Thani and his successor, Sultanah Safiatuddin Tajul Alam, at the

Acehnese court between 1637–1644, he introduced many new elements in the development of Malay historical and didactic writings as well as in religious and Sufi literature. His contribution to traditional Malay literature, as seen from the influence exerted on it by *Bustan al-Salatin*, is outstanding and has inspired many of the Malay historians and *adab* writers, who came after him. Because of this, the background to his works and his ability as an *adab* writer and a historiographer are discussed thoroughly. An attempt is also made to trace his influence on later Malay men of letters and to discover whether any of them can be considered as his successor in historical and *adab* writings.

This book is based on five major manuscripts, they are the MS Raffles Malay 8 (Royal Asiatic Society, London), MS UM 41 (Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur), MS SOAS 36500 (University of London), MS Klinkert 14 and MS Cod. Or. 1694 (University of Leiden).

It is only too natural that such a complex work as *Bustan al-Salatin*, which not only touches upon the factual history, but also explains it within the theological context, requires thorough interpretation. The author's narration on the proper duties of rulers and court officials, his didactic message, moral values, the doctrine of God's reward or punishment, are basically theological and need to be properly interpreted from the religious perspective. Thus the element of theological interpretation is crucial in studying Nuruddin al-Raniri's concept of history and that of the mirror, in order to discover the spiritual, or didactic meaning of his narration. This, among other aspects, forms the major intention of my book. Nevertheless, the concept of history and *adab* in *Bustan al-Salatin*, need other elements to be taken into consideration.

Firstly, the interpretation of the *adab* component in *Bustan al-Salatin* must be closely connected with the whole process of history as shown in the text, from the Creation in Book I to the end of Book VII. This suggests that *Bustan al-Salatin* should be seen holistically. The aspect of Creation for instance, should not be considered separately from history proper, but must be seen as the beginning of the whole historical continuum. Both aspects form a unity, and therefore should be interpreted as an integral whole in the framework of the concept of the Divine Plan. In this way, the interpretation of history in the text are conducted from a wider perspective, by taking into account both theological and factual narrations. A holistic approach in studying *Bustan al-Salatin* as a universal history will reveal not only the superficial meaning of history but also its inner or spiritual meaning, that is, history as a manifestation of the Divine Plan.

Secondly, the components of universal history and *adab* in *Bustan al-Salatin* should be seen within its own concepts and frame of reference, and not through the comparison with history as a modern discipline. This is related to the very nature of the subject. Islamic universal histories and mirrors are very different from history in the modern sense of the word. The narrative on universal history, besides being factual and to some extent objective, also contains many non-historical, rhetorical, and fictitious elements. Many historical facts have been elaborated or stylised under the influence of oral or written creative literature. In many historical narratives, the historiographer inserts his moral judgements and expresses his direct or indirect views, especially when he combines historical elements with those of *adab* writing, as an example of a moral lesson. In *Bustan al-Salatin*, the element of *adab* is very much articulated as is obvious from the author's citation of didactic stories and tales for moral purposes. The manner in which Nuruddin al-Raniri combines elements of didactic mirror and historical chronicle within his integral work is a typical characteristic of the Islamic approach to history. In other words, the approach to Islamic traditional historiography in this book takes into account the historiographer as an *adab* writer (belletrist) and not a historian in the modern sense of the word.

Finally, the Malay *adab* writings (mirrors) have passed through a long period of development and represent a synthesis of many traditions particularly the Arabian, Persian, and Indian. These historical influences must be identified in order to obtain a clear understanding of *Bustan al-Salatin* which is undoubtedly based on the Persian tradition of mirror and our attention will naturally focus on the Persian tradition of mirror writing. The concepts and principles of both Persian universal histories and *adab* writings, therefore, are allotted with much space in this book. In addition, *Bustan al-Salatin* must be seen with a clear sense of awareness of its author as part of the society in which he lived. The point is that the narration in Nuruddin al-Raniri's work was affected to some extent by new elements related to the local tradition. In the context of *Bustan al-Salatin*, the fusion of foreign traditions with those originating from local history and literature is obvious, and thus reveals the connection between the Malay culture and cultures of the "outer" world, in this case, with Persian-Islamic culture and thought. A thorough study of the text as a synthetic genre is therefore essential in order to reveal the proper place of Malay tradition within different traditions of the world, first and foremost of Islamic nations. The following objectives have been formulated for this writing:

- a. To trace the early specimens of Malay interest in universal history and *adab* writings, representing a synthesis of different traditions.

