

Misri A Muchsin & Hermansyah. ed.

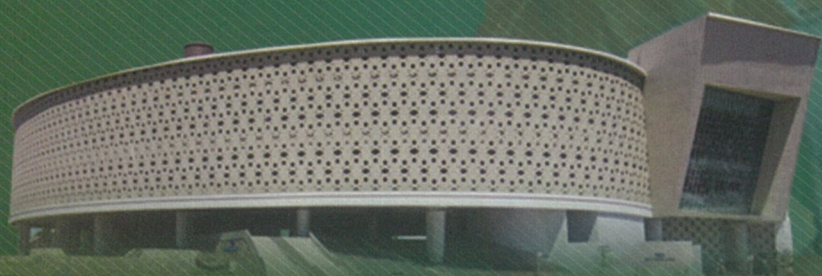
# ACEH SATU

DALAM SEJARAH  
DAN BUDAYA



DINAS KEBUDAYAAN DAN PARIWISATA ACEH  
2014

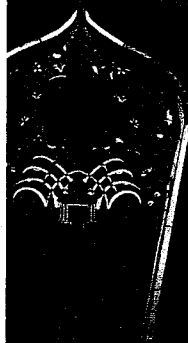
Berdasarkan kenyataan Aceh dan masyarakatnya baru saja keluar dari kemelut konflik yang sudah mencapai 30-an tahun lebih dan ditambah pula dengan bencana gempa 8,9 SR yang dibarengi dengan tsunami pada tanggal 26 Desember 2004, telah meluluh-lantakkan kehidupan dan penghidupan masyarakat Aceh, adalah sudah cukup beralasan tema seminar Temu Budaya kali ini demikian. "Aceh Satu Dalam Sejarah dan Aceh Satu Dalam Budaya". Tema ini secara implisit ingin menyadarkan masyarakat Aceh guna untuk bersatu dan menghindari potensi perpecahan. Semua itu dapatlah berkaca dalam sejarah dan budaya Aceh, yang walaupun di sini-sini terdapat perbedaan, namun dalam sejarahnya selalu mengutamakan kesatuan dalam keragaman dimaksud. Mengelaborasi tema itulah sekitar 20 pakar dengan makalah-makalahnya berusaha menyajikan fikiran-pikiran cemerlangnya, yang semuanya tertuang dan tersaji dalam buku yang sudah berada di tangan pembaca.



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2014

cemerlangnya, yang semuanya tertuang dan tersaji dalam buku yang sudah berada di tangan pembaca.

Buku ini dengan demikian dasarnya adalah makalah-makalah yang sudah disajikan dalam forum seminar Temu Budaya, setelah direvisi dan dikoreksi secukupnya, kemudian ditetapkan judul adalah tema itu sendiri, yaitu "Aceh Satu Dalam Sejarah dan Satu Dalam Budaya". Buku ini sepatutnya mendapat tempat di hati kita semua, dan diharapkan dapat mencerahkan dan bermanfaat bagi anak bangsa, terutama bagi putera-puteri Aceh yang islamis.

Penghargaan dan terima kasih yang setinggi-tingginya kepada Gubernur Aceh, dr. Zaini Abdullah; Wakil Gubernur, Muzakkir Manaf (Muaim), dan Kepala Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Aceh ketika berlangsungnya PKA-6, Drs. Adami Umar, yang telah memberikan kepercayaan kepada kami untuk mengkoordinir acara Seminar Temu Budaya PKA ke-6 yang penuh dengan nuansa akademis dan ilmiah tersebut. Kemudian kepada Kepala Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata yang baru, Bapak Drs. Reza Fahlevi, M. Si., yang sudah mendukung dan menyediakan biaya untuk penerbitan buku ini. Begitu pula kepada semua pihak yang telah ikut mensukseskan seminar dan juga penerbitan buku ini sepatutnya kami sampaikan ucapan terima kasih.

Khusus kepada para pakar-pemateri yang datang dari berbagai penjuru dunia, wilayah dan daerah, dengan disiplin mereka yang beda-beda, telah menyiapkan makalahnya, tentu sesuatu yang mustahil dilupakan. Dengan jasa mereka itu yang menjadi cikal-bakal buku ini. Kepada temanteman editor yang sudah menunjukkan pula dedikasinya, kita sampaikan banyak terima kasih. Akhirnya kepada Allah jualah semuanya kita berserah diri, dan semoga buku ini bermanfaat bagi agama, nusa dan bangsa. Amiin!

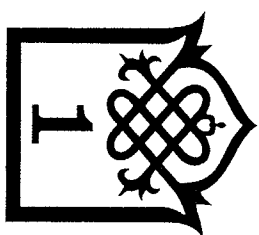
**Prof. Dr. Misri A. Muchsin, MA**

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## ACEH DI PERSIMPANGAN JALAN: Titik Balik Peradaban dan Kebangkitan Budaya Baru

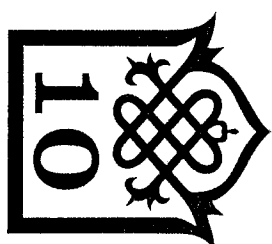
Irwan Abdullah\*

### 1. Pendahuluan

Perkembangan masyarakat dewasa ini tidak hanya menuju ke arah integrasi, tetapi juga disintegrasi sejalan dengan proses internasionalisasi nilai dan praktik sosial. Proses globalisasi mendapatkan berbagai tanggapan oleh masyarakat yang berbeda yang tampak dari proses integrasi, resistensi yang melahirkan suatu bentuk disintegrasi, atau terlihat juga dari adaptasi-adaptasi yang dilakukan suatu masyarakat terhadap berbagai pengaruh arus tersebut. Sejalan dengan itu, proses "lokalisasi" (semacam usaha penaklukan kebudayaan global) dapat saja terjadi, yang menunjuk pada percampuran unsur lama dan baru dalam berbagai proses sosial. Namun demikian, hampir tidak ada satu masyarakat pun yang terbebas sepenuhnya dari pengaruh globalisasi, sejalan dengan perbaikan transformasi dan teknologi komunikasi. Pemerintah pun yang berperan dalam menyaring jenis informasi yang masuk ke suatu negara dan masyarakat, tidak pernah mampu meredam arus informasi yang meluudak dari sudut jenis dan intensitas. Yang menjadi masalah di sini adalah bagaimana memilih dari sekian banyak informasi yang tersedia (Hammerz, 1992). Kemampuan memilih sangat ditentukan oleh kedewasaan dan wawasan dan bagaimana arus peradaban baru itu diantisipasi dan diartikulasikan dalam suatu konfigurasi nilai.

Informasi yang disalurkan melalui berbagai media (yang merupakan kekuatan paling nyata dari masyarakat modern) telah membentuk ideologi yang

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## THE INTELLECTUAL NETWORK IN THE ERA OF THE ACEH SULTANATE

Dr. Asna Husin\*

### 1. Introduction

Although Aceh<sup>1</sup> may now be considered a marginal backwater on the periphery of global currents, for many centuries it served as one nodal center for extensive commercial, cultural and intellectual currents spreading across the Islamic lands. Aceh functioned as one nexus for the bustling crosscurrents of Muslim commercial activities and Islamic cultural and intellectual networks connecting the Islamic lands from South West Asia to Central Asia and India as far as China—and eventually even linking with North American shipping commerce in the nineteenth century. That was the time when Boston clipper ships made round trips from the East coast of America to Aceh for the pepper trade. What were the reasons for its creative energy and its successful integration into the ebb and flow of transcontinental currents? One of the vital factors for Aceh's fertile civilisational activity was the organically embedded social role exercised by its cultural and

\* Presented at the *Cultural Meeting* (Temu Budaya) for the event of the *SIXTH ACEH CULTURAL WEEK*, 2013, on the theme "One Aceh in History and Culture" (Banda Aceh, 25–26th September 2013).

<sup>1</sup> "Earlier known to the Arabs and Italians as *Assi*, to the Portuguese as *Dachem*, and to the English as *Achin* or *Acheen*"; citing Anthony Reid in his recent article "Aceh," in Brill Online Reference Works <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com>.

intellectual leaders. We are referring to the 'Ulama who advised the political class and endowed them with legitimacy, and who gave the commercial leaders their moral compass, while fulfilling the fundamental task of religious and legal guidance for common people. Knowledge was arguably the most distinguishing feature of Islamic civilization, and the guild of trained knowledge-holders until recently exercised a preponderant role in almost every sphere of life. This outstanding feature has been well highlighted by Professor Franz Rosenthal in his classic study *Knowledge Triumphant*.

