CHAPTER TWO

INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS MILIEU

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish an intellectual and religious context of al- Falimbānī in the sixteenth until eighteenth centuries. Through understanding the historical milieu, one would then have a better picture on why things happened as they did.

In the case of al-Falimbānī, the intellectual and religious milieu surrounding him has shed some light on why certain works were written on such an such time, as works usually were not authored out of the vacuum. They were in fact reflections of or responses to the situation or phenomenon encountered by the author himself. In this connection, we find historian like Johann Herder, argued that each culture and historical period in history "had to be understood on its own terms. While, according to George Hegel, that truth depended on historical circumstances".[1]. Hence, the surrounding situation has indirectly forced the author to come up such a work. This chapter discusses the following two main issues:

a) Chronology on the arrival of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago with its various theories;[2]

[1] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling The Truth About History*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 64.

[2] It should be mentioned at the outset that when one speaks of 'Malay Archipelago', it does not only confine to the country where now known as 'Malaysia'. It is more than that. According to Ricklefs, it constitutes the present-day territories of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Malay-speaking Southern Thailand, the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah along

b) The intellectual and religious milieu of the places where al-Falimbānī had spent his life: particularly, in the Malay Archipelago (Palembang and Kedah) and the Arabian Peninsula (Medina and Mecca), and finally a Yemeni town of Zabid and Egypt.

2.2 Chronology of Islamization Process in the Archipelago

Many works have undoubtedly been written by the western as well as eastern historians on the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago.[3] This section therefore, neither intends to repeat what has been done nor to present new discovery, but rather to collate all previous findings, analyse them and building the intellectual climate of those centuries. The importance of this chapter is by having better understanding of the intellectual atmosphere then, we could situate al-Falimbānī in the historical context of his time, and the intellectual feud between scholars.

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with the Federal Territory of Labuan, East Timor, and most of Papua New Guinea, though the last-named country is sometimes debatable due to geographical and cultural reasons. Today, the Archipelago is often referred to as South East Asia. It covers an area of more than two million kilometres square. The largest islands in the Archipelago are Borneo and Sumatra while the most widely populated island is Java. As Ricklefs says: 'the area concerned is the largest archipelago on the earth's surface', see Ricklefs, *A History,* 3. Throughout this work, the 'Malay-Indonesian Archipelago' is abbreviated as merely 'the Archipelago'.

[3] The best article and most up-to-date giving an overview and suming up all the theories on the advent of Islam to the region is by Mohd. Zain Abdul Rahman (2004) entitled 'Islam in the Malay World: A Chronological Advent of Islam to the Malay-Indonesian Archilepago' in *Jurnal Pengajian Melayu* (Universiti Malaya), vol. 14, 31-45. Others are, for example A.H. Johns (1961), 'Islam in Southeast Asia' in D.E. Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, 222; A.H. Johns (1957), 'Malay Sufism Malay Sufism as illustrated in an anonymous collection of 17th century tracts'; T.W. Arnold (1935), *The Preaching of the Muslim Faith*, 363; S.Q. Fatimi (1963), *Islam Comes to Malaysia*; G.R.Tibbets (1956), 'Pre-Islamic Arabia and South-East Asia'; R.O.Winstedt (1935), 'A History of Malay Literature'; Rauf (1964), *A Brief History of Islam With Special Reference to Malaysia*; Wan Hussein Azmi (1980), 'Islam di Malaysia: Kedatangan dan Perkembangan (Abad 7-20M)'; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1969), *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesia Archipelago*; S. Hussein Alatas (March 1963), 'On the Need for a Historical Study of Malaysian Islamisation'; Russel Jones (1979), *Ten Conversion Myths from Indonesia*; G.W.J. Drewes (1968), 'New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia'; Vincent J.H. Houben (2003), 'Southeast Asia and Islam'; Syed Farid Alatas (1985), 'Notes on various theories regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago'.

The hypotheses and theories are numerous, and hence conflicting conclusions and differences in opinions among scholars are inevitable. At this point of time, it is understandably acceptable for the scholars to come up with a conclusion based on these scanty evidences until and unless 'new data' are found that necessitate further investigation. And this would be only possible, according to Drewes, if one is willing to resume conducting the 'archaeological research in North Sumatra and painstaking study in South India – for which a thorough knowledge of Tamil language is indispensable'.[4] Otherwise, one would have to bear with all the existing sources that have been exhaustively studied and examined despite the occasionally contradicting conclusions that may result out of it eventually. Al-Attas views that scholars of the Malay World generally made inaccurate theories about Islam in the Archipelago because they began with the wrong footing. Due to that, all other theories proceeded from inaccurate assumption. In his own words, al-Attas says:

> The starting point of the historians in their attempt to reconstruct the history of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was the idea that Islam came via the trade routes. Upon this obvious fact the conclusion was quickly drawn that traders brought and disseminated Islam in this part of the world[5]

Briefly, here we shall outline a concise chronology of the period of Islamization process that took place throughout the Archipelago after the first arrival of Islam.[6] We shall see whether they were the traders, or the Ṣūfīs or the

[4] Drewes, *New Light*, 459.

[5] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (2011), *Historical Fact and Fiction.* Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Press, xii.

[6] For further details on the Islamization process of almost all parts of the Archipelago, from Kedah to Borneo and Papua New Guineas, see Ricklefs, *A History*, 3-13; Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11-17.

missionaries that involved in process. The process is in fact still continuing, albeit in varying degrees, throughout the various parts of the region.

The earliest document on this issue comes from the Chinese chronicle. The chronicles recorded that the Arab settlement began in East Sumatera, i.e. Palembang as early as 55 AH / 674 CE.[7] Some scholars regard this as a sign of the first advent of Islam in the Archipelago.[8] Others somehow believe that it only indicates nothing more than just the physical presence of the Arabs in the Archipelago by which the proselytizing process did not necessarily take place.[9] This is the period what Fatimi terms as 'incubation' because no active proselytizing process took place until the thirteenth century as we shall see later.[10]

The Leran inscription found near Gresik in East Java dated 475/1082 is generally regarded as a proof of an earliest presence of the Muslims in the Archipelago. While a Malay history book, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (Chronicles of the kings of Pasai), claims that the Pasai region of North Sumatera which covered Perlak and Samudra (now Aceh), was the first country 'below the winds' to enter Islam'.[11] According to the Chinese chronicles, the Muslims had a footing in Samudra by 679/1281 or 680/1282, ten years before the arrival or Marco Polo.[12] This evidence indicates the likelihood that Pasai was already

[7] Al-Attas believes that the Muslim traders 'had quite a considerable settlement in Canton as early as the 1st / 7th century', al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11. See also Chau Ju-Kua, Chu-fan-chi, trans.F.Hirth and W.W.Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His Works on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, (St.Petersberg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911) 14-15,18 as cited by A.Azra in *Jaringan Ulama*, 37-38.

[8] Fatimi, *Islam*, 10; Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11.

[9] T.W.Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 363-4

[10] Fatimi, *Islam*, 69.

[11] Rusell, *Hikayat*, 1.

[12] Fatimi derived from E.H. Parker, "The Island of Sumatra", in *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 3rd. series, vol.IX (1900) where he mentions that in "the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* it states that in 1282 a Chinese envoy in Quillon met a minister from the Kingdom of *Su-mu-ta* (Samudra) and pointed out that it would be a wise move if the ruler of Samudra were also

'Islamised' before Marco Polo's visit in 691/1292.[13] Hence, it would be quite inaccurate as some historians do, claiming that the arrival of Islam to Malay Peninsula started with the observation of Marco Polo during his visit to the region in 691/1292.

Pasai was already a Muslim territory by seventeenth/thirteenth century or 682/1282 during the reign of Sultān al-Malik al-Sālih who died in 697/1297 (or 707/1307).[14] When Ibn Battūtah visited Pasai in 746-7/1345-6, Islam had already gained dominance and strong foothold in the region under the rule of Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir (grandson of Sultan al-Malik al-Sālih), who Ibn Battūtah observed was 'fond of religious debates, and zealous in propagating Islam in the surrounding country by means of conquests'.[15]

Fatimi believes that beginning from 600/1204, Islam had already started to achieve political power with large scale of conversion after its long period of 'incubation' since its first arrival in the seventh century.[16] The period from seventh until eleventh centuries could be considered the first wave of Islamization process. Al-Attas shares the same opinion when he says:

> Emergence of Islam in the Malay Archipelago "came about through propagation by authorirative missionaries, understandbly slow at first at the end of the 7th century and increasing in momentum by the 12th to the 16 centuries continuing to the present day".[17]

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to send an emissary to China. Shortly after, two envoys from Samudra went to China. From their names, Hasan and Sulāyman, they were most likely Muslims, see Fatimi, *Islam*, 10 also 14.

[13] The first Sultan of Pasai died in 696/1297 or more probably in 706/1307, and his gravestone subsequently proved to be a milestone in the history of Malaysian Islam, see Fatimi, *Islam*, 29.

[14] Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11-12.

[15] Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 12.

[16] Fatimi, *Islam*, 69; Drewes, *New Light*, 443.

[17] Al-Attas, *Historical Fact*, xvii.

