

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND
CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

THE MALAY EXPOSITION OF AL-SANUSI'S UMM AL-BARAMIN:
WITH AN ANNOTATED TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION OF
ITS MALAY TEXT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND
CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE M.A. DEGREE

BY
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KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
FEBRUARY, 2000



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APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master (M.A.) in Islamic Thought

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

To

my parents:

Hj Jusoh and Hajjah Wan Zabidah

my wife

Norhusniah

and my children

'Arief, Yusran (d.1998) and 'Aisyah

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Bidayat</i>	Muhammad Zayn, <i>Bidayat al-Hidayah</i>
<i>Budda</i>	Isma'il, <i>Mā la Budda Minhu</i>
<i>Creed</i>	A. J. Wensinck, <i>The Muslim Creed</i>
<i>EI/First</i>	E.J. Brill's First Encyclopedia of-Islām
<i>EI²</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islām</i>
<i>Faridah</i>	Aḥmad al-Faṭānī, <i>Farīdat al-Ḥarā'id fi 'Ilm al-'Aqā'id</i>
<i>GAL</i>	Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i>
<i>GALS</i>	Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i> , the Supplementband
<i>HD</i>	al-Dusūqī, <i>Ḥāshiyat al-Dusūqī 'alā Matn of Umm al-Barāhīn</i>
<i>HMS</i>	al-Bajūrī, <i>Ḥāshiyat 'alā Matn al-Sanūsīyyah</i>
<i>Hujjat</i>	al-Attas, <i>A Commentary on the Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddiq al-Rāniri</i>
<i>Jam'</i>	al-Subkī, <i>Jam' al-Jawāmi'</i>
<i>JMBRAS</i>	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>Kifayat</i>	al-Faḡāli, <i>Kifāyat al-'Awām</i>
<i>Kesusasteraan</i>	Zalila, <i>Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional</i>
<i>Kubra</i>	al-Sanūsī, <i>Sharḥ al-Sanūsīyyat al-Kubrā</i>
<i>Major</i>	Yasin, <i>Theology and Tafsir in the Major Works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī</i>
<i>Makkah</i>	Snouck, <i>Makkah in the Latter Part of the 19th Century</i>
<i>Manusia</i>	Daudy, <i>Allāh dan Manusia</i>
<i>MMNA</i>	Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muḥammad Nahdī wa Awlāduhu
<i>Murid</i>	Dawūd al-Faṭānī, <i>Ḍiyā' al-Murīd</i>
<i>Nadwah</i>	WMS, <i>Nadwah Ilmiah Tokoh 'Ulamā'</i>

<i>Najin</i>	Zayn al-'Abidin al-Faṭānī, <i>'Aqīdat al-Nājīn</i>
<i>Naskhah</i>	Maḥayudīn Yahaya, <i>Naskhah Jawi Sejarah dan Teks</i>
<i>Nawawi</i>	Nawawi al-Bantani, <i>on Intellectual Master of the Pesantren Tradition</i>
<i>Nayl</i>	Aḥmad Bābā, <i>Nayl al-Ibtihāj</i>
<i>Oldest</i>	al-Attas, <i>The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqā'id al-Nasafi.</i>
<i>Osantara</i>	Omar Awang, <i>The Umm al-Barāhīn</i>
<i>Pemikiran</i>	'Abd al-Raḥmān, <i>Pemikiran Umat Islām di Nusantara</i>
<i>Prolegomena</i>	al-Attas, <i>Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islām</i>
<i>Rahman</i>	Azhari, <i>'Atṭiyyat al-Raḥmān</i>
<i>Rasionalisme</i>	Shafi'i Abū Bakar, <i>Pengaruh Rasionalisme di dalam Islām</i>
<i>Roots</i>	Ceric, <i>Roots in Synthetic Theology in Islām</i>
<i>SAQF</i>	Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadīr al-Faṭānī
<i>Sdafa</i>	WMS, <i>Shaykh Dawud b. 'Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī, Ulama' dan Pengarang Terulung Asia Tenggara.</i>
<i>SDP</i>	<i>Sifat Dua Puluh</i>
<i>SEI</i>	<i>Shorter Encyclopedia of Islām</i>
<i>Ssanusi</i>	<i>Sharḥ Umm al-Barāhīn of al-Sanūsī</i>
<i>Thamin</i>	Dawūd al-Faṭānī, <i>Dūr al-Thamin</i>
<i>The Role</i>	Ridzuan, <i>The Role of Makkah-Educated Malays</i>
<i>WMS</i>	Wan Mohd Saghir