Today we will examine the crucial role of intellectual leadership behind the political and cultural success of Aceh in historical perspective. Truly, social and economic activities only thrive within the larger framework provided by the guiding ideas of any great civilization. Plato emphasized that ideas are more real than things, and without the light shed by master ideas the social and economic life of humanity would be groping in darkness. Our discussion falls into three sections. *First* we will briefly appraise the Islamization of Aceh in the context of the flourishing of Islamic civilization in the late medieval period whose social, political and economic activities depended on the intellectual energy of 'Ulama to provide its glue. *Secondly* we discuss the role of the 'Ulama within the intellectual and cultural networks they participated in, demonstrating the cultural unity across the Islamic world in the context of moral guidance and legal praxis, the 'Ulama education system, and the mosque. We also refer to the cultural and intellectual connections between Aceh and the rest of the Islamic world in terms of the flow of ideas and intellectual currents (debates on *wahdat al-wujud* and *wahdat al-shuhudis* one example). Finally, we explore the role of the networks of 'Ulama during the colonial wars of the nineteenth and early twentieth century demonstrating the major shift in 'Ulama activities from cultural and academic engagement providing the cement for Islamic civilization for the political and commercial classes — into social mobilization and combative leadership necessary for asserting cultural authenticity and resisting alien oppression. Our remarks conclude with modest reflections on how to revive the role of the 'Ulama for Acehnese intellectual life in order to rediscover true civilisational vitality in our age of globalized marketisation and pervasive consumerism. The lesson we must learn from examining the Past should be to repair the loss of our intellectual and cultural depths, in order to position our society for creating our own form of modernity which remains faithful to our essential values and character. Only in this way can Muslims meaningfully contribute to the emerging cosmopolitan era, or they risk being swallowed up by the hyper-capitalism of Late Modernity and forfeiting their inner connection with the transcendent realm.

## 2. Islamization of Aceh during the Peak of Islamic Civilization

The issue of the first introduction of Islam into Aceh or Indonesia (*Nusantara*), still remains inconclusive. Indonesian scholars such as Ali Hasjimy (1914–1998) and Hamka (1908–1981) were of the opinion that Islam arrived in the area of Aceh in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (3<sup>rd</sup> century AH) with the first Islamic sultanate being the kingdom of Perlak in East Aceh.<sup>3</sup>

Agreeing that Islam indeed came to the region in the 9<sup>th</sup> century or even earlier, S. Q. Fatimi<sup>4</sup> argues that while there were pockets of Muslim merchants living in Aceh and other coastal commercial centers in Southeast Asia, massive Islamization of the local populations only occurred during the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was propagated by the Sufis. However, most Western observers including the Dutch colonial scholar Snouck Hurgronje and Professor Anthony Reid of Australia dispute the above views, arguing that Islam only took hold in Aceh in the 13<sup>th</sup> century basing their arguments on the reports by the Venetian adventurer Marco Polo visiting Samudra in Aceh in 1292 and by the Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta arriving in Aceh first in 1345 and again in 1347<sup>5</sup>, as well as the location of the tombstone of the Pasai Sultan Malik al-Saleh (d. 1297). Thus, Reid stated: "Samudra itself was Muslim by 1297, to judge from the earliest of the tombstones in the ancient cemetery at Geudong"<sup>6</sup> or "*Samudra sendiri [jelah] menganut Islam pada 1297, seperti terlihat dari batu-batu nisan paling awal di pemakaman purba di Geudong.*"<sup>7</sup>

It is possible that Islam may have reached Aceh in the earlier phase of Islamic history in the wake of the movement of Muslim traders who frequented the

<sup>3</sup> Ali Hasjimy, "Apakah Kerajaan Islam Perlak Negara Islam Pertama di Asia Tenggara," a paper presented at the Conference on *The Arrival and the Development of Islam in Aceh*, organized by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Banda Aceh, July, 1978); also published in Ali Hasjimy (ed.), *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia* (Medan: PT. Almaarif, 1981); and Ahmad Jelani Halimi, *Sejarah dan Tamadun Bangsa Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Uruhan Publications, 2008) 161–16x, 179–181. Popular opinion today continues to repeat legends of a descendant of the sixth imam Ja'far al-Qadiq (d. 765) arriving in the region of Perlak and wedding the local princess, while contemporary 'Ulama often re-cycle these tales and award them credence.

<sup>4</sup> Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963) 100.

<sup>5</sup> See his description of Pasai in *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, trans. & selected H.A.R. Gibb (New Delhi: Goodword Books Pvt. Ltd., 2008) 273–276, 302.

<sup>6</sup> A. Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra* (Singapore: Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore, 2005) 5.

<sup>7</sup> A. Reid, *Menyui Sejarah Sumatra: Antara Indonesia dan Dunia*, trans. Masri Maris (Jakarta: KITLV-Jakarta & Pustaka Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011) 5.

ports of Sumatra long before their peoples converted to Islam. As these people embraced Islam it was only natural for resident merchants to promote their new faith among the local populace both through business dealings and marriage.<sup>8</sup> Muslim merchants have always combined commerce with religious vocation, proselytizing and scholarship. For example, one of the greatest 10<sup>th</sup> century scholar-travelers al-Mas'udi (d. 956) definitely reached mainland China (the very early Muslim merchant and sailor community in Guangzhou), and probably also visited the Malay Peninsula and islands of Southeast Asia.<sup>9</sup> In short, during the course of the 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries a number of Muslim communities and kingdoms may have emerged in Aceh beginning with Perlak and followed by Pasai along with others including Barus, Daya, Lamuri, Pidie and Tamiang. In the absence of unequivocal hard evidence, scholars and local historians continue to debate the issue of the first Islamic kingdom to have emerged in Aceh, but these debates fall outside the scope of our remarks today.

The gradual Islamization of coastal lands of western Sumatra during the 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries would have occurred during the consolidation and flourishing of classical Islamic civilisation. Taking the Qur'an as its guiding principle Muslim civilisation develops religious and social institutions emphasizing the role of knowledge ('*ilm*', plural '*ulum*') in all dimensions of human existence: "there is no other concept that has been operative as a determinant of Muslim civilization in all its aspects to the same extent as '*ilm*.'" Such an operation was initiated by the Prophet: "Muhammad's concept of 'knowledge' set intellectual life in Islam on its basically unchangeable course."<sup>10</sup> This unfolding began with the Qur'an and with the variety of '*ulum*' necessary for the understanding of this revealed Book, for "there is no religious statement in classical Arabic which does not suggest some reference to the Qur'an", advancing the emergence of religious culture in Madinah

<sup>8</sup> For a glimpse into early Muslim maritime activities connecting the main lands of Islam in the Arab and Persian world to China via Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, consult George F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in the Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, revised & expanded by John Carswell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995)

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad A. M. Shiboul, *Al-Mas'udi and His World* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979). He roamed the world from Spain and East Africa to China as a merchant and Muslim missionary, and knew thirteen languages. Only a few of his works survive, and the loss of his major work *The Annals of Time (Akhhbar al-Zaman)* left a major lacunae in early historiography which is lamented until today.

<sup>10</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970) 2 & 19.

and then in Iraq and Syria<sup>11</sup>. As a result, there emerged during the first Hijra century disciplines of the Qur'an readings ('*ilm qira'at*), exegesis ('*ilm tafsir*'), and grammar, followed by '*ilm hadith*, *fiqh*, *sirah*, *kalam*, *tasawwuf*, and biographical dictionaries, history, as well as didactic literature. Early in this period Muslims developed a practice of extensive travels in pursuit of knowledge (*rihlah fi talab al-ilm*), an important feature of classical Islamic scholarly culture, thereby creating networks of scholars and teachers in numerous centers of learning across the Islamic world. Finally, the Muslims adopted philosophy, medicine and natural physical sciences in the third Islamic century when Greek works were incorporated into the Islamic intellectual mold through the process of translations and integration of Hellenic sciences into Arabic-Muslim culture. This Islamisation process, which lasted for over two centuries from the mid-second to mid-fourth centuries of the Hijra, is known to be the first large-scale effort of knowledge transformation<sup>12</sup> in human history, taking "over from an alien civilization its sciences and techniques regarded as universally valid, while other manifestations of that civilization" lacking the same validity were neglected<sup>13</sup>. "Insistence upon the importance of 'knowledge' in a religious view of life may perhaps seem rather natural to us" however its "stress in a religious system is something rather unexpected and remarkable."<sup>14</sup>

This concise description of scientific and literary activities in Islam highlights several points. First, it shows that Muslims had engaged seriously in intellectual pursuits long before their acquaintance with Greek thought, and the impetus for their quest was the energy bestowed through revelation. Second, the development of the discipline of Arabic grammar (known as *al nahw* or *al-qawa'id*) is one of the earliest intellectual developments indigenous to Islam. Grammar is a formal discipline based on informal logic for it analyzes the structural patterns of the language, Arabic Qur'anic expressions and old Arab poetry in order to understand the composition of clauses, lexical phrases and

<sup>11</sup> Louis Gardet, "Religion and Culture," in P. M. Holt, et al. (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Volume 2 B on 'Islamic Society and Civilization' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 569-603.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Hamilton Gibb and others regard this era from the end of the second/eighth century to the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century to be the "golden age" of Islam, while the fifth/eleventh century until the seventh/thirteenth century was its "silver age". See Gardet, "Religion and Culture" 570. Current views tend to dismiss this categorization as distorting or misleading, since the intellectual vitality of Islamic civilization manifested vigorously until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>13</sup> Shlomo Pines, "Philosophy," in Holt, *Cambridge History of Islam* 780-823.

