

# MONOGRAPH on selected **MALAY** **INTELLECTUALS**



Edited by  
**HAMAD @ MD. SOM SUJIMON**



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# Contents

	<i>Message from the President</i>	vii
	<i>Foreword</i>	xv
	<i>Preface</i>	xvii
	<i>Contributors</i>	xxi
	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxiii
X	Chapter 1 Sheikh Dā'ud al-Faṭānī's Contribution to Muslim Scholarship in Malaysia <i>Mohamad @ Md. Som Sujimon and Wan Sabri Wan Yusoff</i>	1
X	Chapter 2 To' Kenali (Muhammad Yusof) and Sunni Scholarship <i>Uthman al-Muhammady</i>	37
1583 96242	Chapter 3 Al-Sheikh Dr. Muḥammad Idrīs al-Marbawī's Contribution to Islamic Studies in the Malay World <i>Abdul Salam Muhamad Shukri</i>	82
X	Chapter 4 Za'ba: His Ideas on Islamic Revivalism and its Impact in Malay Peninsula <i>Ilya Romiza Hj. Suri</i>	106
9630 96243	Chapter 5 Tunku Abdul Rahman's Contribution to Islam <i>Habeeb Rahman Ibramsa</i>	143
9634 9635	Chapter 6 Dato' Haji Ahmad Badawi's Contribution in Politics, Da'wah and Education <i>Ismail Hj Abdullah, Jamil Hashim and Mohd. Fauzan Hj Nordin</i>	169
96143	Chapter 7 Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy and His Contribution to the Islamic Thought in Malaysia <i>Wan Mohd. Azam Mohd Amin</i>	181

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† Chapter 8	Ahmad Ibrahim and the Islamisation of Law in Malaysia <i>Abdul Aziz Bari</i>	212
Chapter 9	Sheikh Mustafa Abdul Rahman Mahmud (1918-1968): Twentieth Century Malay Qur'anic Interpreter <i>Wan Sabri Wan Yusof, Shayuthy Abdul Manas and Nadzirah Muhammad</i>	241
Chapter 10	Dato' Yusoff Zaky Yacob's Contribution to Islamic Studies in the Malay World <i>Ashraf Md. Hashim and Ammar Fadzil</i>	264
	<i>Index</i>	295

## Message from The President\*

### Great Muslim Thinkers

As it has been suggested that Islam will bloom again from the East, it is certainly a good idea to have a monograph of Malay intellectuals who have contributed in substantial ways to Islam, nationally and internationally.

One of the ten thinkers in this monograph is distantly related to me. Therefore, it is not improper for me to quote a saying attributed to him i.e. Islam does not need us in order to be supreme; it is we who need Islam.

Many of the problems in the Muslim world arise out of hero-worship and that far too many Muslims think that the world, particularly Islam, need them. As such, they try to be different when actually they should just serve.

### Analysis

I noted that from among the ten names in the list of selected Malay intellectuals, eight of them are from the paddy growing areas. The eight are: Dato' Yusof Zaki Yaakob (Kelantan), Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra (Kedah), Haji Yusof Ahmad a.k.a. To' Kenali (Kelantan), Sheikh Daud Al Fatani (Patani), Dato' Hj. Ahmad Badawi (Province Wellesley), Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy (Perak), Sheikh Mustapha Abdul Rahman Mahmud (Perak), and Al Sheikh Dr. Mohd Idris Abdul Rauf Al Marbawi (born in Makkah and at the age of 10 returned to Perak for education).

\* The text was based on the speech delivered at the launching of "Monograph on Selected Malay Intellectuals" on October 3, 2003.



