

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Since Islam was first revealed in the Arabian Peninsula, it is often simply assumed that Islam belongs only to the Arabs and only the Arabian Peninsula has the stable core of Islamic traditions, while the regions outside the Peninsula have no 'real Islam'. In reality, historically the links or international networks between the Malay-Indonesian world and Middle East have long existed since the earliest time of the advent of Islam, evident from the Islamization process that had taken place.

In the process of Islamization of the Malay Archipelago, it is generally believed that Islam and Sufism were closely linked and inter-related. Dutch scholar, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje<sup>1</sup> and the Malay scholar Professor Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas for example both believe that some form of mysticism was introduced simultaneously with the introduction of Islam into the Archipelago. Since then, Islam in the Archipelago was more of *Ṣūfī* oriented than the mainstream Islam.<sup>2</sup> The accurate year of the introduction of Sufism in the region however, could not be precisely ascertained.

Quite interestingly to note that the presentation of Islam to the indigenous people was in the form of *Ṣūfī* metaphysical teachings involving around the nature of God, of the universe, of man, of creation, or in short, of reality as a whole.<sup>3</sup> In Aceh, the public discussion of the problematic nature such as the

---

<sup>1</sup> He was was a Dutch scholar of Oriental cultures and languages and Advisor on Native Affairs to the colonial government of the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia). He lived from 8 February 1857 until 26 June 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Hurgronje, *The Achenese*, 9-10; Al-Attas, *Some Aspects*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, xv.

permanent archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*) initiated by two scholars from Mecca namely, Shaykh Abū al-Khayr ibn Shaykh ibn Ḥajar<sup>4</sup> and Shaykh Muhammad al-Yamanī in 987/1580, had aggravated the state of confusion of the general public.<sup>5</sup> While on the west coast of Northern Sumatra, there flourished the greatest Malay Ṣūfī poet, Hamzah al-Fansūrī, who al-Attas called as 'the first man to set the Ṣūfī doctrines and metaphysics in Malay'.<sup>6</sup>

The Sufism that prevalent and widely propagated then was in the form of *wujūdiyyah* doctrine identical to the *waḥdat al-wujūd* attributed to Ibn 'Arabī (d.637/1240). Early Malay scholars like Hamzah al-Fansūrī (d.1015/1607) and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī (d.1039/1630) were among the forerunners of this doctrine. This group was vehemently opposed by scholars represented by people like Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī (d.1068/1658) and moderately by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkilī (d.1104/1693).

Modern scholars like al-Attas, for example, believes that the critics have misunderstood the teachings of the *wujūdiyyah* proponents such as Ibn 'Arabi and al-Fansūrī. Riddell concludes al-Attas observation as the following:

Al-Attas is a vigorous advocate for the orthodoxy of Hamzah's teachings, arguing that later accusations of heresy against Hamzah were in fact undeserved. He asserts that Hamzah reputations had been sullied by eager disciples who had taken Hamzah's monistic teachings much further than the great writer himself would have agreed to.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> He was the author of a book called *Al-Sayf al-Qāṭi* dealing with third metaphysical category between being and non-being, see al-Attas, *Commentary*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, x.

<sup>7</sup> Riddell, 133.

The vocal critic of al-Fansūrī was al-Ranīrī. Al-Ranīrī mentions in his work *Tibyān* on how he engaged in debate for several days with “deviating and strayed *wujūdiyyah* from among the disciples of the misguided Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī and banished them forever”.<sup>8</sup>

Around the eighteenth century, there rose a group of Malay scholars who tried to reconcile these two conflicting groups and harmonise the teachings. Among the prominent ones are ‘Abd al-Samad al-Falimbānī<sup>9</sup> (d.1202/1788), the scholar that this work will be discussing, together with him were people like Muhammad Nafīs ibn Idrīs al-Banjārī (d.1147/1735) and Dāwūd ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Fatānī (d.1263/1847).