<sup>14</sup> Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* 22.



morphological analysis, as well as correct readings, vocalizations and other linguistic rules including syntax, metaphor, and semantics. As such it is highly rationalist and this rationalist tendency was already part of Muslim culture well before their exposure to formal Aristotelian logic. Third, the emergence of *kalam* (speculative theology) and *usul al-fiqh* (legal theory) with their tools of *qiyas* and *jihad* (rational inference or analogy, & independent rational effort) and *jadal* or *nazr* (speculative disputation, & rationalist procedures in arguments), further demonstrates that informal logical procedures were already essential indigenous Islamic intellectual tools which grew from within the Islamic ambience. Finally, Muslim religious culture exhibited the great prestige and value of knowledge reflected in networks of scholars<sup>15</sup> involving extensive travels, and academic patronage<sup>16</sup> by the wealthy and political elites. All these factors confirm the existence of the fertile basis within Islam for reception of Greek, Syriac, Persian and Indian thought and the transformation of these received components within Islamic civilization.

On the one hand, the relative maturity of intellectual activities in the Islamic environment before the era of translations of Hellenic works facilitated Muslims to integrate these sciences with proper lexical expressions and linguistic adaptations. The subtlety, flexibility, depth and scope of Arabic as an intellectual medium is quite remarkable, and those of us who do not command this language are all the poorer. On the other hand, the Islamic process of integration and transformation of received components within its revealed framework had to undergo an Islamic filtering process to confirm their validity harmonizing with the Islamic ethos. Hellenic works on medicine and astronomy were the first to be integrated. Medicine was necessary to treat illness and was in line with the Prophetic practices of curing, while astronomy as a science dealt with celestial bodies of sun, moon, planets, stars and their mathematical relation was necessary to fix the times for five daily prayers, the start of the month of Ramadan, and the direction of the qiblah. Such astronomical and mathematic disciplines were taken over from the Indians and Persians in addition to the Greeks, for Islam cast a wide net by means of which the confluence of ancient civilizations merged into its creative energy. The

<sup>15</sup> For details on the unique role of knowledge in Muslim civilization and the important position of the mosque as a center for scholarly activities, consult especially the important study by Johannes Pederson, *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French, Ed. with an introduction by Robert Hillenbrand (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*.

<sup>16</sup> For examples of patronage by the elites of intellectual engagement and their respect for scholars across the Islamic world, see the numerous instances documented in Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*

scientific and metaphysical works of important masters such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Galen were translated early on for these provided additional tools for Muslim thinkers to explore the contours of their intellectual and spiritual universe.<sup>17</sup>

Concurrently there manifested a profound current of ethical and mystic practice stressing inner purification and contemplative techniques traced back to saintly figures such as al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 110/728), Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765), and the Sufi master al-Junaid in Baghdad in the 9<sup>th</sup> century<sup>18</sup>. During this period of roughly two centuries successive generations of Arabic translations of ancient sciences, along with a variety of fields of study which emerged before and were now gaining further maturity, brought an incredible unceasing flow of knowledge that shaped Muslim civilization. Muslim engagement in this array of scientific and intellectual inquiry was not merely a process of translation, but they developed it further giving their own imprint through a process which Professor A. I. Sabra terms "naturalization". In addition, even though philosophy and the natural sciences became less emphasized after the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century, Muslims continued to produce profound thinkers and sages of the stature of Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (561-638/1165-1240), Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (1207-1273) and Ibn Khaldun (732-808/1332-1406). It was the metaphysical wisdom of Ibn 'Arabi which was interpreted anew and circulated in Aceh and South East Asia by saintly figures such as Hamzah al-Fansuri, Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani, Nur al-Din al-Raniri and 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili.

The extensive networks of 'Ulama and intense Muslim religious-intellectual activities went hand-in-hand with economic pursuits, as can clearly be perceived in the course of the maritime travels of Muslim traders. Undoubtedly the vast empire of Islam was created and maintained through a variety of financial and commercial enterprises and craft guilds, yet trading and commerce by land and sea remained a major source of revenue<sup>19</sup>. Commercial activities between South West Asia and the Indian Ocean passing by Sumatran ports and those of the Peninsula during the course of 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries had become routine, and these commercial traderroutes were used by merchants and scholars who propagated Islam in Aceh.

<sup>17</sup> A good orientation to this significant dynamic is Dimitri Gutas, *Greek into Arabic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> For portraits of early Muslim saints consult al-Hujwiri, *The Kashf al-Mahjub. The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. R.A. Nicholson (Gibb Memorial Trust / London: Luzac & Co., 1911, rpr. 1976).

<sup>19</sup> A good brief overview of Muslim economic activities in the central lands of Islam in the Middle Ages is given by Claude Cahen "Economy, Society, Institutions" in Holt, *Cambridge History of Islam*, 511-538.

The increase in Muslim urban affluence further led to the high demand for luxury goods and spices originating in China and South East Asia, especially through Aceh where maritime transport was at the mercy of the monsoon winds. The port of Pasai and several others on the northern coast of Sumatra fell on the route of these traveling vessels. Pasai was superseded in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries by the port of Aceh Darussalam. While transporting their goods merchants also propagated their faith, and the conversion of Indian trading centers to Islam increased the pool of traders-propagators of the faith welcomed in Aceh. Their proselytizing work was augmented with the arrival of families of Sufis after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258. Along with them also came touring intellectuals like Ibn Battulah who recorded the socio-religious life of the people, putting Aceh on the compass of intellectual activities connecting the whole Islamic world through extensive flows of ideas and goods.

Ideas move along the route of wealth and power, while commerce and authority depend on the backbone of ideas to flourish and grow. Intellectuals function like the nucleus of a cell, and patronage boosts its electric activity. Thus, in its openness to scholarly networks during the successive sultanates, Aceh manifested its role as one nexus for *Ulama* and religious teachers who moved “unfurling” from place to place. One moment they would be in the service of the great, acting as both spiritual and political advisors; the next founding a school in opposition to local secular authority,<sup>20</sup> signifying an intimacy and reciprocity between the *Ulama* and the commercial and political classes—with the *Ulama* providing the civilizational cement for the latter’s enterprises and power, while the latter provided space and means for the *Ulama* to teach, guide and serve. The major mercantile routes depended on nodal points or major centres where the travelling merchants could sell and trade and replenish supplies, and where they may have established local familial ties. Aceh was certainly one major nexus for this trans-continental trade and flow of ideas. We may remind ourselves of another far more widely extended example of such a nexus when Mamluk era Cairo hosted the wealthy and politically influential class of merchant-bankers from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries who conducted annual round-trips from Egypt to China, travelling overland by caravan on the outward journey then returning on the maritime route through the South China Sea and the Malacca straits with eastern spices and goods

<sup>20</sup> H.J. De Graaf, “South-East Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century,” in P.M. Holt et al., Eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Volume 2. A – The Indian Sub-Continent, South-East Asia, Africa and the Muslim West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 123–154.

for sale in the Levant.<sup>21</sup> These extremely wealthy families were mainly of Egyptian, Yamani and Indian origin and they bankrolled sultans and amirs while dominating financial activity over large parts of the Islamic realm.

### 3. Intellectual and Cultural Networks of *Ulama*

According to Chinese sources, as early as 1282 the kingdom of Samudra (Pasai) sent ambassadors by the Muslim names of Husayn and Sulayman to the emperor of China<sup>22</sup> during the Yuan Dynasty. It is not clear who they were but observers are of the opinion that the two held important positions in the sultanate of Samudra Pasai. In spite of the uncertainty over their exact status, this information provides a different view from that of Marco Polo who in 1292 visited six of the eight kingdoms he listed in the northern coast of Sumatra, and only one of these he considered to have accepted Islam. This was Ferlec [Perlak]<sup>23</sup>. His account while confirming the Indonesian scholars’ traditional view that Perlak was the first of the Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra, also suggests that the Islamic character of Pasai was not yet observed by Marco Polo in 1292—although according to the local tradition it had converted to Islam since 1267 or even earlier since 1042<sup>24</sup>. All the above records about various travels from and to Pasai highlights its position on the map of intellectual and cultural networks in this era, made possible by its geographic location as an important nexus on maritime trade-routes connecting South East Asian regions of Islam with India as well as with coastal China.

Regarding the movement of the *Ulama* and their intellectual profile, Ibn Battulah related that the Sultan of Pasai al-Malik al-Zahir was “a lover of theologians” and surrounded himself by learned men and doctors of law who “came to the audience hall to study and discuss ideas with him.”<sup>25</sup> He also reported that the two *qadis* serving the kingdom who had come to welcome him at the port were Amir Sayyid of Shiraz and Taj al-Din of Isfahan. The role of these two *alims*

<sup>21</sup> Eliyahu Ashtor, “The Karimi Merchants”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* v.1 /2 (1956) 45–56; Subhi Y. Labib, “Capitalism in Medieval Islam”, *The Journal of Economic History* v. 29 /1 (1969) 79–96 and 81–2.

