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-Ma’sudi 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.

Farid Mat Zain is a senior lecturer at Department of Arab studies and Islamic Civilisation, Faculty of Islamic Studies, at UKM (National University of Malaysia). He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UKM and PhD from IIUM. His areas of specialization include Islam in Nusantara, Islamic civilisation in Malaysia and Islah movements.

Hafiz Zakariya is an Associate Professor of History at the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. He is the first Director of Centre for Malay World and Ottoman Studies, IIUM, which was established in 2016. Currently he is the Director of Centre for Malay World and Ottoman Studies as well as Deputy Dean of the International Institute of Islamic Civilisation & Malay World at IIUM Kuala Lumpur Campus. He holds M.A. and PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His fields of expertise include modern history of the Muslim World, Islamic thought in the Malay world, Islamic civilisation and higher education in the Muslim world.
THE ROLES OF ULAMA’ IN KEDAH
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The Contribution of Shaykh Al-Islam Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidek (1874-1935)

FARID MAT ZAIN
HAFIZ ZAKARIYA

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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
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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.
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