- b. To identify specific features of the concept of universal history and didactic mirror in Malay literature and to demonstrate how this concept was formulated in the framework of Islamic thought in *Bustan al-Salatin*.
- c. To give a detailed analysis of the influence of Persian universal histories and *adab* literature on Malay writings.
- d. To examine the forms of interaction between the Malay tradition and Islamic thought concerning the ideas of kingship, justice and the proper duties of rulers and courtiers.
- e. To evaluate Nuruddin al-Raniri as a court historiographer and *adab* writer, and his influence on the later Malay historical and *adab* works.

To achieve the objectives thus formulated, this book has been divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 will discuss the situation in Aceh between the end of the sixteenth and the early years of the seventeenth centuries. This section is important as an attempt to give a historical sketch about the socioeconomic, political and cultural situation in Aceh prior to the arrival of Nuruddin al-Raniri there, especially during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636).

Chapter 2 will discuss the author, Nuruddin al-Raniri, in order to trace his biography before and after his coming to Aceh, including his role as an *ulama*, man of letters, court advisor and historiographer.

Chapter 3, which discusses the text of *Bustan al-Salatin*, will be divided into three parts. The first is about the manuscripts of *Bustan al-Salatin*. A description of all the manuscripts which are known to exist will be given in a tabular form, the latter is followed by a description of the manuscripts which will be used in this book. The second part concerns the contents of *Bustan al-Salatin* as it is shown in the titles of its books and chapters. The third part is about the sources of references – *Bustan al-Salatin* which will be identified and briefly described.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the problem of interpolations in Book II of *Bustan al-Salatin*. In this section, the views of several scholars about the problem in question will be critically discussed.

Chapter 5, which is devoted to the salient features of universal history and *adab* in Malay and Islamic tradition, is divided into four parts. The first is a preliminary examination which traces the Malay interest in universal histories and *adab* writings before *Bustan al-Salatin*. Some examples of early Malay mirrors are highlighted. The second part is a brief explanation on the doctrine of Divine

Plan in Islamic thought. It is followed by a sketch of the historical development and main characteristics of Persian universal histories and *adab* writings in the third and the fourth parts. The major aim of these sections is to identify the concept of Divine Plan in the genres mentioned above in Islamic literature, especially in Persian tradition. This is important in order to trace Nuruddin al-Raniri's frame of reference and models when he composed *Bustan al-Salatin*.

Chapter 6, a discussion of *Bustan al-Salatin* as a universal history, will be divided into three parts. Part one is an attempt to reveal and describe the structure of *Bustan al-Salatin*, especially the connection between historical writing in Books I–II and *adab* writing in Books III–VII. The cross-references between Book II and Books III–VII of *Bustan al-Salatin* will also be identified. The discussion aims to provide concrete evidence that Nuruddin al-Raniri's narration in Books I–VII is based on the concept of the Divine Plan as formulated in the genres of universal history and *adab*. Part two is devoted to the discussion of Books I–II of *Bustan al-Salatin* as a specimen of universal history. The major point of discussion is to show how the element of universal history was systematically constructed in the text based on the Persian model. Part three treats the topic of the status of the Malay states in the universal history, including the author's narration on contemporary events in Aceh.

Chapter 7 represents a discussion of the aspect of mirror or *adab* writings in *Bustan al-Salatin*. It is divided into six parts. The first part is devoted to the genre of mirror in Book III of the work. The second discussed thoroughly Nuruddin al-Raniri's concept of kingship and the duties of rulers and court officials, especially in its connection with the concept of justice. In the third part special attention is given to the characteristics and function of didactic stories in the text, and a comparison is made with those from some selected Persian mirrors. The fourth part is a further discussion of the rules for kings and didactic stories in Books IV–VI of *Bustan al-Salatin* in order to reveal how these books are related to the idea of universal history and *adab* and form the whole coherently integrated by the concept of the Divine Plan. The sixth part deals with the explanation on the section of Intellect in Book VII in order to show its function and importance in the whole structure of the work.

Chapter 8 discusses the influences and successors. It is divided into two parts. The first part focusses on the discussion about the influence of *Bustan al-Salatin* on the later development of Malay literature. As an outstanding work, *Bustan al-Salatin* was largely copied and spread to many parts of the Malay world during the late seventeenth up to the twentieth centuries. It is important to observe how the Malay historians and *adab*-writers responded to the ideas of Islamic

historiography and *adab* writings introduced in Malay literature through *Bustan al-Salatin*. This chapter is also an attempt to evaluate how Nuruddin al-Raniri's literary contribution influenced the later Malay writers and the development of Malay historical and didactic literature generally. The second part is an attempt to find out whether Nuruddin al-Raniri had any successor in the field of historiography and *adab* writings and whether Raja Ali Haji can be considered as such a successor.

Chapter 9 is a conclusion which sums up the main content of this book and consequently leads to a final discussion of *Bustan al-Salatin* as a work of complex literary genre, the unique work of universal history and *adab* in traditional Malay literature.