These scholars tried to harmonise the *wujūdiyyah* approach with that of mainstream Islam by presenting the correct interpretation of the Ṣūfī metaphysical doctrine. In their attempt to resolve the differences of the two opposing trends, al-Falimbānī brought to the Malay world for the first time the teachings of a moderate and sober Ṣūfī scholar, Hujjāt al-Islam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).<sup>10</sup> Since then for many centuries, al-Falimbānī has left great impact on the development of Islam and the Muslims in the Archipelago. It is even still felt until this present days where his books are still being widely read in many traditional

---

<sup>8</sup> *Tibyān*, 3-5; Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Sometimes also spelled as “al-Palembani”, “al-Palimbani”, “al-Palembangi” or “al-Falimbānī”. Palembang is actually a city on the southern side of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It is the capital of the Sumatera Selatan province. The city was once the capital of the ancient, partly Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya. In colonial times, the Dutch gained control of Palembang. This is the place where al-Falimbānī was born and hence the *nisba*. Al-Falimbānī also addresses himself as ‘Abd al-Samad al-Jāwī al-Falimbānī, as in his *Hidayatus Salikin Sheikh Abdus Shamad al-Falimbani* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2002), 1, henceforth this work is abbreviated as *Hidāyah*. To indicate that he comes from the Malay Archipelago since the Arabs then called those who came from this region as the “Jāwis” (originally to mean Javanese). In spite of the variations in the usage of the word, they all refer to the same place i.e. Palembang. However, for the sake of consistency the spelling “Al-Falimbānī”, will be used throughout this work.

<sup>10</sup> See R.O. Winstedt in his *The Malays*, 42; Drewes, *Directions*, 35; and in el-Muhammady in *Peradaban*, 168.

schools, *pondoks*, *madrasahs*, mosques and *suraus* throughout Malaysia, particularly.<sup>11</sup>

Being one of the most prominent scholars of the Malay world, al-Falimbānī indubitably had contributed tremendously to the propagation of Islam and the spread of Sufism in the region, in the manner taught by al-Ghazālī.

This research analyses some aspects of al-Falimbānī's spiritual thoughts. It discusses among other things al-Falimbānī's concept of knowledge and spiritual education, psychology and cosmology. This work then attempts to answer several major criticisms raised by the modern reformers and critics of al-Falimbānī's metaphysical teachings. Prior to that, al-Falimbānī's biographical details are also scrutinised and re-visited again in order to ascertain various information about him which are vague. The impact of al-Falimbānī's predecessors have had on the Muslims and Islam in the Archipelago which al-Falimbānī eventually inherited.

In order to gain an insight into the religious doctrines which were prevalent and dominant during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is unavoidable for us to also deal with the teachings of scholars like al-Fanṣūrī, al-Sumatrānī, al-Singkīlī, and al-Maqassārī. Hopefully by analysing their thoughts we could understand the situation then better.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> This is confirmed from several interviews conducted with the principals of traditional schools (*pondoks*) such as Dr. Luqman Hj Abdullah, Mudir of Pondok Rahmaniyyah, Pasir Mas Kelantan; Ustaz Fadzli al-Yamani a principal of his own *pondok* at Kg Baru Kuala Lumpur. He also teaches *Siyār al-Sālikīn* at a mosque in Taman Seri Gombak Selangor. An interview also conducted with Dr Salleh Hj Ahmad, a former lecturer of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) who admitted teaching al-Falimbānī's works at several mosque around Klang Valley.

<sup>12</sup> Riddell, 103.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The idea of this research springs from the so-called “accusations” that al-Falimbānī’s teachings contain some elements of *wujūdiyyah*. While, at the same time he was considered as the first scholar responsible in bringing the teachings of al-Ghazālī into this region. This situation is quite perplexed and warrants further research and investigation.

Al-Falimbānī is no ordinary scholar as he wrote quite an extensive of works and has left great influence on the Malay Muslims particularly with his two celebrated works *Siyar al-Sālikīn* and *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*. It is often thought that both works are a direct translation of al-Ghazālī’s works *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulum al-Dīn* and *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* respectively. In relation to that too, al-Falimbānī is generally regarded as a translator of al-Ghazālī and mere replicated what al-Ghazālī has said. This however is not quite true as we shall prove in the succeeding chapters. Al-Falimbānī himself is a unique scholar and an ‘intellectual product’ of many Ṣūfī masters whom he had studied with and directly influenced him.