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to give an insight into the *Umm al-Barāhīn* of Yusūf al-Sanūsī (d.940/1490), a famous North African scholar who was not only a theologian but also a pious sufi whose life was fully dedicated to the education of his community. Al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn*, a short treatise on Islamic creed has greatly influenced people in many countries, and has been translated into Malay and commented upon by a number of prominent Malay scholars like Muhammad Zayn al-Ashī, Dawūd al-Faṭānī, Zayn al-'Abidin al-Faṭānī and others. The Malay commentaries of the *Umm al-Barāhīn*, which elucidate and elaborate on al-Sanūsī's typology of the Divine Attributes and other related issues, prove that the Malay scholars in the past had achieved a very high degree of understanding of Islamic ontology, epistemology and metaphysics. Thus, a new modern edition and translation is needed to expose the richness of the Malay heritage which once flourished throughout the region for the sake of the new generation. The thesis is concluded with a refutation of some cynical arguments put forward by modern Malay writer who blatantly besmirched the content of the *Umm al-Barāhīn* and other commentaries of a similar type.

INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL REMARKS

The serious crises experienced by Muslims today are often diagnosed as being political or economic in origin. This diagnosis risks missing the true, deep seated factors that contribute to the emergence of political and economic problems. Most of our problems today have their true origin in weakness of faith (*imān*). This is because very many people are taking their *imān* for granted, and are not working hard to preserve and strengthen it. Our past experiences have shown that the problems do not arise solely due to external factors only, but also in most cases, are germinated within our own selves and our surroundings. That is why some historians have claimed that the root of the problems is traceable to the end of the companion period when the polemic on Allāh's Essence (*dhāt*) and Attributes (*ṣifāt*) took place among the intellectuals.¹

As a matter of fact, they also agreed that from that time onwards there were other problems pertaining to *Kalām* and other fields of knowledge in which many scholars, directly or indirectly, were involved to the extent that appropriate efforts had to be made to resolve these problems. Among those who exerted much effort in this regard, to name but a

¹ Generally, it is known that during the time of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the four Rightly Guided Successors (i.e. Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī (May Allāh bless them all) there was no such direct discussion on this matter. This is because whenever a problem concerning 'aqidah or rituals arose, people would immediately refer it to the Prophet and his Companions. Undoubtedly, there were minor problems (*furū'*) which arose as pointed out by al-Shahrastānī in *Milal wa al-Nihal* in which at least ten disputes transpired before and after the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace be upon him). Fortunately, those disputes were solved wisely under the light of al-Qur'ān and al-Ḥadīth as well as *qiyās* (analogy) which was practised in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). See Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Nihāl*, trans. A. K. Kazi and J. G. Flynn (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), 18-21.

few, were Imām Abū Ḥanīfah al-Shaykh al-Nu'mān bin Thābit (d.150/767),² Muḥammad bin Idris al-Shāfi'i (d.205/820),³ Aḥmad bin Hanbal (d.241/855),⁴ Abū al-Ḥassan al-Ash'ari (d.260/873),⁵ Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d.333/944),⁶ Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī (d.403/1012),⁷ Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d.429/1037),⁸ Imām al-

2 Even though he was best known as a great *faqih*, and as a *mujtahid* of Islām, he left a few works on 'aqidah to his fellow Muslims for a long time, such as *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, *al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'ālim*, *al-Radd 'alā al-Qadariyyah* and *al-Waṣiyyah*.

3 Like Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, this prominent figure was also one of great jurists of his time with great works *al-Umm* and others. Since Islām came to Malaysia about 600 Years ago, al-Shafi'i's School of Law has been adopted by local people. For further reading please see S. Q. Fatimi, *Islām Comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963), 5. In 'aqidah he wrote two books, first: *Taṣḥīḥ al-Nubuwwat wa al-rad 'alā al-Barāhimah* and second: *al-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Ahwā'*. See 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir Ibn Muḥammad al-Tamimi Asfirayni al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Mahy al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Hamid (Cairo: Maktabat Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣubih, n.d.), 363.

4 He wrote a very important book on 'aqidah namely *al-Radd 'alā al-Zanādiqah wa al-Jahmiyyah*. Apparently in this book he strongly opposed the idea put forward by the Jahmiyyah or even the Mu'tazilites with regard to the creation of al-Qur'ān (*khalq al-Qur'ān*). His strong commitment holding the opinion that the Qur'ān is not created made him suffer tremendously during the time of al-Ma'mūn (813-833). This famous story of *khalq al-Qur'ān* is frequently cited by many Malay scholars in their works, see Shaykh Dawūd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī, *Dār al-Thamin* (Bangkok: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muḥammad Nahdi wa awlāduhu (MMNA), n.d.), 36-37, henceforth cited as *Thamin*; Shaykh Zayn al-'Ābidīn al-Faṭānī, *Aqīdat al-Nājīn* (Percepatan al-Ma'ārif Sendirian Berhad, n.d.), 34-35, hereafter cited as *Nājīn*.