JELANI HARUN
Mac 2008

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Abbreviations

A.D.	Anno Domini, the Christian era
A.H.	Anno Hijrae, the Muslim era
BKI (BTLV)	<i>Bijdragen Tot De Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde</i> , published by the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, Leiden
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> , London
d.c.	died circa
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur
e.g.	for example
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i> , Deccan
i.e.	that is to say
IS	<i>Islamic Studies</i> , The Islamic Research Institute, Karachi
JHS	<i>Journal of the Historical Society</i> , Kuala Lumpur
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> , Chicago
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i> , Jerusalem
JSAES	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
JSBRAS	<i>Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society</i> , London
M	Microfilm
MS	Manuscript
MSS	Manuscripts
p.	page
PNM	Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur
RIMA	<i>Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs</i> , Sydney
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, London
TBG	<i>Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> , Batavia & S-Gravenhage
UIA	Universiti Islam Antarabangsa
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UM	Universiti Malaya
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia



Aceh in the Late 16th – Early 17th Centuries

It is well-known that trade had played an important role in developing Malacca and Aceh as port-states.¹ Trade changed Malacca from a small fishing village to a great international port in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Along the trade routes Islam came to the Malay world which turned Malacca into an international Islamic centre in the region.² After the capture of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511, Malacca's role as an international port and Islamic centre was taken over by Aceh, which reached the peak of its glory under Sultan Iskandar Muda and Sultan Iskandar Thani in the first half of the seventeenth century. From a small coastal settlement in the north of Sumatera which was mainly based on pepper and other spice products, Aceh was transformed into a great power and international port.³ The location of Aceh on the trading routes of the Straits of Malacca made the port highly popular to traders, merchants from Europe, Arabia, China, India, Persia, and many other

¹ See Schrieke (1957), Meilink-Roelofs (1962), Naguib al-Attas (1966), Reid (1975, and [1993(b)], Eleanor Selling (1980), Denys Lombard (1986), Arun Kumar DasGupta (1962), Muhammad Yusoff Hashim [1992(a)] and Chaudhuri (1997). Aceh is situated in the north part of Sumatera Island, now a province of the Indonesian Republic.

² Many views have been given by scholars regarding the history of the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago. It is believed that Islam in the Malay world began with the first Islamic state of Perlak in 225 A.H./840. From Perlak, Islam spread to Pasai and to other parts of Malay Archipelago. In Aceh, especially during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636) many mosques and religious centres were systematically built, from the *meunasah*, *rangkang*, *dayah*, and *Jami'ah Baiturrahman*. See Fatimi (1963), Naguib al-Attas (1966), Drewes (1968), Brakel (1970), Hasjmy (1978), Wan Hussein Azmi (1980) and Azyumardi Azra (1992).

³ Aceh was one of the largest pepper producers in Southeast Asia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Eleanor Selling, 1980).

countries interacted in doing their business there. This was the situation in Aceh shortly before and after the coming of Nuruddin al-Raniri to the region.

The glory of Aceh as a great power and an international port during the seventeenth century may be traced back from its early stages, as narrated in *Hikayat Aceh*. This text begins with an ancient story about two feuding dynasties who ruled Aceh, that is the dynasty of Mahkota Alam founded by Munawwar Syah and the dynasty of Dar al-Kamal founded by Inayat Syah, and according to the text, both dynasties were united by Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam ("Crown of the World").⁴ But, as is well known, it was Sultan Ali Mughayat Syah (1514–1528) who had laid the real foundations of the Sultanate of Aceh by uniting the independent port-states of Pidir, Daya, Lamri, Barus and Pasai into one, known as Aceh Darussalam.⁵ Military expeditions continued under the rule of other sultans, including the war against the Portuguese, which was understood to be a Holy War. The Acehnese Empire then expanded greatly under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), including the capture of several states in the Malay Peninsula such as Johore (1613), Pahang (1617), Kedah (1619), Perak (1620) as well as Nias (1624).

Sultan Iskandar Muda is also remembered for his contribution to the development and modernisation of Aceh. During his reign, Aceh developed greatly and became a prosperous country, a cosmopolitan state and a commercial centre in the Malay Archipelago.⁶ The capital of the sultanate, Banda Aceh Darussalam, became the most important city and attracted many foreign countries to form relations with the sultan. From Western officers and travelers who stayed in Aceh between 1600–1636, we know that, there were many foreigners in the state, such as the Turks, Persians, Indians, Arabs, Chinese and

⁴ According to *Hikayat Aceh*, Sultan Iskandar Muda's father was from the dynasty of Mahkota Alam and his mother from the dynasty of Dar al-Kamal. A genealogy of the Acehnese rulers will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of this book. See Figure 1.

⁵ See *The Cambridge History of Islam*. Vol. 2 (1970: 127).