<sup>22</sup> Labib, “Capitalism in Medieval Islam” 124.

<sup>23</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. R. E. Latham (London: Penguin, 1958) 225; De Graaf, “South-East Asian Islam” 124.

<sup>24</sup> See A.J. Halimi, *Sejarah dan Tamaddun Bangsa Melayu* 165.

<sup>25</sup> *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 273–274; Teuku Iskandar, “Aceh as A Muslim-Malay Cultural Center (14<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Century), a paper presented at *The First International Conference on Aceh and the Indian Ocean Studies*, organized by the Asia Research Institute (National University of Singapore) and Rehabilitation and Construction Executing Agency for Aceh and Nias (BRR), held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia (24–27 February 2007).

was another indication of Aceh serving as a center for Muslim scholarship in conjunction with its commercial function, and these two magistrates, like many other Muslim scholars across the Islamic world, moved around extensively. They traveled seeking knowledge, professional opportunity and patronage, and prospects to propagate the faith creating massive far flung networks of scholars unique to Islamic civilization. Many scholars moved from one center of learning to another at great effort or expense, attaching themselves to specific teachers for certain subjects of study. The knowledge learned was a wide spectrum of disciplines, for "Every scholar was knowledgeable in all branches; the philologist was also a Qur'anic interpreter, a theologian, philosopher, historian, and so forth, and every man of education had his portion of this universal knowledge."<sup>26</sup> This was the quality of scholars during the vitality of Islamic civilization, and the interest of the Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir in ideas thereby surrounding himself with men of wide experience and knowledge was an integral part of Muslim high culture.

Pasai was an important center of learning and literary production in the fourteenth and fifteen centuries, and was closely connected with the Malay Peninsula. The king of Malacca Parameswara married a Pasai princess and converted to Islam with the new name Muhammad Iskandar Shah. Pasai was the spiritual home for Malacca where the problems related to faith were addressed. Sultan Mansur Shah (r. c. 1457-1477) had religious works taken to Pasai for commentary and explanation by Tuan Pamatakan<sup>27</sup>. An Acehnese historian and retired professor of Leiden University the late Teuku Iskandar, and L.F. Blakel the editor of the famous Malay literary work *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah*, both argue that this work was produced in Pasai from its Arabic translation of the Persian original<sup>28</sup>, and from there it became distributed across South East Asia. Similarly, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn* and a host of other Malay writings were rendered in Pasai from largely Arabic sources as well as from their Persian originals<sup>29</sup>. This indicates that the sultanate of Samudra Pasai was on the map of the Islamic literary world transporting religious ideas and works from the central lands of Islam in the Arab and Persian spheres for the benefit of the Malay Islamic communities.

<sup>26</sup> Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book* 20

<sup>27</sup> De Graaf, "South-East Asian Islam" 126; & see also Iskandar, "Aceh as A Muslim Malay Cultural Center" 6. It is not clear who Tuan Pamatakan was, yet he must have been a religious scholar (*alim*) who interpreted religious matters for the faithful.

<sup>28</sup> See Brakel, *The Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*, 56; quoted from T. Iskandar, "Aceh as A Muslim-Malay Cultural Center" 5.

<sup>29</sup> See T. Iskandar, "Aceh as A Muslim-Malay Cultural Center".

Pasai's commercial and cultural significance may also be discerned from the following factors. *First*, the testimony of Ibn Battuta visiting Pasai in 1345 and again in 1347 shows that it possessed a sophisticated and complex political system with international relations around the Indian Ocean and China. *Second*, the sultanate started new practices of issuing gold coins under its Muslim name of Pasai — some are still in existence and kept in the hands of private collectors. *Third*, Samudra Pasai sent ships to major ports of Asia and received fleets of others in its waters as it engaged in the international transportation of goods through maritime commerce and exchanged representatives. In response to market demand Pasai produced silk, and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century grew much pepper for the China market. *Fourth*, Pasai developed a system of writing Malay using Arabic script, following the pattern of the Persians and the Saljuq Turks, giving the mark to Malay as the language of Islam. In short, Samudra Pasai's religious, scholarly and literary importance as such, along with its commercial and political significance for well over two centuries enabled the name of this kingdom "Samudra" (Sanskrit for "sea") to become the name for the entire island, now called Sumatra.

The position of Aceh within scholarly networks was further augmented with the birth of the Islamic sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. It emerged from the union in the 10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century of two small states of the very ancient Lamuri<sup>30</sup> and the Aceh Dar al-Kamal. This new Islamic polity entered upon an extended period of great prosperity especially after the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511<sup>31</sup>, and then the demise of the sultanate in Pasai in 1521. Its first great ruler Ali Mughayat Shah (r. 1514-1530) drove the Portuguese out of the commercial centers of Deli, Daya, and Pedir (modern Pidie) during the course of 1519 to 1524 when he captured Pasai —thereby unifying the whole of Aceh and beyond while laying the foundations for its power and centrality<sup>32</sup>. This commercial center based in the (modern day) city of Banda Aceh also functioned as a great center of learning and scholarly activities. While the records of Aceh Darussalam's military campaigns, its commercial engagements and political maneuverings have been preserved in some detail by both local and foreign sources, its intellectual life from the reign of Mughayat Shah (d. 1530) down to the time of Ala' al-Din Ri'ayat Shah (r. 997-

<sup>30</sup> For the discussion concerning Lamuri, see Densy Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh Jaman Sultan Iskandar Muda* (1607-1637), trans. Winarsih Arifin (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1986) 40-42.

<sup>31</sup> De Graaf, "South-East Asian Islam ..." 127; Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh* 47-49, A. Reid, Indonesian Frontiers<sup>5</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For further treatment of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam consult Hafimi, *Sejarah* 281-319; and Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh*.

1011/1589–1602) regrettably have not been properly documented. However, this lack of proper documentation does not imply the inexistence of scholarly or scientific pursuits in the sultanate.

Actually the opposite is certain, and great personalities of the stature of Hamzah al-Fansuri (d. 1016/1607)<sup>33</sup> and his colleague-pupil Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani (984–1040/1575–1630)<sup>34</sup> could not have emerged without the existence of an intellectual and spiritual culture, and their thirst for knowledge as well as their intellectual achievement is a strong indication for the existence of dynamic scholarly activities in the early period of the polity of Aceh Darussalam. Furthermore, Professor Ali Hasjmy mentioned Sheikh 'Ali al-Fansuri, father of al-Sinkili, and who was also an older brother of Hamzah Fansuri, in several of his works on Hamzah Fansuri.<sup>35</sup> Raniri in his *Bustan al-Salatin (Garden of the Sultans)* also related about three foreign *shaykhs* who arrived in Aceh in the 1580s: Abu al-Khayr b. Shaykh b. al-Hajar, Sheikh al-Yamani, and Raniri's own uncle Muhammad Jilani b. Hasan Muhammad al-Hamaydi al-Raniri.<sup>36</sup> In addition the *Bustan* also reports on the intense interest of the Acehnese towards Sufism.

Although Hamzah Fansuri and Sumatrani are only in the background of Professor Azyumardi Azra's exceptionally insightful and well documented study of

<sup>33</sup> Consult the excellent studies on the life and works of Hamzah al-Fansuri by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970); and Abdul Hadi W. M., *Tasawuf yang Terhindas: Kajian Hermeneutik terhadap Karya-karya Hamzah Fansuri* (Jakarta: Penerbit Paramadina, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> For a useful introduction to his thought, see Mohd Rusdhan bin Mohd Jalani, *The Sufi Metaphysics of Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani*, unpublished PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Exeter (U.K., May 2008); Teuku Iskandar, "Shamsuddin As-Sumatrani Tokoh Wujudiyah," in Muhammad Daud (Ed.), *Tokoh-Tokoh Sastra Klasik* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982) 45–54; Hawash Abdullah, *Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf dan Tokoh-tokohnya di Nusantara* (Surabaya: al-Ikhtlas, 1980) 35–49; Ali Hasjmi, *Kebudayaan Aceh dalam Sejarah* (Jakarta: Beuna, 1983) 198; as well as A. Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 52–54 [see note 38 below].

<sup>35</sup> Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 134

<sup>36</sup> Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 134–135; Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism* 55–56 [see note 38 below].