5 He is regarded as the founder of the school of *Ahl al-Sunnat wa al-Jamā'ah* (in *Kalām*, 'aqidah) together with al-Māturīdī and al-Taḥāwī. See Shafie Abu Bakar, "Pengaruh Rasionalisme di Dalam Islām dan Kaitannya dengan Persoalan Falsafah di Melaka," *Jurnal Sejarah Melaka*, Malaysia History Association Malacca Branch 8 (1983): 4., henceforth cited as *Rasionalisme*. Ash'ari's works are almost all on 'aqidah in which he either explains the creed of Islām or rebuts the incoherent, unjustified, false arguments. For further information on his work, please see Richard Mc. Carthy, *The Theology of al-Ash'ari* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 211-230, where it was stated that al-Ash'ari had written 106 books, the most important works of which are three, *al-Ībānat 'an Uṣūl al-Diyānah*, *al-Luma' fi al-Rad 'alā ahl al-Zaygh wa al-Bidā'* and *Maqālāt al-Islamiyyin*.

6 He was a contemporary of al-Ash'ari and possessed similar opinions with him in many respects. They differ on minor problems but are comparable on principles. His *magnum opus* is *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* in which he discussed in a comprehensive manner Allāh's Essence and Attributes. See Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Faṭḥ Allāh Khalīf (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970); also see Mustafa Ceric, *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām, A Study of the Theology of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 107-226. Henceforth cited as *Roots*.

7 He also strongly upheld the teachings of *Ahl-al-Sunnah*. Two important books of his which heavily influenced many scholars are *al-Insāf fi Mā Yajib al-I'tiqāduhu wa la Yajīz al-Jahl bihi* and *Kitāb al-Tamḥīd*.

8 Al-Baghdādī was an eminent figure of *Ahl-Sunnat wa al-Jamā'ah* who contributed greatly to the development of this school. Among his famous works are *Kitāb Uṣūl a-Dīn* and *al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*.

Haramayn al-Juwayni (d.478/1085),⁹ Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111),¹⁰ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606/1209),¹¹ 'Iḍḍud al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ījī (d.756/1355)¹² and Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. ca. 895/1489)¹³. Each one of them had made substantial efforts to preserve the religious belief ('*aqidah*)¹⁴ of the 'ummah either by propagating the ideas through their works or by other means. They encountered numerous obstacles and bitterness for the sake of the 'ummah. Their influence was undeniably so vast from east to west and from north to south.

There was similar effort on the part the Malay scholars in this part of the world, whose heroic efforts are slowly being cast out from their own people's memory. Their vitality and vigour to defend true *imān* must be remembered, revived and emulated. Big names like Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī (d.1069/1658),¹⁵ 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Fanṣūrī (d.1105/1693),¹⁶ Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī (d.1117?),¹⁷ and other Faṭānī's scholars like Dawūd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Faṭānī (d.1297/1879),¹⁸ 'Abd al-Qadīr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-

- 9 This great '*alim* was not only well-known in *taṣawwuf* but also in other fields of knowledge such as *al-Tawhīd*. He wrote a number of books on it like *al-'Aqīdah al-Nizamiyah*; *al-Irshād*; *al-Shāmil*; and *Luma' al-Adillat fi Qawā'id Ahl al-Sunnat wa al-Jamā'ah*.
- 10 The man known as *Ḥujjat al-Islām* was a multifaceted scholar as well as the *mujaddid* (renewer) of his time. He was a student of al-Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwayni and wrote many books in various fields of knowledge. In '*aqidah* he wrote a number of books, such as *al-Iqtisād fi al-Fiqh* and his *magnum opus* of *al-Iḥyā' 'Ulām al-Dīn*.
- 11 He was the author of three important books on '*aqidah*, i.e. *Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, *al-Muḥaṣṣal Afkār al-Mutaqaddimin wa al-Muta'akhhirin min al-'Ulamā' wa al-Ḥukamā' wa al-Mutakallimin* and *Kitāb al-Arba'in fi Uṣūl al-Dīn*.
- 12 Imām al-Ījī's work namely *al-Mawāqif fi al-'Ilm al-Kalām* was regarded as one of the best in '*Ilm al-Kalām*. It was commented upon by more than forty scholars and the most prominent one was made by al-Jurjānī under the title *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, in 8 volumes.
- 13 Imām Al-Sanūsī is the main subject of our thesis, hence his biography will be discussed in the beginning of the first chapter.
- 14 For further explanation, please see S. M. Naquib al-Attas, *A Commentary on the Ḥujjat al-Ṣādiq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Malaysia, 1986), 187, henceforth cited as *Hujjat*.
- 15 See Zaila Sharif and Jamilah Haji Ahmad, *Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), 65, henceforth cited as *Kesusasteraan*. See also Dr. Ahmad Daudy, *Allāh dan Manusia Dua Konsep Shaykh Nur al-Dīn al-Rānirī* (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983), 35-64, henceforth cited as *Manusia*.
- 16 See *Kesusasteraan*, 64, however Wān Mohd Ṣaghir (WMS) had given another date which is 1960. See WMS, "Antara Karya Shaykh Muḥammad Zayn yang Terkenal," *Dakwah* (November 1989): 21.
- 17 See WMS, *Dakwah* (Nov.1989) 21; and *Idem*, *Dakwah* (Feb. 1993): 53.
- 18 See *Idem*, "Riwayat Hidup Ringkas dan Hasil Karya Shaykh Dawūd al-Faṭānī," paper presented at the *Nadwah Ilmiah Tokoh Ulama Peringkat Kebangsaan Kali ke Empat*, Pusat Islām Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 17-19 Disember 1991, 1-26; R. O. Winsted, *A History of Classical Malay*