The Annals of Acheen, which Fatimi claims as the only Malay classical history that is definite and exact in its dates, records the following:

> On Friday the 1st of Ramadhān in the year 601 of the flight of the Holy Prophet of God, (1204 C.E.), Sultan Johan Shah came to the windward and converted the people of Acheen to the Mohammedan faith.[18]

Further, the discovery of a Terengganu inscription (*Batu Bersurat*) dated 702/1303[19] in the northeast coast of the Malay Peninsula proves earlier Muslim settlement in the Peninsula. Fatimi says:

> The Terengganu inscription is the earliest Malay text in the Arabic script which has been discovered, and is one of the first contemporary records of the introduction of Islam into any state of the Peninsula.[20]

Another region that is relevant in the context of our studies is the kingdom of Malacca,[21] on the west coast of Malay Peninsula. By 812/1409, the ruler of Malacca, through proselytizing efforts of the Muslim missionaries, had embraced Islam and married the daughter of Sultan of Pasai. Both kingdoms, Pasai and Malacca, later flourished as centres of learning and propagation of Islamic faith throughout the Archipelago.[22] We could predict well that by the time the

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[18] Fatimi, *Islam,* 38

[19] There were several attempts to date the inscription. Among them are Major H.S. Paterson, C.O. Blagden, G.W.J. Drewes and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, see *JMBRAS*, vol. 2, part 3, 1924, 252-263; cf. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Correct Date of Terengganu Inscription*. Muhammad Zainiy Uthman however, has reconfirmed the date given by al-Attas, see Muhammad Zainiy Uthman and Azlan Hashim (2010), 'The Correct Date of The Terengganu Inscription: Reconfirmed using Astronomical Computer Programs', in Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud & Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (eds.), *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam: Essays in Honor of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit UTM. The exact date according to al-Attas and reconfirmed by Zainiy is 4th Rajab 702 / 22nd February 1303.

[20] Fatimi, *Islam,* 60.

[21] It was founded by prince Parameswara of Palembang who fled Java.

[22] Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 12. Al-Attas mentions that both scholars and missionaries from all parts of the Archipelago as well as the Arabia gathered in these two kingdoms to disseminate religious knowledge. This includes the two future saints of Java, Sunan Bonang and Sunan Giri. Both of them apart from doing their missionary works, also studied under a famous Arab missionary, Mawlānā Ishāq of Pasai (Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 13). However, al-Attas did not

Portuguese conquered Malacca in 916/1511, there must have already been a significant number of Muslims.

With the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese – the first Muslim Malay kingdom that had always been an important centre for the dissemination of Islam in the Archipelago – the centre of Islamic learning and missionary began to shift to the northern part of Sumatra, Aceh, whose ruler Sultan Johan Shāh had earlier converted to Islam in 601/1204.[23] Aceh then saw itself as heir to the missionary work of Malacca.

From this brief overview, we notice that Islam did arrive in the region sometime in the seventh century CE, in spite of no active proselytizing efforts that had been recorded by then, nor was then any widespread conversion to Islam. Islam then was still in its early period. As to the first bringers of Islam to the region, it is, however, uncertain. The scholars dispute whether they were the Arabs,[24] the Indians[25] or the Persians.[26]

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agree with Shrieke's theory that the intensification of proselytizing by Muslim missionary was due to a race with Christianity (Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 198-199).

[23] Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11. It seems that Barwise and White's assertion that the ruler of Aceh embraced Islam only in the mid-15th century contradicts *The Annals of Acheen*, see J.M. Barwise and N.J. White, *A Traveller's History of Southeast Asia*, 114; cf. Fatimi, 38.

[24] The evidence is the existence of early Arab settlements in the Archipelago and the strong Arab influence that could be felt with the usage of the Arabic word 'Sultan' and many other Malay Arabised words.

[25] While the evidence of the latter, Gujerati's influence, is portrayed in the gravestones of the Malay rulers, similar to those from Gujerat, namely Cambay. One of local scholars of Gujerati origin who rise to prominence is Nūr al-Dīn bin 'Alī Hasan Jī al-Ranīrī (popularly known in Malay simply, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī). He enjoyed the patronage of the ruler, Sultān Iskandar Thānī (reigned 1636-1641), and was subsequently appointed as the Sheikh al-Islam during his reign. Another source of possible Indian influence of the early Islamization of Southeast Asia, according to Feener is the 'Labbai' – 'a Muslim Tamil mercantile sub-caste whom Massignon makes a number of references to this group in the second volume of his work.'(Feener, *Re-Examination*, 573; Massignon, *Passion*, II:276).

[26] The Persian influence is evident in the usage of Persian word "Shah" for a king even until today. Hamka, however, does not agree with this since according to him the titles of the earliest rajas of Pasai (al-Malik al-Sālih, al-Malik al-'Adil, etc.) resembled those of the Egyptian Ayyubids and not of the Persians. Not even of other contemporary Muslim rulers including those of Iran and India, M.van Bruinessen, "New Perspectives on Southeast Asian Islam?" in *BJK*, 143

Scholars such as al-Attas, Fatimi, Laffan and Azra on one side differs from Ricklefs as to whether the first bringers of Islam were the ordinary traders, or missionaries or they were the Ṣūfīs at the same time.[27] Ricklefs on the other hand does not agree with the arguments that the Ṣūfīs were involved in the spread of Islam in the early centuries.[28] Nonetheless, they seemed to agree on one thing that the Sufīs did play an active role at least in the second wave of Islamization process of the Archipelago beginning from the twelfth century onwards. One of the Sufīs who came to this region to spread Islam and actively involved in proselytizing in the second wave of Islamization was Sheikh ʻAbd Allāh ʻArif (d. 572/1177) who came to Aceh as early as 560/1165 and taught Islam to the people of Samudera-Pasai.[29] He was believed to be the student of the great Sufī, Sheikh ʻAbd al-Qadīr al- Jilānī (d. 561/1166) and was the author of the famous Sufī work, *Bahr al-Lāhut* where he discusses the Light of Muhammad (*Nūr Muḥammad*).[30]

There are in fact two conflicting opinions among the scholars as to the roles played by the Sufīs. The first group accused Islam had failed to attract large converts and mass followers at the early stage of its advent in the Archipelago, and remained in a state of 'incubation' for five centuries beginning from the seventh until after the twelve century, due to the Sufīs that emphasizes the ultimate reality

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(1987), 537; While, the management of affairs at the court of Malik al-Zāhir as observed by the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battutah who visited the Archipelago in 745/1345 on his journey from Bengal to China had the Persian elements.

[27] T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching*, 363-4; Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 11; Fatimi, *Islam*, 16; Azra, *Jaringan*, 37-38; Laffan, 'Interview with Michael Laffan: Contouring Islam in Indonesia' in *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Winter 2006, http://www.asiaquarterly.com/content/view/169/36/ accessed on 2 March 2010.

[28] Ricklefs, *A History*, 3-13.

[29] Shaghir, *Perkembangan*, 10; Further, he was responsible for giving the Arabic honorific name of Kedah as 'Dār al-Aman' (Abode of Peace), Shaghir, *al-Maʻrifa*, 1:1-2; 8-9.

[30] Shaghir, *Penutup*, 66; Shaghir, *al-Maʻrifa*, 1:1-2; 8-9.

of God, the 'Oneness of Being' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and the illusoriness of the perceived world that may have been brought into the islands during this time. Given the mystical elements of both Sufism and prevalent indigenous beliefs then, it may have been more appealing to the people to stick to their original indigenous beliefs rather than converting to Sufī Islam, which is more austere, and law-bounded versions of Islam than their Hindu-Buddhist or animistic beliefs.[31]

On the other hand, according to Ricklefs, no evidence on the existence of Ṣūfī brotherhoods in the early centuries has been found.[32] This led to scholars like al-Attas to argue the opposite, that the failure of Islam at the early stage was not due to Sufism but rather due to a strict Orthodox Sunni teachings brought by the traders which stress more on Islamic law and jurisprudence.[33] These scholars believe that if the Ṣūfīs had been there during the early centuries, then it would have been more appealing for the people to convert to Islam. This is evident with the presence of Shaykh 'Abd Allāh 'Arif in Aceh in 560/1165 and later the arrival of Shaykh Abū Ishāq during the time of Sultan Mansūr Shah of Malacca in 863/1459 had resulted in the acceleration the Islamization process.[34]

Apart from al-Attas, Azra too is of the opinion that the Ṣūfīs had in fact presented Islam which was attractive to the local people. He says:

> The Ṣūfīs' ability to present Islam in an attractive fashion, principally by emphasizing continuity rather than change in local traditional beliefs and practices, is often identified as one of the major factors accounting for conversion. This implies that the brand of Islam that spread in the region during its early period in the Archipelago was

[31] Laffan: *Contouring Islam*.

[32] Ricklefs, *A History*, 3-13.

[33] Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 186.

[34] Abū Ishāq is the author of *Durr al-manzūm*, a Sufi treatise. The work was regarded as the first Sufī literature to be brought to and taught in the Archipelago. Thereafter, more emphasis on Sufism rather than *fiqh* became noticeable in the region (Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 191-192).

> that of syncretistic Sufism which was not in all respects in accordance with the teachings of the Shari'ah.[35]

Al-Attas strongly believes that at the early stage, the law and jurisprudence played more significant role than Sufism. He draws the evidence of religious and mystical literature and concludes that the Islamization of the Archipelago could actually be divided into three phases, as follows:[36]

a) from thirteenth century until fourteenth century: conversion of the Malays in which law and jurisprudence played the major role;

b) from fifteenth century until seventeenth: major role in interpreting the religion is now passed to mysticism, dialectic and theological and

c) from late eighteenth century, continuation of phase (a) and consummation of phase (b).

If we base on al-Attas' opinion, then we could conclude that the Ṣūfīs were hardly involved at the early stage of Islamization. It was only later when the Sufī traders came in the second wave of Islamization that Islam began to be more welcomed. The teachings of Islam imbued with the Sufism flavour was well received by the Malays then, because Islam was presented more in the mystical perspective in a way, resembling the Hindu belief that the Malays held for many centuries. 'Hinduism' had already become the superstructure of their metaphysical outlook, and hence it was not that difficult for the preachers to convince the

[35] Azra, *Oppossition*, 665.
[36] N.G. Phillips, *BSOAS*, vol.35, no.1 (1972), 209. (Review)

local people to be receptive to the new religion.[37] Al-Attas, Laffan and other scholars seem to agree that positive receptiveness among the Malays mainly due to their background prior to the arrival of Islam, which was of mystical Hindu-Buddhism in origin. Laffan, for example, describes Indonesian Islam as being infused with Hindu-Buddhist or animist 'deviation''.[38] Much of the east of the Java Island, such as the isle of Bali, continues to adhere to Hinduism until now. Furthermore, if the Ṣūfī merchant-preachers were originally from India, then this would have served as an advantage as well in convincing the local Hindu Malays to embrace Islam.