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the networks of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Malay-Indonesian 'Ulama in their connections with the Middle East<sup>37</sup>, he does highlight their important positions in 'Ulama' networks prior to Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1068/1658) and 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili (1024–1105/1615–1893)—not only for Aceh but also for the entire South East Asian region. Very little is known about the life of Fansuri, but his extant writings allows us a glimpse into his thinking and perception of his world. Among his prose works that have survived are *Asrar al-'Arifin (Secrets of the Gnostics)*, *Sharab al-'Ashiqin (Inoxiant of Lovers)* and *al-Muntahi (The Adept)*. His extant poems are few and include the verses whose authenticity are debated; among these is the famous *Sha'ir Perahu (Ark Poems)*. Originally from Fansur (modern Barus or Singkil), Fansuri might have received his early education in the area and then in Banda Aceh; or likely in the city of *Shahr-i Naw* in Siam (with Persians present there for some time). He is said to have traveled in search of knowledge rather widely, including Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Baghdad, "where he was initiated into the *Qadiriyyah tariqah*"<sup>38</sup> and studied "a variety of mystical schools of thought"<sup>39</sup>. He also travelled to Pahang, Kedah, Java and Stam. In addition to his *lingua franca*, the *Shaykh* mastered Arabic, Persian and probably Urdu,<sup>40</sup> and Javanese as well<sup>41</sup>. Fansuri is reported to have many students in the capital Banda Aceh, Fansur and Java. He is also reported to have founded a *dayah* (Islamic boarding school) where he taught *tasawuf* to his students including the Javanese.<sup>42</sup> Fansuri was truly the greatest poet Aceh has even known and probably the greatest Muslim Sufi poet in the Malay world<sup>43</sup>, and therefore Syed Muhammad

<sup>37</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism* 52

<sup>39</sup> Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Singapore: Horizon Books, 2001) 105; Al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah*; Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf*; further Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 52.

<sup>40</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 52

<sup>41</sup> Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 240–241.

<sup>42</sup> Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 240–241.

<sup>43</sup> Sadly his poetry is no longer much known and studied by the younger generation today, and the modern Acehnese government seems unaware of his grand contributions to the birth of high culture in Aceh and throughout South East Asia. Therefore, when the Indonesian government awarded the "Bintang Budaya Parama Dharma" in recognition of his cultural contributions on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013, no Acehnese man or woman of significance was there to receive the honor from the President of Indonesia. This is how contemporary Acehnese are blind to their great men of letters, while in other countries thinkers of his stature have become the patron saint of a nation, like Ibn 'Arabi for the Ottoman and Rumi for modern Turkey.

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Naquib Al-Attas rightly refer to him as the “Jalaluddin Rumi” of the archipelago. His extensive travels and the renditions of his works into different languages in the *Masaratara* is only a trivial testimony to his essential position in the ‘Ulama’ networks, advancing Aceh as a centre for Islamic scholarship in the region. Hamzah Fansuri, along with his pupil Sumatrani, was the one who made Malay the literary language of Islam through his poems and prose works, followed by later writers in South East Asia<sup>44</sup>. Samudra Pasai in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries spread the Malay writing and speech as the language of Southeast Asian Islam by promoting Arabic script, while Hamzah Fansuri of Aceh Darussalam raised Malay to become the literary and cultural language of the region<sup>45</sup>. Thus, Pasai and Aceh Darussalam as well as their ‘*Ulama*’ and litterateurs have made fundamental contributions to the creation of the Muslim Malay world as a major cultural realm—alongside of the Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Urdu and Swahili worlds of Islam.

Fansuri’s disciple Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani (d. 1040/1630) was honored by ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani (1116–1200/1704–1785) with the name of “gnostic”/“al-‘Arif bi-Allah al-Shaykh Shams al-Din ibn ‘Abdullah”. Shams al-Din was Aceh’s *Shaykh al-Islam*<sup>46</sup>, the next highest position after the sultan, at the time of Iskandar Muda (rg. 1607–1636). Very little is known about his early life but from his name we surmise he may have been a son of Samudra Pasai and therefore was also known as Shams al-Din of Pasai. Although he did not travel as wide as Fansuri, he is reported to have studied in Java, and with a certain Sheykh Muhammad ibn Fadl Allah of Burtanpur in India<sup>47</sup>. Sumatrani mustered several languages, and was the first scholar of the Malay Muslim world to have written his works in both Malay and Arabic, including *Jawhar al-Haqaiq* (*Essence of Realities*), and has left behind more books than his teacher Fansuri<sup>48</sup>. We do not know with certainty of his Sufi *tariqah* but he was reported to have initiated the Sultan Iskandar Muda into the Naqshbandiyyah Order<sup>49</sup>. As far as Sufi teachings are concerned, both Sumatrani and Fansuri fall within the Ibn ‘Arabi or Akbarian school of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (*Oneness of Being*), emphasizing that there is no true reality except the Absolute Truth or God whose theophanic effulgence manifested

<sup>44</sup> For details see Al-Attas, *The Mysticism 186–197*; Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 135 & 204–204.

<sup>45</sup> See Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier* 336

<sup>46</sup> For an account of his life and the debates surrounding his person, consult Jailani, *Sufi Metaphysics* 24–35; Iskandar, “Shamsuddin”; Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 52–54; Halimi, *Sejarah* 307–310; Riddell, *Islam* 110–116.

<sup>47</sup> Halimi, *Sejarah* 307.

<sup>48</sup> Jailani, *The Sufi Metaphysics* 34

<sup>49</sup> Riddell, *Islam* 110; Halimi, *Sejarah* 307; Jailani, *The Sufi Metaphysics* 34

through His Names and Qualities comprises all creation, although there are some definite differences between the two.<sup>50</sup>

Their complex metaphysical ideas led Raniri and a few others to accuse them as falling into *zandaqah* (atheist heresy) and infidelity. However, many other scholar-Sufis have defended these two *Shaykhs* and argued succinctly in support of their metaphysical ideas as falling within the veritable Islamic spiritual universe. Perhaps the most cogent and profound examination of their doctrines was offered by the great contemporary scholar of South East Asian Islam Professor Syed Naquib Al-Attas. He examined these events closely and demonstrated that the teachings of Fansuri, Sumatrani as well as Raniri are in essence the same—and thus one cannot categorize the first two as “heretics”<sup>51</sup>. Raniri’s attack seems, among others, to be motivated by the debates on the issue of *Wahdat al-Wujud* and *Wahdat al-Shuhud* (*Unity of Witnessing*) that emphasizes a marked separation between God and His creation. Such debates had taken place in India just before they arose in Aceh, so Raniri’s attack against the *Shaykh* may be inspired by what he learned in his birth place in India. Whatever the reason for this bitter controversy, Sumatrani and Fansuri are ranked among the great Acehese saints (*wali*, plural *awliya*) whose lives and work helped enshrine Aceh as a major intellectual and spiritual nexus and certainly contributed to the depths of Islamic scholarship in South East Asia.

In spite of his being a foreigner Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1068/1658) was indeed a great thinker of Aceh as well as for the Malay-Indonesian world, and his name was adopted for the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh founded in 1960. He arrived in Aceh in 1047/1637 during the reign of Iskandar Thani (rg. 1636–1641) and became the *Shaykh al-Islam* for the next seven years (1047–1054/1637–1644) until he abruptly left Aceh two and a half years after the Sultanah Saftyyat al-Din assumed the throne. Raniri was born in Ranir (modern Rander) in Gujarat of India to a diaspora Hadrami Muslim family with scholarly orientations. Some have suggested that his mother was Malay from whom he acquired the Malay language early on in his life, allowing him to write as soon as

<sup>50</sup> See Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 114–136; Riddell, *Islam* 104–116.

<sup>51</sup> For a brief overview on reasons for Raniri’s attacks against Fansuri and Sumatrani, consult Asna Husin, “Reviving Islamic Philosophy: Problems and Possibilities in Indonesia,” in *Philosophia Islamica – The Journal of the International Society for Islamic Philosophy* (ISIP), Vol. 1, no. 1 (2010) 113–132; for a lengthy account refer to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Raniry and the Wajidiyyah of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Aceh* (Singapore: The Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, 1966).

he arrived in Aceh<sup>52</sup>. Professor Azra<sup>53</sup> has provided an excellent account of Raniri's academic milieu in Ranir providing space for scholars, like his uncle al-Humaydi mentioned earlier, to travel back and forth from India, Hadramawt, Yemen, Mecca and Medina as well as the Indonesian-Malay world<sup>54</sup>. He studied in a number of learning centers in Gujarat, Hadramawt, and the *Haramayn* and was initiated into Rifa'iyyah *tariqah* as well as Ayydarusiyah and Qadiriyyah orders. Raniri was a controversial scholar who condemned Fansuri and Sumatrani to be heretics, had their books burned, and persecuted their followers to death; his *Hujjat al-Siddiq li-Daf' al-Zindiq (Truthful Proofs to Repel the Heretics)* was developed to argue against his two predecessors whom he considered to be promoting pantheistic ideas and false beliefs. Nevertheless Raniri contributed a great deal to "the intensification of the Islamic process in the Malay-Indonesian world,"<sup>55</sup> and was a prolific writer who had authored thirty works according to the list by Ahmad Daudy<sup>56</sup>, with *Bustan al-Salatin* being the lengthiest of his treatises. In spite of the above controversy, Raniri was a great 'alim of Aceh whose scholarly activities were indeed impressive. His teachings and his impact through his students on intellectual circles strengthened the position of Aceh as a center of learning, and as a fertile arena for different religious ideas and persuasions. Raniri provides a relevant index to the breadth of academic activities in Aceh and the interest of people in spiritual metaphysics prior and during his presence in the Sultanate.