Hence, the problem statement would be:

- Who is al-Falimbani? As to date, there is no complete biography of al-Falimbani, especially written in English.
- Is it true the teachings of al-Falimbani is often said to contain elements of *wujūdiyyah*?
- Is it true al-Falimbani only replicate what al-Ghazali had taught?
- Who has influenced al-Falimbani apart from al-Ghazali, if there is any?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are the following:

- a) To provide expository account - as comprehensive and detailed as possible, of the life, influences and spiritual thoughts of ‘Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani.
- b) To discuss al-Falimbānī’s concept of knowledge and spiritual education.
- c) To elaborate on al-Falimbānī’s concept of spiritual psychology and cosmology.
- d) To analyse al-Falimbānī’s concept of Seven Stages of Being, its origin and relation with the previous *wujūdiyyah* doctrines of al-Fanṣurī and al-Sumatrānī.
- e) To evaluate arguments from those who are against the teachings of *wujūdiyyah* and those who support them.

### 1.4. Importance of the Research

As one of the most prominent Malay scholars of the eighteenth century, many local as well as international scholars have written about him in various ways and contexts. But it does not mean the research of him has been exhaustive as many more aspects of his teachings, his life, and his works have not been studied. Just as new works and doctoral researches written about Shakespeare and al-Ghazālī are

still flourishing every year in the East and the West in spite of the fact that hundreds have already been written about them. There are always new perspectives and new interpretations can be deduced from great scholars like them.

Some of works already written about al-Falimbānī, particularly the most important ones will be highlighted in our literature review.<sup>13</sup> As far as is known, in terms of a comprehensive exposition and commentary of al-Falimbānī's life, education, and spiritual teachings as revealed in the texts of his works being written in English language, this study perhaps represents the first undertaking of such a task.<sup>14</sup> Hopefully, with this research more studies on al-Falimbānī could be made to benefit from his rich knowledge.

## 1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Research

This scope and limitations of this work is as follows:

---

<sup>13</sup> One deserving mention as being above the others is perhaps a dissertation of Megawati Moris submitted in June 2007 to the International Islamic University Malaysia bearing the title *The Influence of al-Ghazzālī on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Thinkers and Their Works, with an analysis of Shaykh 'Abd Samad al-Palimbānī's Siyar al-Sālikīn, A Malay Rendition of the Mukhtasar Ihya' Ulum al-Dīn*, henceforth, *The Influence*. Prior to that of M.Chatib Quzwain's dissertation submitted in 1984 at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia which was later published under the title *Mengenal Allah: Suatu Studi Ajaran Tasawwuf Shaikh Abdus-Samad al-Palimbani*" (Selangor: Thinker's Library Sdn. Bhd., 2003), henceforth *Mengenal*.

<sup>14</sup> Works written in European languages that discuss al-Falimbānī's are many but in piecemeal and not comprehensive. We will briefly mention the most important works in English in our literature review. such as those ones by G.W.J. Drewes (1977), *Directions for Travellers on the Mystic Path* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, henceforth abbreviated *Directions*; Peter Riddell (2001), *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*, London: Hurst & Company henceforth abbreviated *Transmission*; Azyumardi Azra (2004), *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks on Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, henceforth cited as *Networks*; R.Michael Feener's paper at *International Conference on Cultural Exchange and Transformation in the Indian Ocean World* in UCLA on 5-6<sup>th</sup> April 2002 entitled "Palimbānī/ al-Jawi: The Life of a Muslim Scholar in the Eighteenth-Century Indian Ocean Networks; another paper by Feener entitled "South East Asian Localisations of Islam and Participation within a Global Umma, c.1500-1800" written for *New Cambridge History of Islam* (Volume 3).

a) To primarily study al-Falimbānī's *Siyar al-Salikin*<sup>15</sup> with emphasis on his spiritual and metaphysical thoughts. While his other works will also be referred to whenever relevant to the discussion. Cross reference to al-Ghazālī's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Dīn* is a necessity. It is beyond the scope of this research however, to delve into various manuscripts of al-Falimbānī and making textual critical analysis of them.

b) The title "Some Aspects of Spiritual Thoughts of Shaykh Al-Falimbānī" denotes that not all aspects of al-Falimbānī's spiritual thoughts will be studied in this modest work. Spiritual thoughts that we shall concentrate are only of three categories namely: (i) spiritual education, (ii) spiritual psychology and (iii) spiritual cosmology. While other spiritual thoughts that al-Falimbānī might have touched in his works will not be discussed here. Neither this work will deal with al-Falimbānī's teachings on jurisprudence (*fiqh*) where he devotes quite extensively of his *Siyar* and *Hidāyat* explaining on this subject.