In whatever case, Islam certainly began to gain its foothold sometime in the thirteenth century onwards and reached its climax in the sixteenth and seventeenth century CE when it was officially adopted by the courts of the Sultanate Kingdom of Aceh.

The fact that the Ṣūfīs are the bringers of Islam not only to this region but also to other parts of the world is recognised by most scholars. Arberry also shares the view that Sufism did play greater part in Islamizing the lands of Asia (and Africa) which the scholars (*'ulamā'*) had failed. He said:

> So it came about that Sufism won far more converts to Islam, as the remoter lands of Asia and Africa were opened up, than the erudite *'ulama'* could have helped to do; on the other hand the latter have patiently strived to educate the newly converted or semi-converted elements in the fundamental principle of the faith.[39]

[37] This contention that 'Hinduism' was a 'superstructure' of the society is debatable. Van Leur and Al-Attas believe that the Malay-Indonesian society as a whole was not a Hinduized society, rather the ruling group of the Malay-Indonesia dynasties were 'legitimized sacrally by an Indian hierocracy'. Al-Attas, *Preliminary*, 2; *Mysticism*, 186-187; J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, 108.
[38] Laffan, *Contouring Islam*,
[39] A.J.Arberry, *Sufism*, 466; cf. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, 156.

Azra, again affirms his observation on the effective role played by the Ṣūfīs in the spread of Islam. He says:

> Sufism has often been associated with the spread of Islam in the East Indies – or more conveniently the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago – particularly after the thirteenth century. Some scholars maintain that wandering Sufī shaykhs who came from certain parts of the Middle East played a crucial role in the large scale conversion of the local population to Islam from that period onwards.[40]

The Ṣūfīs were known to be missionaries since long time ago. Therefore, the Islamization of the Archipelago by the Ṣūfīs, for instance, had nothing to do with other external factors. For that reason al-Attas could not agree with Schrieke's theory that the Islamization of the Archipelago took place due to a 'race with Christianity.[41] In fact, as we have demonstrated, the Islamization process had begun much earlier than the Portuguese's invasion of Malacca in 916/1511.

The high position of Ṣūfī scholars as the transmitters of Islamic knowledge was also evident. Azra, for example, demonstrates how Indonesian scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who had studied or linked with Ṣūfī masters or associated with Ṣūfī orders (*tariqah*) were welcomed at many of the courts of the Archipelago and served as authorities of Islam in both esoteric and exoteric aspects, as we shall see in the preceding section.[42]

Another point that worthy of discussion here is that, apart from the various theories on who brought Islam to region and the role of the Ṣūfīs in the Islamization process of the Archipelago, one should also pay special attention to the 'version', as it were, of Sufism that was actually brought to this region. This is very

[40] Azra, *Oppossition*, 665.
[41] Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 198-199; N.G. Phillips, *BOAS*, 209.
[42] Laffan, *Contouring Islam*, 4.

pertinent since the general shape of Islam in the Archipelago thereafter was a consequence of this brand of Sufism, whether it was the *wujūdiyyah* or sometimes also termed as philosophical Sufism or *tasawwuf falsafī* vis-à-vis *tasawwuf sunnī*. As we shall see in the preceding section that the dominant type of Sufism prevalent in those days was that of *wujūdiyyah.*

Al-Attas not only believe that the Ṣūfīs were responsible for bringing Islam to this region but also strongly believe that they were the Arabs, particularly the *sayyid* and *shakyh* families of the Hadramawt. He claims:

> It was also the custom of the *sayyid* and *shaykh* families of Hadramawt to maintain contact not only with India, where many of the saints, Sufīs and scholars who played a major role in its conversion to Islam by missionary efforts were *sayyids* and *shayks*, but also with the Malay world, whose conversion to Islam through missionary activity was initially their work, and whose religious, spiritual, intellectual and cultural development within the fold of Islamic civilization bears their indelible imprint.[43]

We can conclude here that the scholars of the Malay world generally tend to agree that the spread of Islam in the Archipelago was chiefly due to the act of 'traders' either from the Arabia, Persia or India. They only differ on whether the traders were also 'Ṣūfīs' as claimed by some scholars such Johns and al-Attas, and secondly, whether or not the Ṣūfīs were really involved in the first wave of Islamization or only in its later part. The main issue to be highlighted here is that the Ṣūfīs, without doubt, *did* play significant roles in the spread of Islam in the Archipelago and they had left tremendous impacts on the society since then. As a result of this, Islam in the Archipelago was presented in a mystical flavour. These

[43] Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, 4; see also his *Historical Fact*, 147-148.

Ṣūfī traders who were actively proselytizing the communities seemed to bring along with them mystical Islam replete with ontological teachings as in the doctrine of '*waḥdat al-wujūd*' of Ibn 'Arabī. This doctrine was propagated by al-Falimbānī's predecessors such as al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī as have been mentioned above, who were severely criticised by al-Rānīrī. An analysis of the Malay *wujūdiyyah* and of the aforementioned two conflicting groups is presented in Chapter Six.

2.3. Al-Falimbānī's Predecessors and Their Impacts

It is not the aim of this section to delve into detail on each and every one of al-Falimbānī's predecessors but rather to select a few of them who have left tremendous impacts on the Muslims prior to the time of al-Falimbānī. This is in order to gain an insight into the religious doctrines which were predominant in the Archipelago then, and as a prelude to providing contextual and intellectual scenarios of the centuries before al-Falimbānī. It is very unfortunate however that in spite of the fact Islam might have been in the region as early as seventh century and no later than thirteenth century, the writings of Malay scholars during this formative period until fifteenth century were not available. It points to either of 'their non-existence in the first place or to the fact that they once existed but decayed over time or were destroyed'.[44] It is only during the late sixteenth century, Islamic scholarship in this region began and significant Islamic scholarly works were discovered. It is especially true in the early seventeenth century when profound social and religious change took place as a result of the ruler, 'Sultan

[44] Riddell, *Transmission*, 106.

Iskandar Muda (d.1045/1636), who had placed great importance upon the strengthening of the Islamic faith of Aceh'.[45] This includes the building of many mosques such as the famous *Bayt al-Rahmān* mosque which was later destroyed by fire, as well as the emergence of many scholars and their writings. This was the period of 'golden age' of Aceh.

The earliest documented case we have of a Malay scholar who wrote in Malay on Islamic sciences is the great poet-mystic of the late sixteenth century, Hamzah al-Fansūrī (d. *c*.1015/1607). Other equally important scholars of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī (d.1039/1630), Nūr al-Dīn al- Ranīrī (d.1068/1658), 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkilī (d.1104/1693) and finally Yusūf al-Maqassārī (d.1111/1699). These scholars can be regarded as amongst the most prominent of all early Malay Muslim scholars that we came to know. They were responsible in shaping the Islamic thought in the region for many centuries to come.[46] They were very close to the rulers, holding important offices in the Sultanate and advising the rulers on religious and administrative matters. It was an era of good leadership synergy between scholars (*ulamā'*) and leaders (*umarā'*). At the same time, they were close to the people too in the sense that they played a highly respectable role as their preachers (*du'āt),* shaping their worldview and building their social system.

[45] Riddell, *Transmission*, 103; Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[46] Riddell, for example, has listed these scholars with brief introduction about each of them and their thoughts in his work, *Transmission*, under the sub-chapter "*Prominent Malay Religious Scholars and their writings*", 103-132. Likewise Azra's discussion in his work *Networks*, centres on these figures too.

The studies on the thoughts of these Malay scholars have already been quite extensive.[47] What will be presented here is, however, only a brief overview and introduction of their main ideas and thoughts, as a prelude to the succeeding chapter, Chapter Three.

2.3.1 Hamzah al-Fansūrī

The teachings of Hamzah al-Fansūrī have been studied extensively by several scholars, namely Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, and G.W.J Drewes co-authored with L.F. Brakel.[48] Al-Attas believes that al-Fansūrī was 'the first person to explain the Ṣūfī doctrines in Malay and the first to produce systematic speculative writing in Malay'.[49] Moris shares al-Attas' claim that al-Fansurī was the first Malay thinker to have penned lofty and abstract metaphysical principles and ideas in the Malay language.[50]

Riddell, on the other hand, argues whether al-Fansūrī's writings truly represent the 'commencement of Islamic writing in Malay' since this is difficult to ascertain.[51] The absence of any surviving records pre-dating al-Fansūrī may imply two things: of their non-existence or secondly, they once existed but were

[47] The two quite recent and most valuable works are by Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia*; and Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*.

[48] See Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansūrī*. Equally important is by G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, eds. and tr., *The Poems of Hamzah Fansurī*. Al-Attas' extensive work comprises of 472 pages analysing Fansūrī's mysticism, including the translations into English with commentary of Fansūrī's three main treatises namely *Asrār al-'ārifīn* (The Secrets of the Gnostics), *Sharab al-'āshiqīn* (The Drink of Lovers) and *al-Muntahī* (The Adept) through his work, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansūrī*. See works by R.O Winstedt such as *Some Malay Mystics: Heretical and Orthodox*; and A.H. Johns, *Malay Sufism*; Other scholars are more interested in the study of Malay and Indonesian literature rather than Fansūrī's Sufī thought such as Francois Valentijn, in his work in Dutch, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien*; Dr. C. Hooykaas, *Over Malaise literatuur* which was translated into Indonesian by Raihoel Amar gelar Datoek Besar 1 entitled *Perintis sastera*; other studies include by A.Teeuw, A.Vakily, J.Bousfield and Zailan Moris.