Faṭānī (d.1316/1898),¹⁹ Zayn al-'Ābidīn al-Faṭānī (d.12/18?),²⁰ Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Zayn al-Faṭānī (d.18?),²¹ Azhari al-Falimbānī (d.1357/1938),²² as well as Kelantani scholars such as Wan Muḥammad 'Alī Kutan al-Kalantānī (d.1332/1913)²³ and many others strove to safeguard the *imān* of Muslims by articulating '*aqā'id* clearly and systematically indeed need to be reintroduced, even to the whole world. These scholars were actually working in continuous chains of eminent minds with the above mentioned figures.

In pursuing Kalām, (the systematic articulation of '*aqā'id*'), scholars in the Malay world often wrote commentaries on texts that were traditionally endowed with great authority. One such authoritative text was the famous *Umm al-Barāhin* of Imām 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Sanūsī. This short but thorough and systematic treatise enjoyed astonishing popularity as a succinct articulation of the tenets of Islām, presenting the best proofs for them (hence the name: literally 'the mother of proofs'). Imām al-Sanūsī wrote this short '*aqidah* as a summary of his larger and more extensive book: *al-'Aqidat al-Kubrā*. Thus, the *Umm al-Barāhin* was also known as *al-'Aqidat al-Sughrā*.

The influence of al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhin* is attested to by the simple fact that al-Sanūsī's typology of Allah's Attributes as the famous "*Ṣifāt Dua Puluh*" or the Twenty Divine Attributes²⁴ has dominated nearly all traditional scholarly discussions of *Kalām* in the Malay world since at least the 12th/18th century. Hence, many Malay commentaries were written on al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhin*.

Literature, ed. and intro. Y. A. Talib (Petaling Jaya: Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Reprint no. 12), 105.

- 19 WMS, "Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir bin 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Faṭānī," *Dakwah* (Nov. 1989): 24-25.
 20 Idem, "Shaykh Zayn al-'Abidīn al-Faṭānī," *Dakwah* (April 1991): 16-21.
 21 Idem, "Shaykh Aḥmad al-Faṭānī," *Dewan Budaya* (Sept. 1991): 50-51; Idem, (Nov. 1991): 51-53; and idem, (January 1992): 37-39.
 22 Idem, "Shaykh Muḥammad Azhari al-Falimbānī, Generasi Penyambung Penulisan 'Ulamā'-'Ulamā' Palembang," *Dakwah* (April 1993): 49.
 23 Idem, "Al-'Allāmat al-'Amil wa al-Fāḍil al-Kāmil Shaykh Wan 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Rahmān Kutan al-Kalantānī," *Dakwah* (Sept. 1989): 34-36.
 24 *Ṣifāt Dua Puluh* and Twenty Attributes are to be used interchangeably in this work, and hereafter abbreviated as *SDP*.

However, according to some writers there were three eminent scholars identified as the pioneers of the discussion of the Divine Attributes, though they did not solely refer to the *Umm al-Barāhin*. First Bukhāri al-Johori, who wrote *Tāj al-Salāṭin* (compl.²⁵1012/1603),²⁶ second, Nūr al-Dīn al-Raniri with his book *Durrat al-Farā'id bi Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id* (c.1658/1069)²⁷ which is the commentary of *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* of Abū Ḥafs 'Umar Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafi,²⁸ and third was Shaykh 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Faṣṣūrī, the author of *'Umdat al-Muḥtājīn* which was written in the 1050/1640's. On the other hand, some other historians believe that the discussion commenced during the reign of Sulṭān Maṣṣūr Shāh of Malacca, (861-882/1456-1477) based on the finding of the *Dūr al-Manẓūm*,²⁹ a sufi text which was sent by a sufi scholar namely Mawlānā Abū Ishāq to Sulṭān Maṣṣūr Shāh for teaching purposes.

