

**ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND ITS  
CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**  
**A Discourse on Selected Issues**

**THAMEEM USHAMA**

**IUM PRESS**  
**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



# **Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance**

*[A Discourse on Selected Issues]*

Edited by

Thameem Ushama



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## NINE

### The Influence of al-Ghazzālī in the Malay World

Megawati Moris

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It is well known and widely accepted that Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), popularly known as *Ḥujjat al-Islām* (Proof of Islam), had a pervasive and profound influence on the religious life and thought of Muslims in the Malay World.<sup>1</sup> Studies have also shown that environments in the Malay World were conducive to the reception, assimilation and dissemination of the teachings of *taṣawwuf* or Sufism generally, and of al-Ghazzālī particularly.<sup>2</sup> His influence was

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, the terms 'Malay World' and 'Malay Archipelago' are used interchangeably. Occasionally, the term 'Southeast Asia' is also used to signify the same meaning. By these three terms is meant the region which has been the home of people of the Malay racial stock whose *lingua franca*, historically and presently, is Malay. This region comprises present day Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Thailand and the Philippines. For definition, see Osman Bakar, "Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian World" in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed.), (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 287, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> For example, R. O. Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1961); Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some aspects of Sūfism as Understood and Practiced among the Malays* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963); G. W. J. Drewes, *Directions for Travellers on the Mystic Path* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977); Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan ulama: Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara abad xvii dan xviii* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, cetakan 5, 1420/1999, cetakan 1, 1994); Nurman Said, "Al-Ghazzālī's works and their influence on Islam in Indonesia," (M.A. thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada, 1996); Alwi Shihab, *Islam Sufistik: "Islam Pertama" dan pengaruhnya hingga kini di Indonesia*, pengantar K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2001); Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab kuning: Pesantren dan tarekat, tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, cetakan 3, 1999, cetakan 1, 1995); Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Singapore: Horizons Books, 2001); <http://yenus.igalaksi.com/warisan/bughazali.htm> (accessed 31 July 2002). Article originally published in *Utusan Malaysia*, 5 November, 2001 and; Megawati Moris, "The influence of al-Ghazzālī on eighteenth and nineteenth century Malay thinkers and their works, with and analysis of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī's *Ṣiyar al-sālikīn*, a Malay rendition of the *Mukhtaṣar ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*" (Ph.d dissertation, ISTAC,