[49] Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, x.

[50] Zailan Moris, 'Mulla Sadra and Hamzah Fansurī', *Transcendent Philosophy*, vol.8, December 2007, 98.

[51] Riddell, *Transmission,* 106.

destroyed or decayed over time as we have mentioned earlier.[52] Riddell seems to agree with Winstedt who believes that al-Fansūrī was at least the first person to write on metaphysical principles or Sufism in the form of poems,[53] and 'he was obviously a great scholar'.[54]

In spite of that, nothing much is known about the life of this great man apart from a belief that he was originally from Fansūr, also known as Barus, on the west coast of Sumatra.[55] Even though no records of his actual date of birth and of his death were found, it was surmised that he died sometime in 1590[56] or 1630[57]. What the scholars generally agreed was that al-Fansūrī a poet-mystic was born during the reign of Sultan'Alā al-Dīn Ri'ayat Shāh al-Mukammīl (r.1006-1012/1588-1604) and worked in the Sultanate of Aceh.

It has also been surmised that he died before 1016/1607.[58] He travelled extensively throughout the Muslim world, 'visiting some important centres of Islamic learning including Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Baghdad', studying from the leading Sufīs and was eventually initiated into the Qadiriyyah Sufī Order in Arabia.[59] According to Riddell, there is a documented case that the first Malay to undertake studies of the Islamic sciences is al-Fansūrī.[60]

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[52] Riddell, *Transmission*, 106.
[53] Riddell, *Transmission*, 106.
[54] Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[55] There is considerable debates among scholars on the details of Hamzah's life, see Brakel, *The Birth of Hamzah Fansuri*, responding to Al-Attas, *Mysticism*. Fansūr is an old centre of learning in southwest Aceh, see Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[56] Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, 3.
[57] Nasution *et.al*, *Ensiklopedia Islam Indonesia*, 296.
[58] Al-Attas, *New Light*, 40; *Mysticism*, 313; Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[59] Winstedt believes it occurred at Mecca or Medina, while Vakily claims it took place in Baghdad, see Riddell, *Transmission*, 104-105; Winstedt, *Some Malay Mystics*, 312; Vakily, *Sufism*, 119; Al-Attas, *Some Aspects*, 22; Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[60] Riddle, *Transmission*, 104.

Hamzah al-Fansūrī mastered Arabic, Persian and possibly Urdu.[61] It is without doubt that al-Fansūrī derived much influence from the teachings of Ibn ʻArabī[62] and al-Jīlī. The thoughts of other scholars as revealed in his writings include those of al-Bistāmī (d. 261/874), al-Baghdādī (d. 298/910), al-Hallāj (d. 309/922), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Masʻūdī (d. 515/1121), ʻAttār (d. 616/1229), Rūmī (d. 672/1273) and many others.[63] He was a prolific writer, producing not only religious treatises but also literary works in the form of prose and poems imbued with mystical ideas. Hence, he was not only regarded as one of the early Malay Sufis but also as ʻa prominent precursor of the Malay literary traditions'.[64]

He was clearly an influential figure within the Acehnese religious world and the Archipelago in general during the late sixteenth century.[65] He was appointed as the head of spiritual leaders, *Shaykh al-Islām*,[66] of the Kingdom of Aceh.[67] He is often regarded as a Ṣūfī who actively propagated Ibn ʻArabī's doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in the Malay Archipelago, together with Shams al-Dīn

[61] Azra, *Networks*, 52.
[62] The teaching is extensively studied by A.E. Affifi (1939) in his book, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid al-Dīn ibn al-ʻArabī*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[63] Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 14.
[64] Azra, *Networks*, 53.
[65] Riddell, *Transmission*, 110.
[66] The title '*Shaykh al-Islam*' in the Sultanate of Aceh was perhaps to be in tandem with the practice of the Ottoman Empire which was in power at that time. It is famously associated with Ottoman office of the *Mufti* where the two terms were used interchangeably and often together, see R.C. Repp, s.v. 'Shaykh al-Islam' in *EI2*. Ottoman governed for more than six hundred years (1290-1923) and held high in the position of *Shaykh al-Islam*. In the practice of Ottoman Caliphate, *Shaykh al-Islam* is the leader of all '*ulamā'*. He advises the Sultan or the Caliph in governing the nation and his advice are binding. He is empowered to remove the Sultan or the Caliph from his office, see ʻUmar ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ʻUmar, *al-Mashriq al-ʻArabī al-muʻāsir*, 54. According to some scholars, the Sultanate Aceh was in fact regarded as representative of the Ottoman Empire in the East in the seventeenth century. Substantial evidence can support this assertion, see for example, William Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, passim 401,446-447; also Raden Hussein Djajaningrat, *Kesultanan Aceh*, trans. Teuku Hamid, 47-48.
[67] This is based on a visit of Sir James Lancaster, the British special envoy to Aceh, in 1011/1602 who tells us that he met two notables, one of whom was the '*chiefe bishope*' appointed by the Sultan for a negotiation. Many scholars believe that the '*chiefe bishope*' was al-Fansūrī, (Azra, *Networks*, 53).

al- Sumatrānī. They have been categorised as belonging to the same stream of Ṣūfī school.

In terms of theosophy, according to Riddell, al-Fansūrī manifests strong monistic flavours where he believes that the Light of Muhammad (*Nūr Muḥammad*) is the Light of God without any sense of dualism.[68] All these very concepts led his critics, prominent among them was the so-called more orthodox scholars like al-Rānīrī, to accuse him of being a pantheist and therefore a heretic.[69] His notion of '*union with God*', for example, attracts vociferous condemnation from al-Rānīrī. al-Fansūrī says in one of his poems:[70]

> Hamzah is poor and naked a sacrifice, just as Isma'il neither Persian nor Arab yet, in constant union with the Eternal One.

The accusation levelled against al-Fansūrī has created a schism among scholars who fall into two opposing camps. Winstedt,[71] Johns,[72] van Nieuwenhuijze,[73] Baried[74] and Daudy[75] 'maintain that the teachings and doctrine of Fansūrī, just like that of Ibn 'Arabi (and likewise of al-Sumatrānī) are 'heretical' or 'heterodox' and consequently they were 'heretics' or 'heterodox' Sufīs as opposed to the 'orthodox' Sufī like al-Ranīrī'.[76] On the other hand, al-Attas, 'Abd al-'Azīz Dahlan, 'Uthman el-Muhammady maintain that al-Fansūrī, al-Sumatrānī and even the early *wujūdiyyah* proponents such as Ibn 'Arabī, al-Jīlī and others were not 'heretics' nor 'heteredox' but rather the critics have

[68] Riddell, *Transmission*, 109.
[69] Azra, *Networks*, 53.
[70] Riddell, *Transmission*, 108.
[71] Winstedt, *Some Malay Mystics*, 312-8.
[72] A.H. Johns, *Aspects*, 73-5.
[73] Van Nieuwenhuijze, *Shamu'l-Dīn*, 329-39 as cited by Azra, *Networks*, 53.
[74] Siti Baroroh Baried, '*Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf di Indonesia*', 2908.
[75] Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia*, 79.
[76] Azra, *Networks*, 53.

misunderstood them.[77] Al-Attas, for example, insists that al-Fansūrī's teachings were distorted by al-Ranīrī and others in order to prepare the ground for the opponents to conduct 'smear campaign' against them.[78] John, likewise provides a specimen of sayings of al-Rānīrī which are no less 'heterodox' than those of al-Fansūrī whom he accused of being heretic. It is ultimately subject to one's own interpretation whether to regard the words of the mystics as heretical or otherwise. Johns says:

> The specimen of a-Rānīrī in the appendix shows only too clearly that the words of the mystics could be understood in any sense desired by the reader.[79]

This is the risk of involving oneself with the *wujūdiyyah* since it exposes one to misinterpretation. Schimmel warns this:

> One has to admit that there are dangers in the *wahdat al-wujūd* system if this theory is interpreted superficially, as it has been done by many other Ṣūfīs.[80]

In any case, the mystical Islam, particularly that of the *wujūdiyyah* held sways not only in Aceh but also in other parts of the Archipelago from the earliest period of the advent of Islam until the coming of al-Rānirī in 1047/1637. The position as *Shaykh al-Islam* of the Acehnese Sultanate held by al-Fansūrī, and later by al-Sumatrānī after the demise of the former served as an official platform to further exert and popularise their mystical *wujūdiyyah* teachings. Coupled with their writings, they gave 'further impetus to this tendency'.[81]

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[77] Al-Attas, see chapter II of his *Fansūri*, 31-64; 'Abd al-Azīz Dahlan, "Pembelaan Terhadap waḥdat al-Wujud: Tasawuf Syamsuddin Sumatrani", *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an*, Bil. 3:3 (1992), 98- 99; El-Muhammady, *Martabat Tujuh*, http://www.geocities.com/traditionalislam/.

[78] Al-Attas, *Ranīri*, 15-42.
[79] Johns, *Malay Sufism*, 31.
[80] Schimmel, *Die welt*, 232 (Review).
[81] Azra, *Networks*, 54.

2.3.2 Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī

The doctrine of *wujūdiyyah* further gained its momentum during the era of al-Fansūrī's disciple, Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī, albeit in a slightly modified form. Al-Sumatrānī succeeded al-Fansūrī for the office of *Shaykh al-Islam* in the Sultanate of Aceh. Prior to that, he was known only as the loyal disciple of al-Fansūrī. It was believed that he may have occupied a central role in the power structure of Aceh even before the accession of the most powerful of the Acehnese sultan, Sultan Iskandar Muda, also known as 'Mahkota Alam'(r. 1607-1636) who came to power in 1607.[82] This is based on one of his important works, *Mir'āt al-muʿminīn* which might have been sponsored by the previous ruler, Sultan 'Ala al-Dīn Riʿayāt Shah al-Mukammīl who ruled from 997/1589-1012/1604.[83]

Since there is not much record available on his early life, it is not known when and where exactly al-Sumatrānī was born. But what is known is that the patronymic 'al-Sumatrānī' given to his name indicates two facts: firstly, either he or his parents were originally from Sumatra;[84] or secondly, he was born somewhere else but was brought up in Sumatra, probably until his last breath. He is also referred to as Shams al-Dīn of 'Pasai'.[85] It was believed that al-Sumatrānī was born

[82] During the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Aceh was at its peak in terms of its economy and Islamic learning. There are two reasons for its success: first, is its strategic location stretching on the busy business route of those days, and secondly, the Sultan was fond of knowledge and showed great affection for the scholars (Shaghir, *Marifah*, 1:25).