Finally we reach 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili (1024-1105/1615-1893) who is known simply as "Shaykh Kuala" (in Malay: Syiah Kuala). He was the greatest 'alim at the court of Aceh Darussalam, both in terms of his influence and station as well as in the power and impact of his teachings. We should not neglect to mention that between Raniri and Syiah Kuala, a certain Sayf al-Rijal served Aceh as *Shaykh al-Islam* for eighteen years (1643-1661) but very little is known about him and his scholarly activities<sup>57</sup>. Therefore, we will focus here upon al-

<sup>52</sup> For differing views on his Malay proficiency, see Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 54; Riddell, *Islam* 117; Al-Attas, *Raniry* 12.

<sup>53</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 52-69.

<sup>54</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 55.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted by A. H. Johns, in Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 66

<sup>56</sup> Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsep Sufi Murtadhin Ar-Raniry* (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983) 48-53.

<sup>57</sup> Raniri reported Sayf al-Rijal's mastery in the debates to defend his Sufi ideas which were widely followed in Aceh, as cited by Riddell in Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 60-61. An interesting study on the controversy surrounding the Aceh court during the era of Sayf al-Rijal which caused him to lose his life, is provided by Sher Bannu

Sinkili (d. 1105/1893) who held the position of *Qadi Malik al-'Adil*<sup>58</sup> for thirty-two years (1072-1105/1661-1693) under the patronage of four successive Queens who ruled Aceh for fifty-nine years: Sultanah Safiyat al-Din (rg. 1051-1086/1641-1675), Nur 'Alam Naqiyat al-Din (rg. 1086-1088/1675-1678), Zakkiyyat al-Din (rg. 1088-1098/1678-1688), and Kamalat al-Din (1096-1109/1688-99). Haijing from Fansur or Singkil on the southwestern coast of Aceh, Sinkili studied the Islamic religious sciences first with his father who ran a *madrasah* in his native village, and then with other teachers in this district<sup>59</sup>. Later in his teens he travelled to Banda Aceh and is reported to have studied with Sumatrani during the latter's final years. Those were years of controversy and struggles at the court of Aceh Darussalam due to the persecution of the *wujudiyah* followers by Raniri with the sanction of the government<sup>60</sup>. Sinkili seemed to disengage himself from the controversies and instead departed to Arabia around 1052/1642 to further his study<sup>61</sup>. Azra provides a long list of Sinkili's Arabian networks while a student in the Hijaz and other areas in the Arab world. He is reported to have traveled a great deal to a number of places and sat at the feet of some of the most famous teachers at the time including Ahmad al-Qushashi (b. 991/1538) and Ibrahim al-Kurani (1023-1101/1614-1690) who initiated Singkil into the *Shattariyyah* order and became his *khalifah* upon his return to Aceh. Sinkili is reported to have studied a range of specialized disciplines of knowledge, both 'ilm al-zahir (exoteric knowledge) and 'ilm al-batin (esoteric knowledge), with nineteen teachers, and had personal contacts and relations with twenty seven other 'Ulama' during the nineteen years of his stay in Arabia before he returned to Aceh in 1072/1661<sup>62</sup>.

A. L. Khan, "What Happened to Sayf al-Rijal?," in *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde* (April, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> An informed study is needed to unpack the implications of this change in title from *Shaykh al-Islam* used previously as the title of the highest religious position at the Aceh court, higher than the *Qadi Malik al-'Adil* (Jaitani, *The Sufi Metaphysics* 27), while now the highest position was designated as *Qadi Malik al-'Adil* - not *Shaykh al-Islam*. Was there someone else as serving as *Shaykh al-Islam* placed above al-Sinkili? This appears to be quite unlikely.

<sup>59</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 70-71

<sup>60</sup> For this development, see Al-Attas, *Raniry* 60-62; Jaitani *Sufi Metaphysics* 311; Abdul Hadi, *Tasawuf* 158-160; Riddell, *Islam* 119-120

<sup>61</sup> The excellent account by Azra on Sinkili's intellectual networks may be founded in his *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 70-86. Some have argued that Sinkili's departure for Arabia was at the behest of the reigning Sultanah. Even though this may have been the case, this should not deny Sinkili's own enthusiasm to study in the Haramayn following the common practice of academic culture in Aceh and throughout the Muslim world in that era.

<sup>62</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 73-77

“His education was undeniably complete from *shari'ah*, *fiqh*, *hadith*, and other related esoteric disciplines to *kalam*, and *tasawwuf* or esoteric sciences.<sup>63</sup>” Regarding his scholarly network Azra notes: “The fact that most of his teachers and acquaintances are recorded in Arabic biographical dictionaries indicates the incontestable prominence of al-Sinkili's intellectual milieu. Coming from fringe region of the Muslim world, he entered the core of the scholarly networks and won the favour of the major scholars in the Haramayn.”<sup>64</sup>

Upon returning to Aceh Sinkili was summoned by a representative of the Sultanah for an interview before he was assigned the position of *Qadi Malik al-'Adil*. If the story of the assassination of the *Shaykh al-Islam* Sayf al-Rijal a few months before his arrival is correct<sup>65</sup>, then Singkili may have faced negative consequences in the aftermath of the demise of a high ranking *Shaykh* and the controversies surrounding his assassination. Whatever the case may be, the *Qadi* appears to have adjusted to the situation and performed his duty handling religious affairs under the leadership of strong assertive women, while also teaching and writing books. He is reported to have founded a *dayrah* in Banda Aceh and had numerous students coming from different areas of the archipelago. The topics of his writings encompass *fiqh*, *tasawwuf*, law, the metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabi, *adab* between teachers and students and *tafsir*<sup>66</sup>. His *tafsir* work entitled *Tarjuman al-Mustafid (Interpretation of the Beneficial)* was the first complete commentary of the Quran in the Malay world, and he was the first 'alim ever to assume the enormous task of interpreting the whole Quran in Malay, although a fragmentary commentary of surah 18 *al-Kahf* had been done at the time of Fansuri or Sumatran<sup>67</sup>. In addition to *tafsir*, he has written other treatises on both '*ilm al-zahir* and '*ilm al-batin* for he was trying to harmonize *shari'ah* (outer requirements of the faith) and *tasawwuf* (the inner requirements), as Ghazali (d. 1111) had done six centuries earlier. Sinkili wrote several of his works at the request of the Sultanahs. His book on jurisprudence *Mir'at al-Tullab (Mirror for Pupils)* was commissioned by Sultanah Safiyat al-Din and was completed in 1074/1663, while a commentary on the *Arba'in Hadith (Forty Hadiths)* of al-Nawawi (d. 1277) and the *Risalah Adab Murid akan Shaykh (On the Code of Conduct for Students toward the Master)* for Sultanah Zakiyat al-Din. As an '*alim* Sinkili's spirit of writing “differs from Hamzah and Shams al-Din, [yet] we find no evidence in his teachings

<sup>63</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 77.

<sup>64</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 77.

<sup>65</sup> For details see Khan, “What Happened to Sayf al-Rijal?”

<sup>66</sup> Riddell, *Islam* 29; Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 77-84

<sup>67</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 80.

that explicitly opposes their teachings. He also had the same attitude towards al-Raniri. Only implicitly does he criticize the way al-Raniri carried out his renewal.”<sup>68</sup> Singkili died in 1105/1893 and was buried in the complex of his *dayrah* near a river mouth (*kuala*) of Banda Aceh, and therefore he was referred to as Syiah Kuala (a great '*alim* or *shaykh* of the *kuala*), leaving behind his great intellectual legacy and numerous students. In honor of his cultural and intellectual contributions, his name was rightly adopted by the first university in Aceh (Universitas Syiah Kuala) founded in 1959. The '*Shaykh* of the River Mouth' may be the greatest '*alim* with international reputation and an extensive intellectual network that Aceh ever knew. The intellectual treasure he left behind and the network of students across the archipelago is Aceh's other distinguishing mark of its real cultural significance. This precious legacy demands serious study by Aceh's younger generation if Aceh hopes to reclaim some of its amazing intellectual past.