We should not confuse the discussion of the Twenty Divine Attributes with the *Umm al-Barāhin*, because they are two different things. The discussion of the Twenty Divine Attributes is much wider since it covers a hundred or more writings which include major works of al-Nasafi's *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, al-Laḡānī's *Jawḥarat al-Tawḥīd*, Ṭaḥāwī's *Bayān al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* or *'Aqīdat al-Ṭaḥawiyyah* and so forth, while al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhin* is just a part of it. Thus, our area of study specifically

²⁵ Compl. refers to date of completion.

²⁶ The very discussions on it basically concern the advice and admonitions for future rulers and kings of the country. It is believed that this work was written in 1012/1603 in Aceh. Different views arose pertaining the real author of *Tāj al-Salāṭin*, even the author himself, see *Kesusasteraan*, 59-60.

²⁷ According to Prof. al-Attas, it is a translation, most probably of selected parts adapted to the spiritual and intellectual requirements of the people at the time. Please see al-Attas, *Hujjat*, 25.

²⁸ This work is considered the oldest known *'aqīdah* text in The Malay world. Prof. al-Attas proved it succinctly in his work, see S. M. N. al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqā'id al-Nasafi* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1988), 1, hereafter cited as *Oldest*.

²⁹ Nevertheless, many historians cited a different title to the book. For example, Shellabear in his version of the Malay Annals (*Sejarah Melayu*) mentioned *Dar al-Maẓlūm* which means state or house of the oppressed people, while 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Kadir Munshi wrote *Dūr al-Maẓlūm* which means the oppressed jewels. Meanwhile, C. C Brown through the translation of Raffles' manuscript has mentioned it as *Dūrr Manẓūm* which means a piece of jewel. Of these three examples of nearly thirty texts of the Malay Annals obviously indicate that the different titles are because of the mistake or confusion during the process of copying the books from Jawi script. See Shafie Abū Bakar, *Rasionalisme*, 6.

concentrates on the *Umm al-Barāhīn* and its legacy in the Malay World and not on the discussion of the Twenty Divine Attributes *per se*. Even so, there will be a discussion of the Twenty Divine Attributes, only pertaining to al-Sanūsī's work of *Umm al-Barāhīn* and its related issues.

2. ON THE AIMS AND APPROACH OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is twofold; first, to expose some of the contributions of Malay scholars in the field of 'aqidah who made tremendous efforts in translating, commenting on as well as propagating al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn* in this region for a very long time. It is, however, unfortunate, that their great endeavors are not really appreciated by some of us. Indeed, they are even being subjected to sharp criticisms despite their valuable contributions to 'Ilm al-Kalām; and second, to present a new edition and translation of the Malay text of *Umm al-Barāhīn* for the enrichment of the intellectual legacy in this part of the world.

In the *introduction*, we provide introductory remarks about the nature and scope of the thesis. A concise and precise note will be addressed particularly to the genesis of the problems. Apart from that, we will try to investigate the historical aspects of the Malay intellectual discourse of the Twenty Divine Attributes and to clarify some of the issues pertaining to the subject. *Chapter one* will primarily deal with the description of al-Sanūsī's biography and the content of the *Umm al-Barāhīn*. The contributions of the Malay scholars in producing the commentaries and super commentaries of *Umm al-Barāhīn* will also be discussed. In relation to that, there will be a section on the main Malay commentators of *Umm al-Barāhīn* as well as their works on it. In *chapter two*, the content of the *Umm al-Barāhīn* will be fully exposed. Four main issues which will be discussed are: Intellectual judgement (*hukm al-'aql*), Divine Attributes (*Ṣifāt Allāh*), attributes of the Prophets (*ṣifāt al-Rusul*) (peace be upon them), and lastly, the declaration of faith (*al-*

shahādah). The exposition will primarily be based on the explanation of the Malay commentators of the *Umm al-Barāhin*. In *chapter three*, an annotated transliteration and translation of the Malay underlinear text of *Umm al-Barāhin* will be presented. We will be using Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Faṭāni's text as our main source of this work. The methodology of transliteration and translation used will be clarified in this same chapter. The *conclusion* of the thesis will be divided into two parts: First, refutations of the views held by modern Malay writers pertaining to this subject. Second, a brief recapitulation of the thesis findings and an indication of further work to be pursued in the future research projects.

CHAPTER ONE:

AL-SANŪSĪ'S LIFE AND *UMM AL-BARĀHĪN*

1. AL-SANŪSĪ'S LIFE AND WORKS

A. His Life and Educational Background

The author of *Umm al-Barāhīn* was Shaykh 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Sanūsī.¹ His full name is al-Shaykh al-Imām al-'Ālim al-'Allāmah Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Shu'ayb² al-Sanūsī al-Ḥasanī. He was born in Tlemcen (Tilimsān),³ Algiers in 838 or 839/1435 or 1436. The surname "al-Sanūsī" derived from his clan's name, Banī Sanūsī, a well known tribe in al-Maghrib (North Africa), and not from his birth place as claimed by some historians while "al-Ḥasanī" is ascribed to him because his grandfather is a descendant of the noble line of al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (May Allāh bless and give them peace), a grandson of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Peace be upon him).

