

## THE ROLES OF ULAMA' IN KEDAH

This book aims at presenting a Muslim religious scholar who could be regarded as a Muslim revivalist in Kedah during the first half of the 20th century named Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidek. He was the contemporary of Tuan Husain Nasir al-Mas'udi al-Banjari known as Tuan Husain Kedah. These two Muslim religious scholars were very well known because both were very active and prolific although Wan Sulaiman joined the government administration and Tuan Husain remained as an independent religious scholar and teacher. The personality of Wan Sulaiman is presented in the chapter on his biography. His great contributions are studied and presented in many aspects. In the Kedah public administration he contributed through his public position as Shaykh al-Islam. In Islamic education, Wan Sulaiman founded the madrasah education system different from the pondok education system found in Kedah and in Patani.

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ISBN 978-967-418-503-9



9 789674 185039

IIUM Press

Tel : +603 6196 5014 / 6196 5004

Fax : +603 6196 4862 / 6196 6298

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Website : <http://iiumpress.iium.edu.my/bookshop>



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THE ROLES OF ULAMA' IN KEDAH The Contribution of  
Shaykh Al-Islam Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidek (1874-1935)

FARID MAT ZAIN  
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IIUM Press  
Gombak • 2017

First Print, 2017  
©IIUM Press, IIUM

IIUM Press is a member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM (Malaysian  
Scholarly Publishing Council)

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

ISBN: 978-967-418-503-9

*Published & Printed in Malaysia by*  
IIUM Press  
International Islamic University Malaysia  
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

# CONTENTS

<i>Tables</i>	<b>vii</b>
<i>Preface</i>	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ISLAM IN KEDAH</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3 BIOGRAPHY OF WAN SULAIMAN WAN SIDIK</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 WAN SULAIMAN AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ADMINISTRATION AND SURVIVAL OF ISLAM IN KEDAH</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 THE MAJOR WORKS AND THOUGHTS OF WAN SULAIMAN</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 THE ROLES OF WAN SULAIMAN IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN KEDAH</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>200</b>
<i>References</i>	<b>209</b>
<i>Appendix</i>	<b>227</b>



## TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
2.1	The number of multi-ethnic peoples in the districts of Kedah in 1911	31
2.2	The total population in the Unfederated Malay States in 1931 and their races	32



## PREFACE

This book aims at presenting a Muslim religious scholar who could be regarded as a Muslim revivalist in Kedah during the first half of the 20th century named Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidek. He was the contemporary of Tuan Husain Nasir al-Mas'udi al-Banjari known as Tuan Husain Kedah. These two Muslim religious scholars were very well known because both were very active and prolific although Wan Sulaiman joined the government administration and Tuan Husain remained as an independent religious scholar and teacher. The personality of Wan Sulaiman is presented in the chapter on his biography. His great contributions are studied and presented in many aspects. In the Kedah public administration he contributed through his public position as Shaykh al-Islam. In Islamic education, Wan Sulaiman founded the madrasah education system different from the pondok education system found in Kedah and in Patani. He founded Madrasah Arabiyah Limbung Kapal, the first and pioneering madrasah in Kedah before the establishment of Madrasah Maahad Mahmud and later known as Maahad Mahmud which still exists today. The establishment of Madrasah Arabiyah Limbung Kapal was the introduction of a new educational system for Muslims since the traditional Muslim education was the pondok system. In Islamic thought, Wan Sulaiman had differed from other Muslim religious scholars of Kedah on some religious issues. His thoughts about the mystical order were different from those of his contemporaries who criticized him for opening the mystical order for the Muslim commoners instead of Muslim elite. In Islamic mysticism, Muslim Sufis, as understood by Wan Sulaiman, stayed among the Muslim society and actively contributed to its well-being; they did not isolate themselves from the society in the holy and secluded shrines. In relations with the

## *Preface*

British administrators in Kedah, Wan Sulaiman was able to maintain a good rapport with them although he often disagreed with some of their policies conducted in Kedah. He decided not to oppose openly to the British administrators and their tactics but he used his influence in the State Council to express diplomatically his views regarding certain British projects especially those involving the administration of Islam in Kedah. During his tenure as Shaykh al-Islam in Kedah, Wan Sulaiman introduced the rules and regulations to protect the purity of Islam from the misleading teachings associated or mistakenly linked with Islam. The main sources for this study are the archival documents found in the National Malaysia Archive in Kuala Lumpur and its branch in Kedah. The additional sources are the books and articles related to Islam and Muslim religious scholars in Kedah. Based on these available and accessible sources, this study concludes that Wan Sulaiman had effectively contributed to the maintenance and development of Islam and Muslims in Kedah under the British rule.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

All praises and Gratitude be to the supreme of all being, the Ever-Knowing and the Ever- Wise, the Most Gracious; and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his companions, Alhamdulillah, it was Allah's guidance and mercy that gave the source of strength for the completion and success of this study.

We wish to express our deepest gratitudes to all lecturers in Department History and Civilization, IRKH, IIUM. Also to Prof. Madya Dr Ibrahim Bakar, Prof. Dr Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hasan, Prof Dr. Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, Dr Abdul Ghani Yaakob, Dr AbdulRahman Awang. Lastly, special thanks to our families for their continuous support during the process of this book writing.