## 1.6 Literature Review

As we have mentioned earlier, works written on al-Falimbānī are quite substantial but they discuss different facets of al-Falimbānī, limited in scope and piecemeal. Nonetheless, these works undoubtedly will be a great source for cross-reference.

The most recent study on al-Falimbānī to the best of our knowledge is by Shohana binti Hussin for the work entitled "*Pemikiran Pembangunan Modal Insan dalam Kitab Hidāyah al-Sālikīn: Kajian Teks dan Kontekstual*" which was submitted to the University of Malaya in 2010 as a doctoral dissertation. The difference between Shohana's work and ours is that her study focuses more on al-

---

<sup>15</sup> Sometimes also written as *Sair al-Sālikīn*.



Falimbānī's *Hidāyah al-Sālikīn*. In her studies, Shohana discusses on human development and not on the aspects that we are focusing, spiritual thoughts.

While Megawati Moris's work entitled *The Influence of al-Ghazzālī on eighteenth and nineteenth Century Malay Thinkers and their Works, with an analysis of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī's Siyar al-Sālikīn, A Rendition of the Mukhtaṣar Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, a doctoral dissertation (PhD) submitted to the International Islamic University Malaysia, June 2007 stresses more on the influence of al-Ghazālī on eighteenth and nineteenth century Malay thinkers, including al-Falimbānī. The emphasis of Megawati's work is quite different from ours where we concentrate solely on al-Falimbānī's spiritual thoughts while Megawati was more on al-Ghazālī's influence on the Malay Thinkers, with al-Falimbānī's works is one of them. On the main issue that is discussed in this work, of Seven Degrees of Being for example, is only discussed in passing in Chapter 4 of Megawati's works. While the criticisms on the other hand have not been dealt with at all.

Prior to this, Mohd. Adli bin Mohamed Amin also worked on al-Falimbani when he came up with a master thesis submitted to University of Malaya in 1998 entitled, *Suatu Kajian Analisis Terhadap Beberapa Fahaman Syeikh 'Abd as-Samad al-Falimbānī Dalam Tasawuf Dengan Merujuk Kitab Siyar al-Sālikīn*. This work is interesting indeed for perhaps it was the earliest academic studies conducted on this great scholar. It serves as a structural basis on the study of al-Falimbānī which has benefited later researchers. However, it lacks on in-depth analysis on al-Falimbānī's mystical teachings.

M. Chatib Quzwain also contributed a lot to the study of al-Falimbānī with his work entitled *Mengenal Allah: Suatu Studi Ajaran Tasawwuf Shaikh Abdus-*

*Samad al-Palimbani* published by Thinker's Library in 2003. In this work, however, Quzwain is more concerned with the degrees of *maqām* and *ḥāl* such as repentance (*tawbah*), fear (*khawf*), hopeful (*raja'*) and others.

Writings of Allahyarham Wan Mohd. Shaghir Wan Abdullah on al-Falimbāni are indispensable for the study of Islam and scholars of Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, in spite of them being sometimes regarded by certain scholars as lack of credibility and require one to use them with caution.<sup>16</sup> While certain statements made by Shaghir in his works may require further investigation to be substantiated and verified, nonetheless his works are rich of valuable information taken from rare manuscripts of his personal collection, useful for scholarly academic writings. Shaghir is one of a few local scholars who has written quite a substantial number of works on al-Falimbāni, all of which are in Malay.

The main ones are *Hidayatus Salikin Sheikh Abdus Shamad al-Falimbani*<sup>17</sup> which is mainly the Romanised version of al-Falimbāni's work originally written in Jawi script. In this work, Shaghir has merely re-written al-Falimbāni's work on *Hidayat* from Jawi into Roman script without giving any commentary on the contents, except very few.