According to al-Mallāli,⁴ one of al-Sanūsī's students, his master's knowledge, nobility, kindness and greatness were inherited from his father al-Shaykh al-'Allāmah al-Mutafannin al-Ṣāliḥ al-Zāhid al-'Ābid al-Ustāz al-Muḥaqqiq al-Muqri' Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d.?).

¹ See al-'Allāmat al-Anbābi in a margin of *Ḥāshiyat al-Sanūsī's Umm al Barāhīn* by Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (Surabaya: Dar al Ṭabā'at al-Islamiyyat al-'Arabiyyah, 1347/1928), 1-2, hereafter cited as *HMS*; See also Aḥmad Bābā b. Aḥmad al-Timbuktī, *Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-Taṭrīz al-Dibāj*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamid 'Abd Allāh al-Haramah (Tripoli: Kulliyat al-Da'wat al-Islamiyyah, 1410/1989), 571, henceforth will be cited as *Nayl*. It must be noted that al-Sanūsī al-Ḥasanī al-Idrisī, the founder of the *Sanusiyyah* in Algeria was a different person. His full name was Sidi Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Sanūsī al-Mujāhiri al-Ḥasanī al-Idrisī. He was born in 1206/1791 at Tursḥ near Algeria and died in 1276/1859 at Cyrenaica. See "al-Sanūsī", E. J. Brill's *First Encyclopedia of Islām 1913-1936*, eds. M. Th. Houtsma, A. J. Wensinck, E. L. É Provençai, H. A. R. Gibb and W. Heffening (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), vol. vii, 154, hereafter cited as *EIFirst*.

² "al-Sanūsī," in *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islām*, eds. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 503, hereafter cited as *SEI*; also H. Bencheneb, "al-Sanūsī," in *EF²* (1997) 9:20.

³ Tlemcen, in Arabic Tilimsān, the old town a few hundreds yards from the modern town was called both Tlemcen and Agādīr. See *EIFirst*, vol. viii, 81.

⁴ He is Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Mallāli

Al-Sanūsī has been regarded as the reviver of Islām for the 10th/16th century by Muslim scholars in North Africa. His merit, his learning ability especially in theology, his fear of God and his religious zeal were recognized by his contemporaries. He possessed a wide knowledge in all sciences and even reached the highest achievement in religious knowledge⁵.

Historically, when the dynasty of Banī Zayyān or 'Abd al-Wadīd, the conqueror of some areas in North Africa in 9th/15th century, was about to decline, the city of Tilimsān could still maintain its position as one of the great intellectual and cultural centers of North Africa.⁶ It was at this time that Muḥammad bin Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, a young dedicated man who came from a religious family, diligently devoted his life to seeking knowledge. He first studied al-Qur'ān and Arabic language with his father on before getting closer to some famous scholars in his place to study Arabic language, arithmetic and *al-farā'id*. He received an *ijāzah* in mathematics, theology etc. from Abū Ḥassān al-Qalaṣādī, who was an eminent scholar in the city.

He also studied under his step-brother, al-Faqīh al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī al-Ḥassan al-Tālūti,⁷ a famous scholar at that time. Al-Tālūti conferred on him the *ijāzah* of Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawānī's *al-Risālah* and Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī's *al-Irshād*. He also studied under al-Shaykh al-'Allāmah Naṣr al-Zawawī, al-'Allāmah Muḥammad b. Tāzī, Sayyid al-Sharif Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf b. Abī al-'Abbās bin Muḥammad al-Sharif al-Ḥasani, Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Hibāb, al-Imām Muḥammad b. 'Abbās, who taught him *Uṣul al-fiqh* and logic, as well as under al-Faqīh al-Jallāb, who taught him Science of Jurisprudence. Apart from that, al-Sanūsī had an opportunity to study under two famous sufi scholars in Tilimsān at that time namely al-Ḥassān Abrakan al-Rāshidi and Abī al-Qāsim al-Kanābishi.

After a few years studying with local scholars, al-Sanūsī moved to Algiers for the same purpose. He studied '*Ilm al-Ḥadith* under *al-Imām al-Ḥujjat al-Wara' al-Ṣāliḥ* Abī

⁵ Al-Bājūri, *HMS*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid*; *EI*² 20; and Aḥmad Bābā, *Nayl* 577.

⁷ According to some historians, he was al-Sanūsī's uncle, *Nayl* 577.