[83] Riddell, *Transmission*, 111; A.H. Johns, s.v. 'Shams al-Dīn al-Samatrānī', in *EI2*.

[84] Shaghir in this regard argues that it is wrong, in terms of correct usage of Arabic language, to use 'al-Sumatrānī' but rather 'al-Sumatrā'ī' since the place where he came from was Sumatrā not Sumatrānī. He further says that even al-Sumatrānī himself uses 'al-Sumatrā'ī' in his works not otherwise, see Shaghir, *al-Maʿrifah*, 1:49-50.

[85] Pasai also known as 'Samudera' or 'Samudera-Pasai' was a Muslim Kingdom on the north west of Sumatra, presently Palembang. It was founded by Sultān Malik al-Salih (d. 696/1297) in the year 665/1267. It began to rise when Srivijaya Kingdom started to wane in the eleventh century. A dissertation by C.A.O van Nieuwenhuijze, *Samsu'l-Dīn van Pasai* published by E.J.Brill, Leiden in 1945 is regarded as the earliest and perhaps the most important study of al-Sumatrānī, particularly on his work *Jawhār al-haqā'iq*, see A.H. Johns, 'Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī', in *EI2*.

before 982/1575 and died on 25 February 1630.[86] Like his predecessor[87] and his master, al-Fansūrī, little is known about his early life apart from fragmentary evidence present 'in the writings of his posthumous antagonist, al-Rānīrī, and in the records of European seafarers'.[88]

Al-Sumatrānī was always seen as the disciple of al-Fansūrī for his contributions in further expounding and elaborating the *wujūdiyyah* teachings of his master, which were often misunderstood. It is understandable for the confusions to arise since al-Fansūrī mostly expressed his mystical raptures in poems which could not be easily grasped by ordinary laymen. It was through al-Sumatrānī's commentaries that the teachings made its sense, well-accepted and the *wujūdiyyah* doctrine eventually 'received its official sanction from the Acehnese Sultan'.[89] He even managed to eventually initiate the ruler, Sultan Iskandar Muda into the Naqshbandiyyah order.[90] Apart from the Sultan himself, according to Teuku Iskandar who studied *Hikayat Aceh* (Aceh Annals), al-Sumatrānī had also always enjoyed a very amicable relationship with the aristocrats and the courtiers of the Sultanate Aceh.[91] Having managed to be the Ṣūfī *murshīd* (spiritual guide) to the Sultan and hold in high by the aristocracy, one could imagine the influence that he could possibly have exerted upon the

[86] A.H. Johns, s.v. 'Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī', in *EI2*; R.O Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay* Literature, 119; G.K. Niemann, 126.
[87] Drewes records that H. Kraemer is of the opinion that 'Hamzah was not a predecessor but a contemporary of Shams al-Dīn'. This view however was rejected by many scholars including Nieuwenhuijze, Drewes himself and others, see G.W.J. Drewes, *The Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, 2.
[88] Riddell, *Transmission*, 110-110. Original sources that records al-Sumatrānī's life, though not very detail, are *Hikayat Aceh*, *Adat Aceh* and *Bustān al-Salatin*.
[89] Riddell, *Transmission*, 111. As to why the Sultan patronised such a theosophical doctrine and what benefit that he would derive? Riddell draws attention to the contention put forth by Lombard that such a doctrine would further boost his self image as a king on the feeling of God's presence in him as he is present in all creatures and hence elevated him to semi-divine heights in the eyes of his subjects', see Riddell, *Transmission*, 111-112.
[90] A.H. Johns, 'Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī', in *EI2*.
[91] Teuku Iskandar, *Hikayat Aceh*, 47.

society and shaped the intellectual-religious milieu at the time. It was possible that he was among the aristocrats of Aceh who received the English delegation led by Sir James Lancaster at the court of Sultan Ala al-Dīn in 1602, whom Lancaster referred to as the 'archbishop'.[92] Judging from the position held by al-Sumatrānī and al-Fansūrī, it is reasonable for Riddell to conclude in the following mode:

> Thus, we can conclude that the study of Islam throughout the Sultanate during this period was oriented towards speculative theosophical doctrines which were initially expounded by Hamzah, consolidated by Shams al-Dīn and his followers, and were later to be condemned heretical.[93]

Like his master al-Fansūrī, al-Sumatrānī was indeed a great scholar and this was even admitted by his own archrival, al-Rānīrī, when the latter says in his work *Bustān al-salātīn*: "the Shaykh is learned (*'ālīm*) in all knowledge especially well-known in the knowledge of *tasawwuf* and he was an author of several books".[94] His principal work in Arabic was *Jawhār al-Haqā'iq* (Jewel of True Realities), in which he articulates his system of 'Seven Stages of Being' (*Martabat Tujuh*). The ideas were also expressed in his other works including *Mir'āt al-Mu'minīn* and *Nūr al-Daqā'iq*.[95]

What we shall see later in Chapter Six that this idea of Seven Stages originates from an Indian writer, al-Burhanpūrī (d.998/1590) and not his master, al-Fansūrī. With the reference to al-Burhanpurī, it seems Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago began to make a shift, as portrayed by al-Sumatrānī who

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[92] Johns, *Malay Sufism*, 9-10.
[93] Riddell, *Transmission*, 111.
[94] Teuku Iskandar, *Nuru'd-din al-Raniri: Bustanu's-salatin*, Chapter II, Section 13, 35. It is known, however, that al-Ranīrī is inconsistent in his perception towards al-Sumatrānī where in another occasion which we shall see, al-Ranīrī even declares al-Fansūrī, al-Sumatrānī and their disciples as infidels.
[95] Extensive study on al-Sumatrānī was done by van Nieuwenhuijze for his doctoral dissertation; see C.A.O van Nieuwenhuijze, *Samsu'l-Dīn van Pasai*, Leiden, 1954. When his work is cited here, it refers to the original Malay language of al-Sumatrānī cited in the work, but not the explanation of Nieuwenhuijze himself which is in Dutch.

drew much on Indian scholars, such as al-Burhanpūrī, than from the Arab writers. Johns concludes that:

> ...comparative study of Hamzah and Shams al-Dīn's writings points to a shift in influence upon Acehnese mystical thinking from Arab writers (Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Jīlī upon Hamzah) to Indian writers (al-Burhanpūrī upon Shams al-Dīn).[96]

We will come back to al-Sumatrānī's teachings when discussing the doctrine of Seven Stages later. Suffice to mention here that al-Sumatrānī, like his master al- Fansūri, he too was frequently charged as heretic (*zindīq*) and infidel (*kāfir*) especially by al-Rānīrī for allegedly being an exponent of 'heterodox' tradition of pantheistic mysticism, or Ibn 'Arabī's school. They often are dubbed as 'two famous heterodox Malay mystics'.[97]

2.3.3 Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī

Due to good international reputation of the Kingdom of Aceh, especially in terms of the development of Islam, many scholars all over the world started to flock to Aceh. One of them was a scholar from Ranir, Gujerat,[98] Southern India, by the name of Nūr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn 'Alī ibn Hasan-Ji ibn Muhammad al-Rānīrī.[99] According to al-Attas, he 'came from an Arab family of noble *shaykhs* known as the *al-Ḥamīd*'.[100]

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[96] Riddell, *Transmission*, 112-113.
[97] Johns, *Malay Sufism*, 9.
[98] Gujerat was then under the rulership of Shihāb al-Dīn Shah Jihan 1 (r.1628-1659). It had suffered from internal conflicts with the Shi'ites and syncretism, as well as with the Hindus. Many scholars*('ulamā*) left India because of this perilous state and migrated to other countries, including Aceh, C.E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, 211; Ismail Bakar, *Sejarah dan Tamadun Islam di India*, 216-217.
[99] A good number of studies have been devoted to al-Rānīrī. This include Al-Attas, *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddīq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī*; P.Voorhoeve, 'Van en over Nuruddin al-Raniri, *BKI*, 107 (1951); A.Vakily (1997), 'Sufism, Power Politics and Reform: al-Raniri's Opposition to Hamzah Fansuri's Teachings Reconsidered'; Ahmad Daudy (1978), *Syeikh Nuruddin al-Ranīrī*.
[100] Al-Attas, *Hujjat al-Siddīq*, 3.

The arrival of al-Rānīrī in Aceh in 1042/1633 was, however, not welcomed by the ruler at that time, Sultan Iskandar Muda. He was, as said before, the *murīd* of Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī and naturally could not get along with al-Rānīrī, an ardent critic of al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī. Al-Rānīrī then moved to a state in the East Coast of Malay Peninsula, Pahang. In Pahang, he befriended the royalties there and secured their trusts.[101] It was believed that he wrote his famous *Bustān al-Salātīn* while he was living in Pahang.