#### 4. 'Ulama Networking During the Colonial Wars

With the demise of Syiah Kuala in 1693 and the removal of the Sultanah Kamalat al-Din in 1109/1699, Aceh entered the eighteenth century facing both internal and external problems. Internally, the Sultanate lost much of its power since its helm was reduced to a mere symbol due to political intrigues and power struggles<sup>69</sup>, while externally the “Dutch naval and commercial power ensured the permanent dissolution of the Achehese empire ...”<sup>70</sup> in its efforts to monopolize the spice trade. Aceh's antagonism with the Dutch received the staunch response from its cultural and intellectual community or the '*Ulama*'. Yet, there was a duration of roughly eighty years between the death of Sinkili and the Dutch colonial war in Aceh which began in 1873 when the '*Ulama*' led by Teungku Chik di Tiro waged the *jihad* to resist their encroachment. What was the nature of intellectual activities and the scholarly networks of the Aceh '*Ulama*' during this period? Who were the major players among this learned class at the time? To which centers of learning would most Achehese students go to further their Islamic studies? More serious research is required in order to fill in the blanks. In spite of the political uncertainty in the Sultanate, intellectual activities should have continued and this is attested by the account of the mid-eighteenth century Patani '*alim* Daud al-Fatani who

<sup>68</sup> Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 72

<sup>69</sup> A gripping account of both Aceh's internal and external problems is provided by Anthony Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra: Acheh, the Netherlands and Britain* 1858-1898 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); see also C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehese*, trans. A. W. S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1906) 88-95.

<sup>70</sup> Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra* 5.

"traveled to Aceh, where he studied for two years with Muhammad Zayd b. Faqih Jalal al-Din al-Ashi."<sup>71</sup> The fact that a student from far away as Patani still came to Aceh to study in the second half or the late eighteenth century indicates that the attraction of Aceh as a center of learning had not completely disappeared. So, there may have been more scholars like al-Ashi at the court of Aceh at the dawn of the colonial war.

Colonial occupation and exploitation galvanized the strongest responses from the Acehnese, led foremost by their '*Ulama* and other conscious citizens. It is a sad reality that the class of land owners or feudal lords rather cooperated and were co-opted by the Dutch, and generally did not participate in any resistance to alien occupation. The response of the '*Ulama* may be divided into two types: combative forces and military epic. Teungku Chik Muhammad Saman Di Tiro was one of the most important leaders of the '*Ulama*'s defensive armed struggle. Born in 1251/1836 in Tiro (Pidie) to a scholarly family from both parental sides, Chik Di Tiro studied Islamic disciplines first from his father and uncle who were both great '*alims* in that area. Subsequently he studied in several other *dayahs*, including the famous *dayah* Di Le Leubeuc led by Teungku Chik Di Jan, also known as Teungku Muhammad Arshad. He then traveled to Mecca to perform the *hajj* and to further his study. It is not clear when he went to Mecca nor how long did he stay, but he was reported to have learned there not only the Islamic disciplines but also "political strategies to resist the colonials."<sup>72</sup> The story of Indonesian students gaining anti-Dutch awareness in the Haramayn has been well documented, including by the political agent and scholar Hurgronje, and therefore it is probable that Tgk. Chik Di Tiro returned to Aceh shortly before or after the Dutch aggression in 1873.<sup>73</sup>

When the war broke out, he rallied his students and the populace to fight, while his own weapons were a sword and an Acehnese *rencong*. Although there were many other revolutionary leaders during the Aceh war, Chik Di Tiro is best remembered for his bravery and uncompromising integrity. He was "more than any other responsible for portraying the resistance as a *perang sabil* (holy war) and

<sup>71</sup> Quoting Abdullah, in Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism* 124

<sup>72</sup> *Ensiklopedi Ulama Besar Aceh*, Vol. 1 (Banda Aceh: LKAS, 2010), 263

<sup>73</sup> For an account of the Dutch colonial war in Aceh consult the Indonesian-English volume *Perang Kolonial Belanda di Aceh [Dutch Colonial War in Aceh]*, eds. Muhammad Hasan Basry and Ibrahim Alfian (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1990).

uniting the '*Ulama* behind it after 1881."<sup>74</sup> The regiments of Chik Di Tiro were feared by the Dutch for they had proven their strategic ability and fearlessness. In addition to armed resistance, he also sent letters inviting the Dutch officials to embrace Islam in order to make them acceptable to the Acehnese public. Though he did not succeed in persuading them, such correspondence demonstrates Tgk. Di Tiro's humane dimension preferring peace rather than war. He was indeed a heroic patriotic leader who met his death by poison in 1891, leaving behind two sons who continued to lead the *jihad* until they themselves were killed in 1896. To honor his contributions in defending the country, Chik Di Tiro has been recognized as a national hero (*pahlawan nasional*), his patriotism has taught the younger generation the meaning of honor and sacrifice, putting religion and nation above one own life. Unlike the pre-war '*Ulama* like Fansuri or Sinkili who utilized their networks to increase their knowledge and scholarly experience, the combative '*Ulama* used their networks to increase their chances of winning their *fi sabilillah* wars.

In addition to combative engagements, the '*Ulama* were also responsible for creating martial epics known as the *Hikayat Prang Sabil* (Holy War Epic), which served the function of fanning enthusiasm and justifying armed resistance against alien rule. The most famous epic was written by Teungku Chik Haji Muhammad Pante Kulu<sup>75</sup>. He was born in the village of Pante Kulu, Tieu, Pidie in 1251/1836? (in the same year of Chik Di Tiro) in a family of '*Ulama*. This village is not far from Tiro, and thus it is possible that Muhammad Saman and Muhammad Pante Kulu had become friends even in their tender years. The latter first studied Islamic sciences including the Quran, *hadith* and *tafsir* as well as Jawi Language with his father before continuing his education in Dayah Cut of Teungku Chik Muhammad Amin di Tiro (uncle of Chik di Tiro?), where the two might have been classmates. With an *ijazah* from his teacher, Teungku di Pante Kulu traveled to Mecca to perform *hajj* and to pursue his studies. There is no information when he departed to Arabia or who were his teachers, but he was reported to have studied history, logic, philosophy and Arabic literature and stayed in Mecca for four years. While studying Arabic literature he became acquainted with heroic poems believed to have been written by the Prophet's Companion Hassan b. Thabit (the famous poet of the Ansar in Madinah). These poems made a deep impact on Muhammad Pante Kulu's heart. He then became interested in other poems including those uttered by

<sup>74</sup> Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra* 204 /fn. 4; see also Hurgronje, *The Acehnese* vol. 1, 178-180.

<sup>75</sup> For a concise biography of Chik Pante Kulu see *Ensiklopedi Ulama Besar Aceh*, Vol. II (Banda Aceh: LKAS, 2010), 605-626.



Ka'ab b. Zuhayr (an old Arab & Muslim poet). With this experience Teungku Di Panje Kulu returned home to compose the Hikayat Prang Sabias a model patriotic '*alim* and the greatest martial poet to have emerged in the archipelago. The Hikayat carries four themes: the stories of Ayn Mardhiyyah, The Elephant Troops, Sayyid Salm, and how a dead slave regains a new life. All of these stories were to encourage people to fight, and upon finishing it the *Hikayat* was given as a gift to his friend Teungku Chik Di Tiro who popularized the Epic through his sermons, discussions and living example. Thus these two popular leaders joined hand-in-hand in fierce resistance against the Dutch.

War resisting the colonial occupation required sacrifices beyond physical and spiritual levels. The '*Ulama* including Chik Di Tiro and Chik Panje Kulu had sacrificed their education, students and intellectual engagements as they focused on guns and combat. Under these conditions the discourse that emerged would be related to the social context which could be associated either with fear and failure, or with effective strategy and success, or both. Amazingly, the Acehnese people, due to the impetus provided by the notion of *perang suci* (holy war), concentrated on the positive aspect since they viewed the colonial war within the context of a broader spiritual universe rather than as a profane phenomenon. On the pragmatic level this shift was necessary yet the results were very unfortunate. This led to the real neglect of education, teaching activities and academic pursuits for since the colonial war the quality of dayah education has never returned to its pre-war conditions. In short, our exploration into the role of networks of '*Ulama* during the colonial wars in the nineteenth century shows a major shift in their activities from cultural and academic engagement providing the cement for the political and commercial classes — into the collective social and combatively dedicated popular forces necessary for asserting cultural authenticity and resisting oppression.

### 5. Conclusion and Reflections

A Prophetic statement affirms that the people of knowledge are the real heirs to the prophets (*...warathat al-ambiyā*). Over long centuries of Islamic civilization this ideal exhibited a certain degree of truth, for the '*Ulama* functioned as guardians of the religious law, as bearers of the moral ideals of the community, and as trainers and guides of minds and hearts. We may observe significant features of their social and intellectual functions over time in providing the cement which bound Muslim societies together into a larger unity far above local particularities, and seeking to inform all activities with a lively sense of the transcendent origin and purpose of life. By virtue of their being organically embedded within their own specific local society, while simultaneously participating in the trans-national fraternity of

intellectual and spiritual leadership through active networks of like-minded scholars and thinkers, the '*Ulama* vehicled a set of higher concerns which common people depended upon for mitigating abuses or imbalances from the political class. In this sense the symbiosis between merchants and scholars endowed Islamic civilization with a powerful dynamic for checking abuses and for creative advance. Within the over-arching framework provided by the guiding ideas of Islamic civilization, this special group of knowledge-possessioners could draw upon intellectual and human resources far wider and deeper than was offered by anyone society or people. We have seen that social, political and economic activities ultimately relied upon the intellectual vitality of the '*Ulama* to provide the necessary cement fostering communal purpose and direction. The '*Ulama* advised the political class and lent them legitimacy, while providing the commercial class their moral compass and legal guidelines.