Zayd 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Tha'ālibī, and in Oran, which is a small city in Algiers,⁸ he was guided in *taṣawwūf* by a well-known sufi scholar namely Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Tāzi.⁹

The devotional aspects in the sufi order (*fariqah*) had made him pious and religious. He did a lot of prayers and fasting. Interestingly, al-Sanūsī was also known for his practise of *al-istikhārah*, which enabled him to receive the answer to problems in dreams. Al-Sanūsī spent the rest of his life giving lectures on 'aqidah, *taṣawwuf*, the natural sciences, mathematics and the like. At the end of his life he maintained his teaching activities as usual until illness constrained him, thus slowing him down and eventually caused him to leave this world after 'aṣr on Monday 18th of *Jamadi'l Akhir* 895/May 9th, 1490. He was buried in Tilimsān.¹⁰

B. His Students and Influence in the Muslim World

Being a bright and a well-known scholar, al-Sanūsī gained a high reputation for having many students and disciples. Among his famous students were; al-Mallālī, a writer of al-Sanūsī's biography as well as a commentator of al-Sanūsī's famous work, *al-'Aqīdat al-Sughrā*, Abū al-Qāsim al-Zawawī, Ibn al-'Abbas al-Ṣaghīr, Ibn Abi Madyān, Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Yabdarī and Ibn Sa'ad al-Tilimsānī.¹¹ These scholars disseminated al-Sanūsī's teaching and works in West Africa through business links, especially with the family of Aḥmād Bābā in Timbuktu.

Meanwhile, in the 10th/16th century, the teaching of al-Sanūsī's 'aqidah was widespread in Mali, and by the 11th/17th century, his *al-'Aqīdat al-Sughrā* or *Umm al-Barāhin*, one of his works on 'aqidah had achieved a great reputation in many parts of West Africa. West African scholars had written commentaries and *hāshiyah* on it.¹² In the

⁸ Oran (Wahrān), a sea-port town on the coast of Algeria. See *EI*First, vol. vi, 992.

⁹ *SEI*, 503 and *EI*², 20.

¹⁰ *Nayl* 570; and *EI*², 20.

¹¹ *SEI*, 503; and *Nayl* 564.

¹² *EI*², 21.

early 12th /18th century, al-Sanūsī's works on '*aqidah*, especially *Umm al-Barāhin*, was received in the Malay world¹³ and it soon became the main source in *Uṣūl al-Din*.¹⁴ This famous work was commented on by many Malay scholars such as Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī, Zayn al-Dīn al-Sumbawī, Dawūd al-Faṭānī and others. Apart from that, al-Sanūsī's works also spread to the rest of North Africa in 12th/18th through the writing of Shaykh 'Uthmān bin Fūdī, otherwise known as Usmānu dan Fodio.¹⁵

In the early 14th/20th century, al-Sanūsī's works were referred to by Ibn Bādīs in his commentary of the Qur'ān, while Moroccan scholars studied the three works of Sanūsī on '*aqidah* together with the commentary and *ḥāshiyah* of al-Dusūqī. Such was the case with other scholars such as Fāsi al-Manjūr, Miknāsī al-Wallāli, a minister of al-Zayyānī and Ibn 'Ajība, a sufi who studied and gave commentary on al-Sanūsī's work. Until the middle of the 14th/20th century, al-Sanūsī's influence spread tremendously throughout al-Maghrib and even in Fās, where al-Sanūsī's work on logic as well as the three works on '*aqidah* together with both summary of '*Aqīdat al-Sughrā* and '*Aqīdat al-Kubrā* by al-Yūsī became the main references of Islamic education.¹⁶

The *Umm al-Barāhin* has also been used as a text book in al-Azhar University since the early 12th/18th century. One of the Shaykhs al-Azhar, Ibrahīm al-Bājūrī (d.1860)¹⁷ wrote a commentary on al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhin* entitled *Hāshiyat al-*

13 The Malay world comprises four countries; Malaysia (Tanah Melayu), Indonesia, Faṭānī (Southern Thailand) and Borneo. And, Borneo consists of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Sulu. Please refer to the section on 'the Malay legacy of the *Umm al-Barāhin*' in this chapter.

14 The very term *uṣūl* means fundamental, so *uṣūl al-Din* denotes the basic principles of Islām. It will be used interchangeably with the word '*aqidah* (plural-'*aqā'id*) and *tawḥīd*. These are among the common words used in Malay.

15 *EI*², 21.

16 Ibid.

17 In some places it is written al-Bayjūrī instead of al-Bājūrī, for instance the name of al-Bayjūrī is used for a commentary of *Umm al-Barāhin* entitled *Hāshiyat al-Bayjūrī 'alā Matn Umm al-Barāhin*. On the other hand, in *EI*² it is written as al-Bājūrī. It seems that the spelling of al-Bājūrī is more correct due to the fact that his place of birth was Bajūr, a village in the Manufiyya province of Egypt. He was the Rector of al-Azhār or Shaykh al-Azhār in 1263/1846. For more detailed information on him, please see W. Montgomery Watt, "al-Bājūrī" *EI*², 1: 867.