When al-Sumatrānī died on 24th February 1630 in a war against the Portuguese in Malacca,[102] the post of *Shaykh al-Islam* was passed to Ibrahim ʿAbd Allah al-Shāmī which only lasted for five months when the latter died on 21 August 1630. Another student of al-Sumatrānī, Jamal al-Dīn (Maidin) succeeded al-Shāmī.[103]

After about six years of the demise of al-Sumatrānī, Sultan Iskandar Muda too passed away. The ruler of Aceh was then succeeded by Sultan Iskandar Muda's son- in-law, Sultan Iskandar Thānī.[104] As mentioned earlier, he was not originally from Aceh but rather from the royalties of Pahang. This led to a widespread discontentment on his appointment, internal problems and conflicts from within the royalties themselves. Al-Rānīrī who did not find favour with the previous Sultan now arrived in Aceh for the second time after the demise of the Sultan Iskandar Muda. It was not clear whether his second visit to Aceh was

[101] Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Sykh Nuruddin ar-Raniry*, 38; Teuku Iskandar, *Nur'ud-Din al-Rānīrī; Bustanu's-salatīn*, Chapter 2, Section 13, 12.
[102] R.O. Winstedt, *A History*, 119.
[103] Mohd. Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 70.
[104] Sultan Iskandar Thānī was a son of Sultan Ahmad of Pahang. He was married to princess of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Safiyat al-Dīn, in the presence of al-Sumatrāni, (Teuku Iskandar, *Bustān al- Salātīn*, 12-13).

on the invitation of the new ruler, Sultan Iskandar Thānī whom he might have had in contact when he had spent his time in Pahang.

When al-Rānīrī came to Aceh for the second time in 1046/1637, he started attacking the teachings of *wujūdiyyah* of al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī by labelling them as '*wujūdiyyah mulhid*' (heretic *wujūdiyyah*) as opposed to Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine which he termed as *wujūdiyyah muwahhīd* (unitarian *wujūdiyyah*). Al-Ranīrī's concern with the creed of the people was evident when he took the responsibility himself to translate for the first time the creed of al-Taftāzānī, *Durrat al-Farā'id al-'Aqā'id* in order to set the creed of the Malay society then in conformity with the Asha'arite theology.[105]

Al-Rānīrī's vehement attacks, as suspected by al-Attas and others, were initiated by his own desire to secure an important position (presumably Sheikh al-Islam) in the Kingdom of Acheh, as mentioned before,[106] knowing very well that the then Shaykh al-Islam, Jamal al-Dīn (Maidin) was the student of al-Sumatrānī and naturally an adherent of the *wujūdiyyah*. Through his vociferous attacks and accusations, no sooner rather than later, al-Rānīrī found favour with the ruler, Sultan Iskandar Thānī, who himself had been facing various internal disputes. The Sultan perhaps thought of using al-Rānīrī as his strongman against the emerging rebellion, easing down the internal disputes and strengthening his position as the ruler and, as well as combating the *wujūdiyyah* group.[107] The appointment of al-Rānīrī happened in such a tragic way. We will briefly narrate the incident here in order to show that the *wujūdiyyah*-orthodox polemics in the

[105] Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, 47.

[106] Al-Attas, *Rānīrī*, 3 and 17.

[107] Teuku Iskandar, 'Hamzah Fansuri', in *Dewan Bahasa*, Feb. 1965, 53-61.

seventeenth century Aceh was a bloody one, and the dispute continued for many centuries until the time of al-Falimbānī.

While the queen, Sultanah Safiyat al-Dīn, who was a student of al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī, abhorred the way al-Rānīrī and the Sultan criticised her masters and the persecuted al-Fansūrī's disciples. The Sultan was later forced by the queen to leave the palace, which he did, and had to convert the compound of the Bayt al-Rahmān mosque as his 'new palace'.[108] This, however, did not stop the Sultan from appointing al-Rānīrī as the *Shaykh al-Islam* after removing the incumbent, Jamal al-Dīn from his office. The dismissal of Jamal al-Dīn was done in such an atrocious manner in the history of the Muslim Aceh and the Archipelago in general.

Now, under his capacity as the *Shaykh al-Islam*, al-Rānīrī wrote several books denouncing the teachings of his predecessors, al-Fansūrī and Shams al-Dīn at the Acehnese court. He accused both of them as committing heresy of violating the Islamic belief of God and in the ontological aspect of Islamic faith, equating them both with the Jews and Christians. He says in one of his works:

> *Man shakka fī takfīr al-yahūd wa al-nasārā wa hamza fansūrī wa shams al-dīn al- sumatrā'ī wa tāifatihimā faqad kafar*.[109]
>
> "Whoever is in doubt of declaring infidels to the Jews, Christians, Hamzah al-Fansūri and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrā'ī and their groups, then he himself is an infidel"

Al-Rānīrī ordered their books be burnt for being heretical, while he wrote numerous works setting what he insisted were orthodox Sunnī standards.[110] Not

[108] Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Umat Islam di Nusantara*, 158.
[109] Al-Ranīrī, *Mā' al-hayā li-ahl al-mamāt*, MS Library of Tanoh Abee, Seilimum Aceh Besar, folio 45, as cited by Mohd Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 50.
[110] Ricklefs. *A History*, 51; Johns, *Malay Sufism*, 34.

only the books of these two of his great predecessors were burnt, but the adherents were also executed in front of Bayt al-Rahmān mosque, Banda Aceh, including the former *Shaykh al-Islam*, Jamal al-dīn (Maidin). The killing of the one-time spiritual head of the Muslim scholars (*'ulamā*) like Jamal al-Dīn further exacerbated the socio-politico and religious tension. The masses became confused when the newly-appointed *Shaykh al-Islam* declared the former *Shaykh al-Islam* as heretic and infidel. Uncertainties and doubtfulness crept in the minds of the people over the correct version of Islam to be followed. The Malays in those days which were culturally soft-spoken and respect the elders and more so the scholars could not believe the 'tragedy' that had befallen their society when one *Shaykh al-Islam* killed the other one. Such a disgraceful act and loss of *adab* had never happened in the history of Malay-Muslim society. The situation, however, became much better when Sultan Iskandar Thānī suddenly died in 1641, leaving al-Rānīrī without a godfather. When the queen, Sultanah Safiyat al-Dīn (r. 1641-1675) succeeded her husband, al-Rānīrī decided to leave Aceh.[111] There are various theories on why al-Rānīrī left Aceh. One of them is that the Sultanah did not like him. Another reason, as some scholars said, was that al-Rānīrī could not accept being ruled by a woman. Others said he left after being defeated by Saif al-Rijal, a disciple of al-Sumatrānī, in an open debate arranged by the Sultanah in her palace in order to defuse the dispute between the two groups which had created anxiety and instability among the masses as well as the royalties. Sultanah Safiyat al-Dīn ruled for thirty four years.

[111] Takeshi Ito, 'Why did Nuruddin al-Rānīrī leave Atjeh in 1054 A.H.', *BKI*, no.134, 1978, 487- 491; H.M. Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh dan Nusantara*, 100 & 406; Al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujūdiyyah*, 13.

On the attacks made by al-Rānīrī on the teachings of al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī', the scholars, as mentioned earlier, could be grouped into two. One group holds in favour of him while the other supports al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī. Al-Attas, believes that al-Ranīrī had actually misunderstood what al-Fansūrī (or al-Sumatrānī) really meant in their works, in as much as exoteric scholars had misunderstood Ibn 'Arabī in the past.[112] Logically, as a Ṣūfī himself who advocates Ibn 'Arabī's *wujūdiyyah*, accepting the Ṣūfī teachings of al-Fansūrī should not have been a problem for al-Rānīrī. But in contrary, he did not. Johns speculates that perhaps al-Rānīrī was possibly influenced by the teachings of Ahmad Sirhindī's (d.1624) *wahdat al-shuhūd* as opposed to *wahdat al-wujūd.*[113] We will deal with al-Rānīrī's criticisms more detail in Chapter Six.

2.3.4 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkīlī

Another great Malay scholar to dominate the religious life of the Archipelago during the latter half of the seventeenth century was 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkīlī (or Singkel).[114]

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[112] Scholars have discussed at length on several reasons behind the accusations made by al-Ranīrī to al-Fansūri. See G.W.J. Drewes. 'Nur al-Din al-Raniri's charge of heressy against Hamzah and Shamsuddin from an international point of view', 54-9; Takeshi Ito, 'Why', 489-491; Al-Attas, "Raniri and the Wujudiyyah", 13.

[113] A.H. Johns, s.v. 'Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī', in *EI2*.

[114] Al-Attas regards al-Sinkilī, together with al-Sumatrānī and al-Fansūrī as the 'lofty-mountain-peaks' in the landscape of Malay mysticism, while all others that came after them were but 'foothills' in comparison (Al-Attas, *Some Aspects*, 29). A good number of works has been written about him. The most comprehensive work that has incorporated all the studies on al-Sinkīlī is perhaps by Mohd. Syukri Yeoh Abdullah. His doctoral dissertation, "*Pemikiran Dakwah Shaykh Abdul Rauf Ali al-Fansuri al-Singkili*" submitted to the National University of Malaysia (UKM), 2006, (unpublished). Azra in his *Networks* has devoted a chapter discussing all various details of al-Sinkīlī including his early life, Arabian and Malay networks, and his renewal efforts, Azra, *Networks*, 70-86.

If al-Rānīrī sparked the momentum for renewal in the Archipelago, it was al-Sinkīlī who further pursued the impulse and was regarded by Azra as 'one of early *mujaddids* in the Archipelago'.[115] Like all his predecessors, nothing much is known about him though he authored quite a number of works. According to Mohd. Syukri, al-Sinkīlī wrote all together fifty six works: one in exegesis, one in *hadith*, four in ethics or *akhlāq*, eight in jurisprudence, one in history and forty one in creed and *tasawwuf*. [116] The vast scope of his writings points to his overall dedication and determination. Perhaps, the Malay scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not accustomed to writing biographies or details of themselves or of their teachers.