⁶ Some historical information about the grandeur of early seventeenth century Aceh and during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636) may be found in the works of many Western officers or travellers who stayed or sojourned in Aceh during that time, such as the French Francois Martin (1602) and Augustin de Beaulieu (1620–1621), the Dutch Frederik de Houtman (1599–1601), the Portuguese Diogo do Couto (1611), Antonio Van Diemen (1637), the British John Davis (1599–1601), James Lancaster (1602), Thomas Best (1613), Downtown (1615) and Peter Mundy (1637–1638). See some discussions of their reports in Denys Lombard (1981 and 1986), Arun Kumar DasGupta (1962), Mohammad Said (1981), Takeshi Ito (1984) and Reid (1995). Beaulieu and Peter Mundy's reports could be the best portrait that we have of Sultan Iskandar Muda. See the Malay translation of Beaulieu's reports in Denys Lombard (1981: 35–64) and the English translation in Reid (1995: 64–81). Peter Mundy's description of Aceh and Sultan Iskandar Muda may be read in Temple (1914/1919).

Europeans, living there in their own communities.⁷ In the Bodleian Library, Oxford, there are four preserved letters from the Acehese sultans to the British dignitaries authorizing them to trade in Aceh: three letters from Sultan Alauddin Syah (1589–1604) to Queen Elizabeth I (MS Douce Or.e.5), Harry Middleton (MS Douce.e.5) and James Lancaster (MS Douce Or.e.5) in 1602, and a letter from Sultan Iskandar Muda to King James I in 1615 (MS Douce.e.4). These letters are examples of the foreigners interest in the Acehese sultans during that time. The letter from Sultan Iskandar Muda to King James I is especially important because its contents reveal the "formal" salutation regarding the sovereignty of the Acehese ruler to the British King (Gallop & Arps, 1991: 34): "...are devoted to describing the majesty of the sultan, his great wealth and the breadth of his dominions."⁸

Generally, Acehese society during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thani may be divided into three main groups: the royal family, the nobles and the commoners. The first two groups mainly lived in the surroundings of the court/city, whereas the latter mainly lived in the rural areas (*gampong*) working mainly as fishermen or farmers. The king was the head of state. He was assisted by many nobles, known as *Orangkaya* (the mercantile elite) and *Uleebalang* (the lords of the country, the territorial chiefs or the war leaders).⁹ The centre of administration

⁷ About the relationship between Aceh and Turkey, see Reid (1969) and Denys Lombard (1986: 288). To my mind, the great foreign influence in Aceh may be seen in the long description of "Taman Ghairah" in *Bustan al-Salatin*, as a symbolic intermixture of influence between the Malays, Chinese, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Indians, and Europeans.

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countries interacted in doing their business there. This was the situation in Aceh shortly before and after the coming of Nuruddin al-Raniri to the region.

The glory of Aceh as a great power and an international port during the seventeenth century may be traced back from its early stages, as narrated in *Hikayat Aceh*. This text begins with an ancient story about two feuding dynasties who ruled Aceh, that is the dynasty of Mahkota Alam founded by Munawwar Syah and the dynasty of Dar al-Kamal founded by Inayat Syah, and according to the text, both dynasties were united by Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam ("Crown of the World").⁴ But, as is well known, it was Sultan Ali Mughayat Syah (1514–1528) who had laid the real foundations of the Sultanate of Aceh by uniting the independent port-states of Pidir, Daya, Lamri, Barus and Pasai into one, known as Aceh Darussalam.⁵ Military expeditions continued under the rule of other sultans, including the war against the Portuguese, which was understood to be a Holy War. The Acehnese Empire then expanded greatly under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), including the capture of several states in the Malay Peninsula such as Johore (1613), Pahang (1617), Kedah (1619), Perak (1620) as well as Nias (1624).

Sultan Iskandar Muda is also remembered for his contribution to the development and modernisation of Aceh. During his reign, Aceh developed greatly and became a prosperous country, a cosmopolitan state and a commercial centre in the Malay Archipelago.⁶ The capital of the sultanate, Banda Aceh Darussalam, became the most important city and attracted many foreign countries to form relations with the sultan. From Western officers and travelers who stayed in Aceh between 1600–1636, we know that, there were many foreigners in the state, such as the Turks, Persians, Indians, Arabs, Chinese and

⁴ According to *Hikayat Aceh*, Sultan Iskandar Muda's father was from the dynasty of Mahkota Alam and his mother from the dynasty of Dar al-Kamal. A genealogy of the Acehnese rulers will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of this book. See Figure 1.

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This book by Jelani Harun is rich in knowledge and fresh ideas, new findings and earlier unknown facts. From now on it will be impossible to write about Islamic literature of the Malay world without reference to this thoughtful and erudite book.

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