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9639

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*Mohamad @ Md. Som Sujimon*

# Index

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- ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Batawī 5  
‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Buġīsī 5  
‘Alī b. Ishāq al-Faṭānī 5  
‘*Aqidah Islam* [Islamic Belief] 290  
‘*asabiyyah* 198-200, 203  
‘ibadāt 35  
‘*Ūlūm al-Dīn* 242  
Ḥaramayn 5  
1001 Masalah Jiwa Manusia [1001  
Spiritual and Emotional  
Problems of Human Beings] 283
- Abd. Rahman bin Haji Hashim, Dr.  
196  
Abdul Razak Mahmood 276  
Abdullah al-Qari Haji Salleh  
(A.Q.H.A.S) 103  
Abdullah bin Ubai 259  
Abdullah Fahim Park 176  
Abdullah Munshi 109-110  
Abu A’la al-Maududi 185  
Abu Bakar al-Baqir 189, 191-192,  
243  
Abu Hurayrah 257  
Adnan Nawang 127  
Aga Khan 153  
Ahmad bin Abdul Rahman, Dr. 196  
Ahmad bin Ibrahim, Tan Sri Prof  
193  
Ahmad bin Ismail 48  
Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain bin  
Mustafa al-Fatani 42  
Ahmad Boestamam 192-193  
Ahmad Ibrahim 212-214, 216-217,  
221-223, 228-231, 235, 238-  
240
- Ahmad Ibrahim and Islamic  
Education 234  
Ahmad Maher 266  
Ahmad Shalabi, Dr. 279  
al-Ahliyah Press 275  
al-Aqsa Mosque 149  
al-Azhar 244  
al-Azhar publisher, Mustafa al-  
Halabi in Cairo 87  
al-Azhar University, Egypt 7, 34,  
84, 91, 268  
*al-Ehya al-Syarif* 244  
Alexander Kier 131  
al-fadil Tuan Haji Awang Kenali 38  
Al-Haj Abdul Tayyib Mahmud  
Kabir, Tan Sri Dato’ 161-162  
Alhaj Abdul Mubin Shepherd, Tan  
Sri Dato’ Dr. 154  
*al-Hikmah* 266-267  
*al-Imam* 110  
*al-Iman al-qadha’ wa al-qadr* 112  
*al-Ittihad* 171  
al-Jamiul Badawi Mosque 176  
al-Junid 187  
Alliance Party 147  
al-Mansor Adabi 217  
al-Marbawī 82, 84-85, 87-89, 91,  
102  
al-Marbawī’s dictionary 88, 104  
publisher 88  
al-Qur’an 203  
*al-Rahmāniyyah* (Religious  
Traditional School) 242  
al-Shaykh Muhammad Ibrāhīm al-  
Samālūtī 91



al-Sheikh Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī 83  
 al-Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh 87  
 al-Sunnah 203  
*al-Wadah* 171  
*American University in Cairo* 269  
 Aminah 193  
 Andi Maharajalela, Datuk 4  
 Anuar Musaddad 247  
 Anwar al-Jundi 279  
 API (Angkatan Pemuda Insaf), AWAS (Angkatan Wanita Sedar) 191  
 Arab Limbungan Kapal School 171  
 Arabic 92  
   and Islamic studies 88-89  
   language 46, 243, 264  
 Arab-Malay dictionary 87, 93  
 Arab-Malaya Latin 93  
 Aristotle 233  
 as al-Malibari 227  
 asabiyyah 196-197  
 asceticism 63  
 ASEAN 156  
 Association of the Middle East Students 90  
 authoritarian attitude 121  
 Azahari, A. M 193  
 Azhar publisher, Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh 95  
 Aziz Ishak 195  
  
 bachelor's degree in law and history 145  
 Baḥr al-madhi (The Sea of Honey) 87, 91, 94, 103-104  
 Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad 214  
*bayt 'ilm* (a house of learning) 139  
*bida'ah* 110, 130  
  
 BINA 158  
 Board of Governors of the Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) 131  
 British 174, 186  
   authorities 108  
   colonial power 86  
   colonial rulers 120, 127  
   colonialism 184  
   Commissioner 87  
   government 128, 173, 184  
   imperialism 187  
   policy 130  
   rule 145  
 Broadcasting Company 187  
 Buddhist 32  
 budget planning 125  
 Buku Daftar Ejaan Melayu Jawi-Rumi 96  
 Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Dr. 181, 185-191, 194-195, 197, 201-202, 207-209, 211, 270  
 Burhanuddin bin Haji Muhammad Nor, Dr. 182  
 Burhanuddin Dr. was imprisoned, 193  
 Butterworth Malay Club 174  
 Buya Hamka 247  
  
 Cambodia 43, 88  
 Cambridge University 145  
 Canton 165  
 centenary of Torrens system in Malaysian 228  
 central masjid of the Korean Muslim 165  
   mosque in London 153  
 Central people force (Pusat tenaga rakyat-PUTERA) 191