However, this reality may also work to degrade and stall society, when the special tasks and responsibility of its intellectual and spiritual leadership fails to replenish itself by live engagement with the timeless values and legacy of master ideas and principles enshrined in the underlying sources of Muslim activity. We may observe this unfortunate state of affairs across the Muslim world today, where we find that a certain proportion of the '*Ulama* have lost touch with those timeless principles and have devolved into mere state functionaries or self-serving cliques quite remote from the actual needs of the real world and their own societies. Quite simply: *their response to modernity is inadequate*.<sup>76</sup> This failure of intellectual and moral leadership is one of the most pervasive features of our age of Late Modernity throughout the Islamic world. If Muslims wish to recapture their forward-moving dynamic and awaken a more adequate understanding of their contemporary reality, then the '*Ulama* should transform themselves in order to serve the best interests of their people and nation and the planet. This transformation must begin in the mind and the spirit, and calls for a new jihad — *jihad al-'aql*. Actually, this was the theme of the educational manual which our Peace Education Program produced for use in the Islamic schools of Aceh, in cooperation with enlightened and forward looking leaders among our '*Ulama*.

In the past the '*Ulama* of Aceh had sufficient sense of purpose and strength of will to work closely with their people in resisting colonial occupation. They relied on the versatility of Islam's legacy of jihad, and harnessed it for the

<sup>76</sup> I am indebted to Professor Karim Douglas Crow of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia for allowing me to appropriate his analysis on the inadequacy of Muslim responses to the contemporary problems faced by the Ummah and for allowing me to use his precious phrase.

requirements of their society as they understood it. Chik Di Tiro called for a total societal mobilization to repel colonial aggression—even declaring that the jihad he advocated had now become an ‘individual obligation’ (*fard ‘ayn*) upon every man and woman, not merely a ‘collective obligation’ (which is the normative position in Sunni legal teachings). Indeed, women played an active and dramatic part in this effort, and among the heroes of Aceh’s resistance were many notable women leaders. The heroic sacrifices and impressive collective unity of their resistance asserted Aceh’s cultural authenticity and resisted alien domination, and helped define our recent history. Nevertheless, our conditions now differ in many ways from those prevailing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. ✱

We saw from our brief glance at the historical unfolding of intellectual currents that ideas move along the route of wealth and power, and that Aceh played a significant role as one nexus of commerce and scholarship which advanced the cultural and intellectual life of Muslims in South East Asia. Muslims in Aceh were not isolated or marginalized from important flows of wealth and ideas in the central lands of the Islamic world, rather they were enabled to participate in these currents as a major centre linked to a string of interconnected centres. Here also the function of the ‘*Ulama*’ was a crucial component helping to insure the creative engagement with ideas and institutions which promoted the wellbeing of their people. It is evident today that our situation has been reversed, and Aceh—like so many other Muslim societies—is receiving and consuming but not creating or producing, whether in material goods (other than bananas or fish), and more importantly in ideas and in understanding. The truth is that Muslims over the past century have become vulnerable to new forms of exploitation and subservience. The present ‘world system’ operating everywhere (now even in former communist states) is that peculiar brand of free market capitalism marked by financialisation and the marketisation of societies which degrades the human spirit and cheapens our lives even while providing an abundance of material ‘things’ to a growing percentage of the population. The expanding urban Muslim Middle Class is rushing heedlessly to embrace this modern lifestyle and unthinkingly swallow the values and principles embedded in it. Inwardly they are becoming orphaned from the timeless principles and master ideas which Islam as a revealed truth was built upon. It is not possible in the short time given us to explain this tragedy in more detail, but a word to the wise is sufficient.

Here is the place where one might hope that an enlightened and forward looking class of ‘*Ulama*’ and Muslim intellectuals could offer real guidance and hope for Muslims today, especially our youth. Are the ‘*Ulama*’ and Muslim intellectuals in many Muslim societies up to date with the true nature of our

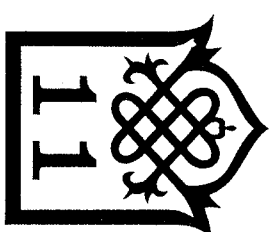
planetary situation, our geo-political and economic complexities, our intellectual—scientific—and metaphysical challenges? Are they intelligent enough, well educated enough, and competent to look beyond the simplistic formulas and slogans which so often cloud the air when ‘Islam’ is pointed to as the solution to our dilemma? While our youth are on YouTube and absorbed with their smart phones communicating frivolous vanities, can our ‘*Ulama*’ and the Muslim intellectual class offer real guidance and understanding of the world and the human being? What is actually happening is the emergence of a “new ‘*Ulama*’” quietly side-stepping and going around the traditional ‘*Ulama*’ leaders. Younger professional people with a clearer grasp of our global reality, and who take the trouble to educate themselves about the timeless values taught by Islam, and who labor to effect meaningful changes and reform their own society—these are the new ‘*Ulama*’. They are actively engaged in their own intellectual networks through the digital media and non-traditional ways of learning and acting, and some work in the non-governmental sphere as activists seeking to guide to truth and correct abuses. Sadly, their understanding of Islam is also very inadequate.

Perhaps what needs to occur to insure that our ‘*Ulama*’ emerge once again as a vanguard and conscience of people in society is to train and educate a new generation of religious leaders to combine the traditional functions and mindset with our new global awareness and concerns. Here I will limit myself to pointing out that in terms of the educational curriculum, the vast majority of Islamic teaching institutions in Aceh have not upgraded or revised their teaching manuals and textbooks for more than a century. This is an area of major concern and urgency, but the majority of ‘*Ulama*’ exhibit complacency and even distrust when asked to consider real improvements in their educational methods. Perhaps a cooperative effort between Islamic schools, the private sector, and government might produce better results. Many ‘*Ulama*’ leaders have expressed the interest in changing their curriculum but the financial requirements have not forthcoming.

I have taken your attention for too long, and will close my remarks with a plea to establish a genuine Research Institute of high competence and with generous funding to gather accurate information and disseminate its results effectively, which will be dedicated to the study of the ‘*Ulama*’ and the historical reality of Aceh in the past and the present. Society and state will be better served when we gain a more accurate and detailed understanding of our own history and its reality. Repeating self-comforting myths and pious legends is not adequate to guide us in our search for a better future grounded on the best of what our past may offer. This Research Institute could be independent, or might be affiliated with established universities, but it must be planned and realized with the highest

standards, and should provide a networking competence for sharing work and results with other national and global bodies. It should be staffed both by the best researchers we can provide, as well as by foreign scholars. Most of us are more concerned with material pursuits in our worldly lives, but to respect and honor the life of the mind and the heart of those great Ulama leaders who labored and suffered to spread their knowledge and beneficial understanding for the common good of humanity — demands that we pay serious attention to improving the intellectual environment in which we move and breath.

All Praise to GOD the Exalted ALLMIGHTY and ALLFORGIVING!



**BATU ACEH:**

**SUMBANGAN ACEH KEPADA SEJARAH, SENI  
BUDAYA SERTA TAMADUN DI DUNIA MELAYU**

**PROF. DATO' DR. OTHMAN YATIM<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Pengenalan**

Aceh muncul sebagai satu kuasa yang tekkuat di Dunia Melayu, khususnya selepas kejatuhan empayar Melaka ke tangan Portugis pada tahun 1511. Aceh telah menjadi pusat perdagangan serantau yangtermasyhur dan sekaligus menjadi pusat penyebaran Islam dan ilmu. Di bawah pemerintahan kesultannya, khususnya pada zaman Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam, Aceh mencapai kemuncak kecemerlangannya dari pelbagai perspektif khususnya dari segi keilmuan, seni (tampak dan persembahan), budaya dan tamadun Islam. Ini terbukti melalui beberapa warisan seni dan budaya yang masih wujud hingga ke hari ini, sama ada di Aceh sendiri mahu pun di beberapa negara di Dunia Melayu ini. Salah satu daripada warisan itu ialah batu nisan yang agak unik yang kini dikenali sebagai batu Aceh (lihat peta yang menggambarkan luasnya penyebaran seni dan budaya Batu Aceh ini).

Kini kedatangan penduduk-penduduk Indonesia ke Malaysia sejak akhir-akhir ini, termasuk dari Aceh, telah menimbulkan kegawatan politik, ekonomi dan social di Malaysia dan sedikit sebanyak di negara Indonesia sendiri. Fenomena ini (penghijrahan) bukanlah satu perkara yang baru. Ia pernah terjadi dalam sejarah dan ia berlaku dalam konteks dan situasi yang berbeza. Dahulu hanya lautan yang

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