Reclaiming the Conversation
Islamic Intellectual Tradition in the Malay Archipelago

Edited by ROSNANI HASHIM
with a Foreword by MOHD KAMAL HASSAN
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Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palembani
The Islamic Concept of Education in Relation to the Issue of Personality Integration

Muhammad Uthman el-Muhammady

The concept of education embraced by Muslims in the contemporary world has been greatly reduced to the physical and intellectual aspects of the human being. No aspect of the curriculum pays particular attention to the spiritual dimension. The spiritual crisis of modern man has been well-expressed by S.H. Nasr in his work, *Man and Nature*. If not for some elementary religious education, Muslim education would have completely lost its spiritual dimension. It is within this context that the work of Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palembani (or sometimes also spelled al-Falimbani) is significant. He understood the need for a concept of education that deals with the holistic personality of man instead of just appealing to his mind and body.

In this chapter an attempt is made to portray the configuration of the Islamic traditional doctrine in education—as obtained in the Sufi perspective—in relation to the issue of the integration of the human personality, in the *gestalt* of its traditional worldview, as expressed by one of the most significant spiritual and intellectual figures in this region—Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad of Palembang, whose active literary life in Makkah and Ta'if in Arabia extended from 1178 AH 1768 AD to 1203 AH 1793 AD.

The attempt made here is to consider the views of the Shaykh in the context of Islamic esoteric doctrine and practice and the