According to Voorhoeve, the full name of al-Sinkīlī is 'Abd al-Ra'ūf bin 'Alī al-Jāwī al-Fansūrī al-Sinkīlī.[117] He was born around 1029/1620's[118] at Sinkīl (modern Singkel), north of Fansūrī (west coast of Sumatra) in the coastal region of Aceh, where Hamzah al-Fansūrī came from, and died in 1104/1693.[119] An Indonesian scholar, Hasjmi, initially believes that al-Sinkīlī's father was the elder

[115] Azra, *Networks,* 70.
[116] Mohd. Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 165; Azra records only twenty two works, Azra, *Networks*, 79.
[117] There is a dispute as on how many 'Shaykh 'Abd al-Ra'ūf' had actually ever existed in the Archipelago in those centuries since there were works written by a few names bearing the same name: ''Abd al-Rā'ūf' such as 'Abd al-Rā'ūf 'Alī Fansūri, 'Abd al-Rā'ūf Singkil, 'Abd al-Rā'ūf Shaykh Kuala, and 'Abd al-Rā'ūf Mansūri. Do they refer to the same person or different people? There is also uncertainty on the year he was born. A.H. Johns, Peter Riddell and Azra, following Rinkes believes he was born in 1615, while concurs with Voorhoeve on his death year in 1693, see A.H. Jonhs, 'The Qur'ān in The Malay World: Reflections on 'Abd al-Ra'ūf of Singkel (1615-1693)', 120; Peter Riddell, *Transfering a tradition 'Abd al-Rauf al-Singkilī's rendering into Malay of the Jalalayn Commentary*, 4; Azra, *Networks*, 70. Also Mohd. Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 102-107 and 114-115.
[118] There is also uncertainty on the year he was born. A.H. Johns, Peter Riddell and Azra, following Rinkes believes he was born in 1023/1615, while concurs with Voorhoeve on his death year in 1104/1693, see A.H. Johns, 'The Qur'ān in The Malay World: Reflections on 'Abd al-Ra'ūf of Singkel (1615-1693)', 120; Peter Riddell, *Transfering a tradition 'Abd al-Rauf al-Singkilī's rendering into Malay of the Jalalayn Commentary*, 4; Azra, *Networks*, 70. Also Mohd. Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 114-115.
[119] P. Voorhoeve, s.v. "'Abd al-Ra'ūf 'Alī al-Djāwī al-Fansūrī al-Sinkilī", *EI2*. He was buried near the mouth (Malay: *kuala*) of the Aceh River. He later came to be known as the 'Sheikh of Kuala' after the site of his tomb (Azra, *Networks,* 86).

brother of Hamzah al- Fansūrī and hence he was a cousin of al-Fansūrī.[120] Nonetheless, this assertion provides no evidence to corroborate it though, as Azra says, there seems that al- Sinkīlī did have some familial relationship with al-Fansūrī when in one of his extant works he writes: 'who is in the tribe of Hamzah Fansūri' ('*yang berbangsa Hamzah Fansūrī'*).[121] Upon further investigation later, Hasjmi found out that al-Fansūrī was in fact the brother of al-Sinkilī's father instead, and hence al-Sinkilī was his nephew not a cousin as he initially thought.[122]

His childhood period was during the era of Sultan Iskandar Muda (reigned 1607-1636), when he had already begun his early studies with Hamzah al-Fansūrī and then with al-Sumatrāni. At the age of around twenty seven to twenty eight years old, al-Sinkīlī left for Arabia to further his studies. 'Al-Sinkīlī then spent nineteen years in Arabia,[123] where he was initiated into the Shattāriyyah *tariqah* by Ahmad al-Qushāshī (d. 1070/1660) of Medina, the spiritual father of many seventeenth century Indian mystics, and his successor Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690),[124] the latter with whom he was associated for almost twenty years.[125] He returned to Aceh in 1661 after the death of his master, Ahmad al-Qushashi[126] whence this *tariqah* was propagated throughout Malay-Indonesia Archipelago. He

[120] Hasjmi, 'Syekh Abdurrauf Syiah Kuala Ulama Negarawan yang Bijaksana', in *Universitas Syiah Kuala Menjelang 20 tahun*, quoted in Azra, *Networks*, 71.
[121] Azra, *Networks*, 71; also *Jaringan*, 190.
[122] Hasjmi, *Syiah & Ahlusunnah,* 111-125; Mahyuddin, *Ensiklopedia Sejarah Islam*, 1:44.
[123] This information is based on his own statement in his work, *Kifāyat al-muhtajīn ila mashārab al-muwahhidīn al-qā'ilīn bi wahdat al-wujūd,* MS 1314C, National Library of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, as cited by Mohd. Syukri, *Pemikiran*, 125; Azra, *Networks*, 77.
[124] Al-Kūrānī was known for his *wujūdiyyah* leanings, see Knysh, '*Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī*'.
[125] A.H. Johns, *The Qur'ān*, 124. While al-Qushāshī was his spiritual master, al-Kurānī on the other hand was his intellectual master, Azra, *Networks,* 75.
[126] Riddell, *Transmission*, 128.

had been the Shattāriyyah and Qādiriyyah chief (caliph) appointed by al-Qushāshī long time before the master died.[127]

In his works *Kifāyat al-Muhtājīn* and *Daqā'iq al-Hurūf*, al-Singkilī too adopts the doctrine of the 'Seven Stages' and of man as 'the image of God', yet maintains within the 'boundary of orthodoxy'.[128] He was wise to draw careful 'lines of distinction to avoid misinterpretations of the theosophical structure outlined in the work of al-Burhanpūrī's *al-Tuhfat*'[129] to be within the orthodoxy. His master, al-Kūrānī wrote a commentary of the *Tuhfat* entitled *Ithāf al-Dhakī* in response to a request from an unnamed '*ashāb al-Jāwiyyīn*' (people of Jāwī).[130] It was believed that al-Sinkīlī was the person who sought the answer from al-Kūrānī in Medina when confronted with the debates of the status of *Tuhfat* by his fellow men, whether it was an orthodox or heterodox text.[131] It was not the first time that al-Sinkīlī consulted his master as he admits it in his work, *Lubb al-kashf*. Prior to this, he used to send a letter to the City of the Prophet asking his master's opinion about several matters pertain to science of Realities ('*ilm al-haqā'iq*) and science of secret details of things ('*ilm al-daqā'iq*).[132]

Al-Sinkīlī was a smart and wise scholar. He was not a confrontational type or belligerent like al-Rānīrī. There is no record of a meeting or personal contact between al-Sinkīlī and al-Rānīrī. Nonetheless, al-Sinkīlī surely did not like the approach taken by al-Rānīrī and rejected the violent polemics launched by al-Rānīrī. Neither did he join the *wujūdiyyah* group and put his intellectual stature at

[127] Azra, *Networks*, 75.
[128] P.Voorhoeve, ''Abd al-Ra'ūf b.'Ali al-Djāwī al-Fansūrī al-Sinkilī', *EI2*.
[129] A.H. Johns, *The Qur'ān*, 145.
[130] Azra, *Networks*, 75.
[131] Azra, *Networks*, 75.
[132] Azra, *Networks*, 75.

risk.[133] He wisely disassociated himself and took no part in the persecutions and book-burnings that took place during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thānī between 1045/1636 and 1050/1641 after the death of Sultan Iskandar Muda. The controversy surrounding his masters al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī served him as a lesson for him not to repeat the same mistakes. He used his wisdom at the utmost level not to get involved into conflict with anyone.[134]

Though his adulthood was during the time when al-Rānīrī was the *Shaykh al-Islam,* he never mentioned al-Rānīrī by name in any of his works. This shows several things: one of them is that he never studied with al-Rānīrī as some scholars have speculated. Secondly, it could be that he detested the persecutions meted out by al- Rānīri to the disciples al-Fansūrī'.[135] Al-Sinkīlī was an extraordinary and prolific scholar. On his return to Aceh in 1071/1661 from his studies in the Arabia, he was invited to serve in the court of the Sultanah Safiyat al-Dīn Shah (r.1641-75) who commissioned him to write a *fiqh* treatise, *Mir'āt al-Tullāb*.[136] During the reign of Sultanah Inayat Shah Zakiyat al-Dīn (r.1678-88), he was again commissioned to write at least two works, *Risalah adab murid akan shaykh*, which deals with the ethics of a student towards his master, and the second work is a commentary upon the great Shafi'ī jurist work, al-Nawāwī's (d.676/1278) famous work on *Forty Hadith* (*Arba'in Hadith*).[137] According to Johns, 'he served no fewer than four female rulers, the last was Sultanah Kamalat al-Dīn, (r.1688-

[133] Azra, *Networks,* 71; P.Voorhoeve, 'al-Sinkilī', *EI2.*
[134] Denys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh: Jaman Sultan Iskandar Muda,* trans. Winarsh Ariffin, 133-134.
[135] The contention put forth by some scholars such as H.M. Zainuddin, and Peunoh Daily that al-Sinkilī did study with al-Rānīrī is not substantiated with strong evidence, see their respective *Tarikh Atjeh dan Nusantara*, 406; *Hukum Perkahwinan Islam: Suatu Studi Negara Islam*, 17.
[136] Printed in facsimile by Universitas Sjiah Kuala, Banda Atjeh, 1971, see Johns, *The Qur'ān*, 144; Riddell, *Transmission*, 129.
[137] Riddell, *Transmission*, 129.

1699), who was deposed six years after al-Sinkīlī's death'.[138] In his lifetime, he witnessed the intense conflict between the two Sufī groups, *wujūdiyyah* led by al-Fansūri and al-Sumatrānī on one side and al-Rānīrī on the other; the political and leadership struggle between the aristocrats, royalties and the ruler and finally the dilemma that the Muslim Aceh had to undergo for having a female ruler, Sultanah, beginning from Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiyat al-Dīn Shah (r. 1641-1675).