Shaghir also published another work *Syeikh Abdush Shamad al-Falimbani Shufi Yang Syahid fi Sabilillah*<sup>18</sup> discussing the concept of Holy War (*Jihad*) propagated by al-Falimbāni. Al-Falimbāni was said to have written the work when he came to know that the Muslims of Southern Thailand, Pattani, had been attacked by the Buddhist Siamese. *Al-'Urwatul Wutsqa Sheikh Abdus Shamad al-Falimbani:*

---

<sup>16</sup> See for example Nico J.G. Kaptein's article in the *New Encyclopedia of Islam (Third Edition)*, s.v. "Abd al-Samad al-Palimbāni".

<sup>17</sup> Published in Kuala Lumpur by Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Published in Kuala Lumpur by Yayasan Pendidikan & Dakwah Islamiyyah al-Fathanah, 1983.

*Pegangan Yang Kukuh Golongan Shufi*<sup>19</sup> is another work by Shaghir outlining the doctrines of the Sūfis adopted by al-Falimbāni. Shaghir also writes a book on *Penyebaran Thariqah-thariqah Sufiyyah Mu'tabarah di Dunia Melayu*<sup>20</sup> discussing the spread of Sūfi orders in the Malay world.

Apart from Shaghir, Muhammad 'Uthman el-Muhammady<sup>21</sup> is another local scholar who has also written quite extensively on al-Falimbāni. One of his articles entitled "*Ajaran Tasawwuf: Sheikh 'Abd al-Samad al-Falimbāni*" had been written in a series of five parts elaborating on the teachings of al-Falimbāni and was published in "*Pengasuh*".<sup>22</sup> El-Muhammady also writes a very interesting article in English on "*The Islamic Concept of Education According to Shaykh 'Abdu's-Samad of Palembang and Its Significance in Relation to the Issue of Personality Integration*". In this article el-Muhammady explains al-Falimbāni's educational philosophy from the Sūfi perspective. It also attempts to shed light on the Sūfi doctrine predominant in the region in those days, propounded by Muḥammad ibn Faḍlillah al-Burhānpūrī<sup>23</sup> known as "Seven Stages" or "Seven Grades" (Malay: Martabat Tujuh), an adaptation of Ibn al-'Arabi's *wahdat al-wujūd*. This concept will be further elaborated in our succeeding chapters.

---

<sup>19</sup> Published in Kuala Lumpur by Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Published in Kuala Lumpur: by Khazanah Fathaniyyah, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> El-Muhammady passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013, two days after this work was successfully defended. May Allah have mercy on his soul.

<sup>22</sup> This journal is published by Kelantan Islamic Religious Council (MAIK). Part one of the article appeared in issue No.507 (Nov-Dec 1990), Part Two No.508 (Jan 1991), Part Three 509 (Feb. 1991), Part Four No.510 (March 1991) and Part Five No. 511 (April 1991).

<sup>23</sup> He is a Gujerati who, according to Brockelmann, died in 1620, see Vide Brockelmann: *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1898-1942), Supp.II, 617, henceforth GAL. Al-Burhanpuri's influence in the Archipelago was spread through his book *al-Tuhfat al-Mursalat ila Rūh al-Nabi*. The work has been translated by A.H.Johns (1965) as "The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet" Canberra: The Australian National University. The book will be frequently cited in this work and abbreviated as *Tuhfat*.

There are several Indonesian scholars who have written excellent piece of works on al-Falimbānī. The leading one is by Professor Dr. Azyumardi Azra, who briefly talked on al-Falimbānī in his dissertation published as *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth*.<sup>24</sup> While other works of Azra are like *Jaringan Global dan Lokal: Islam Nusantara*.<sup>25</sup> In both works Azra only briefly commented about al-Falimbānī's networks and connection, together with many other local scholars.