Bājūrī 'alā Matn al-Sanūsiyyah like his Master al-Faḍālī¹⁸ who also wrote a commentary on al-Sanūsi's work known as *Kifāyat al-'Awām*.

C. His Writings

Al-Sanūsi undoubtedly was a multifaceted and talented scholar as well as a prolific author. He produced more than 45 works in various fields of knowledge. Unfortunately, some of his works are no longer available anywhere, while others could be found only in certain places. Some of his important works, however, are mentioned in a number of authoritative sources such as *Nayl al-Ibtihāj bi-Taḥriḡ al-Dibāj* by Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbukti, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* by Carl Brockelmann, *Encyclopedia of Islām*, *Shorter encyclopedia of Islām* and E. J. Brill's *First Encyclopedia of Islām*. To indicate the importance of his works, we also provide a list of commentaries and super commentaries written by other scholars as below:

1. 'Aqīdat ahl al-Tawḥīd wa al-Tasḍīd al-Mukhrij min al-Ḍulumāt al-Jahli wa Rabqat al-Taqlīd also known as *al-'Aqīdat al-Kubra*.¹⁹ Several commentaries were written on this work, such as;

i. 'Umdat al-Tawfiq wa al-Ta'dīd²⁰ or *Tasḍīd*²¹ by al-Ḥassan

b. Mas'ūd al-Yūsi (d.1111/1699).

ii. *Hidāyat al-Murīd* by 'Ullais al-Miṣri (d. 1299/1882).²²

iii. *Jadwa* and *Durrat al-Ḥijāl* by al-Qāḍī.²³

18 He was Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Faḍālī al-Shāfi'i (1236/1821). He wrote two books namely *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi mā Yajibu 'alaihim min 'Ilm al-Kalām*, hereafter cited as *Kifāyat* and *Risālat lā ilāha illa Allāh*. Both of which were commented on by his student al-Bājūrī. See J. Schact, "al-Faḍālī," *EI*, 2:727; *SEI*, 95 and Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1937-45), 2: 641, hereafter cited as *GAL* and its *Supplementband*, 3 vols., 2: 744, henceforth cited as *GALS*.

19 See *Nayl*, 571 (*GALS*, 2:352); (*GAL*, 2: 323); and (*SEI* 302).

20 Ibid. (*SEI* 302); (*GALS*, 352).

21 *SEI*, 302 (*GAL*, 323).

22 Ibid., (*GAL*, 323).

23 Ibid.

iv. *Şalawât al-Anfas* by al-Kattâni. ²⁴

v. *Şafwat* by al-Ifrâni. ²⁵

2. *'Aqîdat ahl at-Tawhîd al-Şuġhrâ*²⁶ or *Umm al-Barâhin* or *Sharġ Kalimat al-Shahâdah*²⁷ or *al-Sanûsiyyah*.²⁸

3. *'Aqîdat al-Ĥâfîzah*.²⁹ This work was commented upon by 'Abd al-Muġsin b. al-Şalâh under the title *al-Maţâli' al-Saniyyah* ³⁰

4. *Al-Jumâl* or *al-Murshidah* or *al-Sanûsiyyat al-Wuṣṭâ*.³¹ Among its commentaries are;

i. *Nûr al-Ifâdah Sharġ al-Murshidah* by 'Abd al-Gĥâni Nâbulûsi. ³²

ii. *Al-Lâzim wa al-Malzûm* by Sa'id al-Kafif.³³

5. *Al-Muqaddimah*.³⁴ Among its commentaries are;

i. *Al-Mawâhib al-Rabbaniyyah* by Ibrahim b. Ḥasan. al-Bannâni al-Saraqaşti ³⁵

ii. *Al-Ma'ânî al-Saniyyah* by 'Abd Allâh b. al-Ḥasan al-Babâ

iii. *Al-Anwâr al-Baĥiyyah* by 'Abd al-Gĥâni al-Nâbulûsi.³⁶

6. *Mukhtaşâr al-Manfiq*.³⁷ Among its commentaries are:

i. *Al-Rajâz al-Muĥtawî 'alâ Masâ'il al-Mukhtaşar al-Sanûsi* by 'Abd al-Salâm al-Ṭayyîb al-Qâdiri (1110/1698).³⁸ It was then commented upon by

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

26

Nayl, 571 (*GALS*, 2:353).

27

A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 275, henceforth cited as *Creed*.

28

Nayl, 573.

29

Nayl, 571.

30

GALS, 2:355.

31

Ibid. (*GAL*, 2:325).

32

GALS, 2:352.

33

Ibid.

34

Nayl, 571.

35

GALS, 355.

36

GAL, 325.

37

GALS, 355

38

Ibid.