Al-Sinkīlī is considered, together with al-Rānīrī, among the early Malay scholars who tried to reform the type of Sufism practised by the Malays by emphasising on the importance of abiding by the Shari'ah. At the same time, al-Sinkīlī allows the Malays to follow the mystical path, after its neglect during the long period of speculative Sufism dominated by al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī.[139] This kind of reformed Sufism which according to Fazlur Rahman, John Voll, Nehemia Levtzion, and Azra as mentioned in the Introdcution before, is called 'neo-Sufism'.[140]

Nonetheless, al-Sinkīlī's methodology by no means similar in degree of fervour and harshness to that of al-Rānirī. It was perceived by his contemporaries as falling within the boundary of orthodoxy. His methods were considerably more irenic than those of al-Ranirī whose reactions were often hostile and aggressive in nature, accusing others as heretics or infidels. Because of his evolutionary type, al-Sinkīlī dislikes the radical approach of al-Rānīrī and wisely reminds Muslims in

[138] Johns, *The Qur'ān*, 144.
[139] Riddell, *Transmission*, 129 & 132.
[140] M.F. Laffan, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 64, issue no.2, May 2005, 512-513 (Review). Laffan however, skeptical on the nature of neo-Sufism as a category and whether there indeed Sufīs or a certain Sufī orders had undergone structural reformation involving internalization of Shari'ah precepts.

his *Daqā'iq al-Hurūf* of the danger of accusing others of disbelief. His statement, as quoted by Johns and Azra below proves his tactful methods:

> If [a] man is a *kāfir* why waste words on it? And if he is not, the saying will come back upon ourselves, for the Prophet said: "Let no man accuse another of leading a sinful life or infidelity, for the accusation will turn back upon himself if it is false,' Such is the danger of accusing another of infidelity; we take refuge with God from such.[141]

Al-Sinkīlī dislikes the discussion on the doctrine of *wujūdiyyah*, nonetheless, only implicitly does he make this views of his known to the public.[142] Clearly that al-Sinkīlī, opted for a reconciliatory approach between the two opposing views prevalent during his time rather than taking sides.

2.3.5 Yūsuf al-Maqassārī

So far we have discussed scholars or al-Falimbānī's predecessors centred mainly on Aceh. It would be wise to broaden our perspective by looking also at another Malay scholar, who was equally important and had left great impact not only in the Archipelago, but also in South Africa and Sri Lanka, to some extent. Nonetheless, as we have done for other previous scholars, we will only concentrate on his impacts on Muslims and Islam in the region rather than discussing his intellectual networks or details of his life.

The fourth important predecessor of al-Falimbānī is Muhammad Yūsuf al-Maqassārī (1037-1111/1627-99).[143] He is also known as Abidin Tadia Tjoessoep

[141] Johns, *'Daqā'iq'*, 139; Riddell, *Transmission*, 128; Azra, *Networks*, 84.
[142] Azra, *Networks*, 84.
[143] There have been a number of studies on al-Maqassārī. To mention some of the most recent studies are by Azra himself in his *Networks*, 87-108; others include Abū Hamid, Syekh Yusuf Tajul Khalwati: *Suatu Kajian Antropologi Agama*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ujung Padang:

of Makassar.[144] According to Shaghir, al-Maqassārī first travelled to Banten from South Sulawesi (Celebes) on his way to Aceh. By the time he arrived in Aceh, the two leading scholars of Aceh then, al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī had already passed away. It was believed that he then studied with al-Rānīrī who eventually initiated him into the Qadiriyyah *tarīqah*.[145] Despite the fact that he studied with al-Rānīrī, it did not mean that he completely in agreement with his master, for al-Maqassārī never showed any animosity towards al-Fansūrī or al-Sumatrānī as his master had shown. Shaghir speculates that al-Maqassārī might have also studied with al-Sinkīlī while in Aceh.[146] If this is true, then we could say with certainty that al-Maqassārī emulated al-Sinkīlī in not condemning the two Acehnese masters. Azra, on the other hand, believes that al-Sinkīlī and al-Maqassārī were friends studying together under the supervision of, among others, al-Qushāshī and al-Kūrānī in the Haramayn.[147]

Apart from studying with local scholars in the Archipelago, al-Maqassārī also travelled to the Middle East in seeking for knowledge. His first destination was Yemen where he studied with the scholars in the 'city of '*ulamā'* of Zabīd. Later he went to the Haramayn and most likely his period in the Arabian Peninsula coincided with that of al-Sinkīlī. Hence, we could expect that they studied with the same teachers while in the Haramayn.[148] Al-Maqassārī did not stop there, but rather travelled to Damascus to study with one of its leading Syrian scholars,

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Universitas Hasanuddin, 1990; Tudjimal et al., *Syekh Yusuf Makasar: Riwayat Hidup, Karya dan Ajarannya*; Nabilah Lubis, *Syekh Yusuf al-Taj al-Makasari: Menyingkap Intisari Segala Rahsia*; M.R. Feener, 'Syaikh Yusuf and the Appreciation of Muslim Saints in Modern Indonesia', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18/19 (1999), 112-131.

[144] A.I., Tayob, s.v. "South Africa", *EI2.*

[145] Shaghir, *Perkembangan*, 64.

[146] Shaghir, *Perkembangan*, 64.

[147] Azra, *Networks*, 86.

[148] Azra, *Networks*, 89-90.

Ayyūb b. Ahmad b. Ayyūb al-Dimashqī al-Khalwatī (994-1071/1586- 1661) whom al-Muhibbī call this man the 'great teacher' (*al-ustādh al-akbar*).[149]

Ayyūb al-Khalwatī was a renowned Sufī and *muhaddith* of Syria then and al-Maqassārī evidently accompanied him for some time until he was fully competent for absorbing the exoteric and esoteric sciences. He was eventually able to win the favour of Ayyūb al-Khalwatī who awarded him the title of '*al-Tāj al-Khalwatī*' (the Crown of the Khalwatī).[150]

In terms of his impact to the Muslims and Islam in the region, al-Maqassārī left significant role in renewal of Sufism in the region in as much as the role previously played by his two masters, al-Sinkīlī and al-Rānīrī.[151] He too involved in Bantenese politics, advising the Sultan of Banten, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. Not only that, he went a step ahead of his masters by engaging himself, together with the Sultan, in battling a war against the Dutch. He was eventually defeated and arrested. As a consequence, he was exiled to Sri Lanka in 1095/1684 and later, fearing that he might still influence the Malays in the Archipelago, the Dutch exiled him to the Cape of Good Hope in 1105/1694. He was already about sixty eight years old when exiled to the South Africa.[152]

In terms of his teachings, Shaghir claims that al-Maqassārī surprisingly follows closely the teachings of the two *wujūdiyyah* masters, al-Fansūrī and al-Sumatrānī as opposed to his own master al-Rānīrī. This is evident in al-Maqassārī works such as *Zubdat al-Asrār*, where the teachings were in consonant with the

[149] For further details of Ayyūb al-Khalwatī's biography and works, see al-Muhibbī, *Tārikh Khulāsat al- Athār*, 1:428-33; Azra, *Networks,* 92.
[150] Azra, *Networks,* 92.
[151] Azra, *Networks,* 103.
[152] Azra, *Networks,* 98-101.

those of *Tuhfat al-Mursalah* of al-Burhanpurī. He even implicitly mentions that he holds the Sufī teachings found in *Tuhfat* and regards the author al-Burhanpūrī, as a *al-'arif billāh* or gnostic.[153]

At the same time, al-Maqassārī also follows the teachings of al- Ghazālī as manifested in his *tasawwuf* where the purification of belief (*'aqīdah*) in the Unity of God (*tawhīd*) is given emphasis.[154] Al-Maqassārī adopts the four levels of *tawhīd* just as expounded by al- Ghazālī in his *Ihyā'*. Azra claims that al-Maqassārī rejects *waḥdat al-wujūd* but adopts al-Sirhindi's *wahdat al-shuhūd*.[155] Hence, he sees all creation as simply allegorical being (*al-mawjūd al-majāzī*) and not the Real Being (*al-mawjūd al-haqīqī*). Thus, like al-Sinkīlī, al-Maqassārī believes the creation is only a shadow of God, not God Himself.[156] Al-Maqassārī was very tactful not to associate himself with the doctrine of pantheism by maintaining that although God is seemingly immanent in the creation, nonetheless, it does not necessary mean that the creation is God himself. This is, in reality, the crux of the teachings of the Malay *wujūdiyyah* scholars from al- Fansūrī, al-Sumatrānī and others.

It appears that al-Maqassārī was overzealous in his effort to reconcile between the exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam which he found lax in the Malay *wujūdiyyah* Sufism. For him, it would be better for one to abide by the Shari'ah injunctions rather than practising *tasawwuf* while ignoring Islamic legal precepts. He firmly sticks to the sayings of the founder of Mālikī school of jurisprudence, Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796) who said:

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[153] Shaghir, *Perkembangan*, 65; 78.
[154] Azra, *Networks*, 106.
[155] Azra, *Networks*, 104.
[156] Azra, *Networks*, 104.

> those who stick only to the Shari'ah without the *ḥaqīqah* are *fāsiq* (corrupted), and those who practise *tasawwuf* while ignoring Shari'ah are *zindīq* (heretic).[157]

Al-Maqassārī's Ṣūfī teachings seem to continue with the renewal advocated by al-Sinkīlī in the Ṣūfī belief and practice in the Archipelago from purely metaphysical and ontological outlook, to the implementation of a more Shari'ah-oriented Sufism. Al-Falimbānī in the following century, joined these neo-Sufis approach, albeit maintaining a certain element of *wujūdiyyah*.

2.4 Conclusion

We have demonstrated in this chapter that during these two centuries, there were serious feud between the proponents of the *wujūdiyyah* and strict Orthodox Sunni. It was represented by al-Fanṣūrī on one group and al-Ranīrī on the other, which later on continued by their respective diciples. The coming of al-Falimbānī in the midst of this intellectual crisis tried to harmonise these two fighting groups by bringing the method adopted by al-Ghazālī.

[157] Azra, *Networks,* 107.