Other works are like those of Ahmad Purwadaksi's dissertation entitled *Ratib Samman dan Hikayat Syekh Muhammad Samman*, submitted to Fakultas Sastra UI, Jakarta in 1992 that discusses the "ratib" of al-Falimbānī's teacher, Muḥammad Sammān; and Shamsuddin Siddik with his *Hidāyat al-Sālikin*<sup>26</sup> which he submitted in 1983 to the Department of al-Qur'ān and Sunnah, National University of Malaysia for the award of bachelor degree. He focuses on the authenticating the *hadith* aspect of the al-Falimbānī's work which includes evaluating the authenticity of *hadith (takhrij al-hadith)* quoted by al-Falimbānī primarily in *Hidāyat*. Last but not least is the work by an Nyimas Umi Kalsum who wrote an article entitled *Kitāb al-Tuhfat al-Ragibin wa al-Radd 'alā 'Aqidah al-Wujūdiyyah bi Fālimbānj fi al-Qarn al-Thāmin 'Ashar al-Milādi*,<sup>27</sup> mainly concentrating on one of the works

---

<sup>24</sup> Azyumardi Azra (2004), *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth*, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press. The Indonesia version of the work entitled *Jaringan Ulama'*: Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII, Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia (Edisi Revisi)(Bandung: Mizan, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Azyurmadi Azra (2002), *Jaringan Global dan Lokal: Islam Nusantara*, Bandung: Mizan, being the translation of his original work in English entitled *Historical Islam: Indonesian Islam in Global and Local Perspectives*.

<sup>26</sup> Shamsuddin Siddik (1990), *Hidayah al-Sālikin*, Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press.

<sup>27</sup> *Studia Islamika* (Jakarta) 11:3 (2004)

attributed<sup>28</sup> to al-Falimbāni, *Tuhfāt al-Rāghibin*. In this work, the author tries to respond to various attacks against the teachings of *wujūdiyyah*. Scholars have differed however, whether the work is really authored by al-Falimbāni or his contemporaries. This issue shall be dealt with in details in Chapter 3 on sub-topic “His Works”.

Zulkefli Aini’s “*Doktrin Nūr Muhammad di Alam Melayu: Kajian Terhadap Pemikiran Hamzah Fansūrī, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī dan ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fansūrī*”, is another interesting work discussing the *wujūdiyyah* in the Malay region. It is a doctoral dissertation (PhD) submitted to University of Malaya in 2008. It concentrates on the three Malay *wujūdiyyah* scholars Hamzah Fansūrī, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fansūrī. However, it does not touch on al-Falimbāni’s thoughts.

As to the works of the Orientalists on al-Falimbāni, the earliest information that mentions about al-Falimbāni in the West appeared in Brockelmann’s GAL Supp. II, 966. Ph.S. van Ronkel then includes this information in his Supplement Catalogue Rab. Mss. Batavia. P.Voorhoeve then writes about al-Falimbāni in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* a brief one paragraph introduction of this scholar.<sup>29</sup> Nico J.G. Kaptein then has extended it in the third edition of *The New Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

However, the Orientalist who has written quite a lengthy discussion al-Falimbāni is R.Michael Feener who presented a paper at *International Conference on Cultural Exchange and Transformation in the Indian Ocean World* in UCLA on

---

<sup>28</sup> We will deal with the differences on opinions among the scholars later, on the authenticity of this work said to be written by al-Falimbāni.

<sup>29</sup> *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1995), s.v. “‘Abd al-Samad B. ‘Abd Allāh al-Palimbāni”.

5-6<sup>th</sup> April 2002 entitled “Palimbāni / al-Jawi: The Life of a Muslim Scholar in the Eighteenth-Century Indian Ocean Networks”. Feener concentrates on the biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaqāt*), specifically the one written by ‘Abd al-Rahmān bin Sulayman al-Ahdāl (d. 1250/1835) entitled “*Al-Nafas al-Yamāni*”. His other paper entitled “*South East Asian Localisations of Islam and Participation within a Global Umma, c.1500-1800*” written for New Cambridge History of Islam (vol. 3) is basically historical in context.

Martin van Bruinessen also makes cursory remarks about al-Falimbāni in various of his works such as “Origins and development of the Sufī orders (*tarekat*) in Southeast Asia”<sup>30</sup> and also in “*Mencari Ilmu dan Pahala di Tanah Suci: Orang Nusantara Naik Haji*”<sup>31</sup> and finally his “The tariqa Khalwatiyya in South Celebes”.<sup>32</sup>

Other important works on al-Falimbāni are such as the study of al-Falimbāni’s concept of *Jihād* by Norhaidi in his work on *Al-Jihād fi Sabil Allah: A Study on the Fatwa of ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbāni Concerning Holy War for the Cause of Allah* submitted to Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS), Rijks Universiteit Leiden; the study in Russian is done by Wan Jamaluddin who made a survey on al-Falimbāni’s works, mainly the work of *Tuḥfat al-Rāghibin* for his doctoral dissertation entitled *Sufism in Indonesian History: ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbāni, religious thinker of the 18<sup>th</sup> century* submitted in 2003 to Oriental Faculty, The State University of Saint Petersburg, Oriental, Russia.

---

<sup>30</sup> *Studia Islamika* (Jakarta), vol.1, no.1 (1994), 1-23.

<sup>31</sup> *Ulumul Qur’an* (Jakarta) vol II No 5, 1990, 42- 49.

<sup>32</sup> Harry A. Poeze en Pim Schoorl (eds), *Excursies in Celebes. Een bundel bijdragen bij het afscheid van J. Noorduynd...* Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1991, 251-269.

## 1.7 Methodology of the Research

The method by which this work attempts to proceed is the usual methods of commentary and comparison based on the works of al-Falimbānī and other scholars. It is more of library research method and textual studies. The focus of our analysis especially in Chapter Six is a section from the fourth volume of al-Falimbānī's *Siyar al-Sālikīn* where this section has been criticised as being influenced by *wahdatul wujud*. In this research we employ the following methodology:

- a) Library research: Al-Falimbānī works will be thoroughly studied and analysed. Though manuscript texts are also referred to, however, at this stage it is felt that the printed original works of al-Falimbānī are sufficient enough as this research is not meant to be textual studies but rather conceptual. We have discovered that what is contained in the manuscripts are more or less the same as found in the printed works. We have no knowledge if there is anymore manuscripts not yet available in the printed forms.
- b) After analysing the works of al-Falimbānī, the ideas are compared to the teachings of the great scholars like al-Ghazālī and al-Sammān in order to determine the influence of these scholars on him.
- c) The secondary works like those of Megawati, Quzwain, Adli and others are also analysed and compared.

## 1.8 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter One will lay down the Introduction while Chapter Two will begin with the analysis on the Intellectual and Religious Milieu in the Seventeenth / Eighteenth Century. This analysis is crucial in order to better understand al-Falimbānī's thought and situate him in the context of intellectual milieu then in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the Third Chapter, all available resources on al-Falimbānī's life, his teachers, his education, his influences will be compiled from scattered information about him and analysed in order to come up with a comprehensive exposition and detailed account of al-Falimbānī's biography. The influences of scholars like al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī and al-Sammān on al-Falimbānī's thought by means of the usual methods of commentary in which explanation of his ideas and teachings will be largely guided by comparisons with similar ideas and teachings found in the writings of these scholars. The socio-political milieu in the eighteenth century surrounding al-Falimbānī, such as Palembang, Kedah, Arabian Peninsula and Zabid in Yemen will also be explored. In doing so, we will be able to see how the transmission of knowledge from the Arabian reached the Malay Archipelago and the intellectual networking that al-Falimbānī had established in his lifetime.

In the Fourth Chapter, al-Falimbānī's conception on knowledge and spiritual education is analysed while in the Fifth Chapter discusses al-Falimbānī's Spiritual Psychology and Cosmology.

In Chapter Six, we will deal at length on al-Falimbānī's controversial issue of Seven Stages in relation to the doctrine of *wujūdiyyah* allegedly originated from Ibn 'Arabi such as *waḥdat al-wujūd* or its Malay version Seven Stages of Being, i.e. *Martabat Tujuh*. In some instances where warranted, semantic and linguistic



analysis on selection of Malay keywords will be employed in order to fully grasp the conceptual system of al-Falimbānī's mystical teachings. In this chapter, we have brought forth most of the main arguments laid down by the contemporary scholars who are against the teachings of al-Falimbānī or *wujūdiyyah* teachings in general. At the same time, we present the arguments supporting the teachings of al-Falimbānī and the true *wujūdiyyah* .

The Final Chapter will wrap up and conclude our findings.