Centre of Malay Economics of Malaya (Pusat Perekonomian Melayu se Malaya-PEPERMAS) 191  
 Che Gu Haron 193  
 Che Menjalara 145  
 China Islamic Association in Peking, Haji Mohd. Ali Zang Jie 165  
 Chinese 123, 232  
   Muslim Association in Peking 165  
 Christian 127  
   missionaries 34, 121  
 Christianity 34  
 Civil Law Act 1972 230  
 Commonwealth countries 225  
 concept of 'asabiyyah' 181  
   of al-Qadar 112  
 Conference of the Afro-Asia 195  
 conspiracy 192  
 conversion of a Chinese minor to Islam 218  
  
*da'wah* 200  
*Dairat al-Ma'arif al-Wataniyyah* 177  
 Dali bin Muin, Dr. 196  
*dari rahim ke dunia* [from the womb into the world] 283  
 Darul Fikr of Kuala Lumpur 96  
 Darul Nu'man 97  
 development of da'wah and society 175  
 Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka (DBP) 273-274  
 Dian 274, 277  
*Dian Daijes* (Dian Digest) 276  
*Dian Darul Naim Sdn. Bhd* 277  
 Dian magazine 270, 279  
*Dian Press* 264, 276  
  
 Diploma in Shariah and Law and Practice (DSLPL) 236  
 Doctorate in Naturopathy from the School of Naturopathy, London 184  
*Dunia Rahim* (The World of Rahim) 282  
 Dutch 204  
  
 education 120, 125  
   in India 184  
   should not be gender biased 122  
 educational development 123  
 Egypt 33, 84-85, 88, 92, 269  
 Emeritus Professor 215  
 English 102, 204  
   common law 229  
   Government School 145  
   law 217, 223, 225, 230  
 equality of mankind 145  
 essay on man 70  
 establishment of PERKIM 153  
 excessive extravagance 125  
  
*Falsafah Revolusi* [Philosophy of Revolution] 285  
*Falsafah Takdir* 118  
*Fath al-Muin* 227  
*Fatwa dalam Perundangan Islam* 238  
 Fī Zilāl al-Qur'an 291  
 Federal Constitution 240  
 Federal Court of Malaysia 225  
 Federated Malay States (FMS) 140  
 Federation of Malaya 147  
 Festival of the Haj 148  
*Fi Zilal al Qur'an* 264  
 fiqh 92  
*Fitnah Drama Nabi Yusuf* [The Slander of Prophet Yusuf] 289

Formation of RISEAP 163  
*Furū' al-Masā'il* 30

generosity 203  
 German 102  
 Greater Indonesia (Indonesia Raya) 189  
 Greater Malay (Melayu Raya) 189, 203

Haji 'Ali Salahuddin bin Awang 50  
 Haji Abdul Wahab (Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang) 129  
 Haji Abdullah Fahim 243  
 Haji Agoes Salim 140  
 Haji Ahmad Badawi, Dato' 169  
 Haji Ahmad Badawi bin Sheikh Abdullah Fahim, Dato' 169-174, 178-179  
 Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan 194  
 Haji Ahmad Ghazali 171  
 Haji Ahmad Mahir, Dato' Mufti of Kelantan 273  
 Haji Ahmad Maliki 194  
 Haji Awang Muhammad Yusof Kenali 38  
 Haji Hashim b. Halim 166  
 Haji Idris bin Haji Hassan 46  
 Haji Mohd Nor, Dato' 172  
 Haji Nik Mahmud bin Haji Wan Ismail 44  
 Haji Rahmat bin Masdom, Dr. 196  
 Haji Saad 265  
 Haji Wan Ismail 44  
 Haji Wan Mohd Shaghir 44  
 Haji Wan Muhammad Wan Hussain 90  
*Haji Yahya bin Haji Yusoff* 228  
*harta sepencarian* 238  
 Harun Adnan 135

Hassan Bandung, A. 140  
 Hatta 190  
 Highest Religious Council of Malaya (Majlis Agama Tertinggi Se Malaya MATA) 192  
*Hikam* of Ibn 'Ata'illah 47  
*Hikayat Seri Kelantan* 48  
 HIKMAH 158-159, 162  
 Hinduism 204  
 Hindus 184  
 Hj. Othman bin Abdullah 87  
 Hooker, M.B. 9  
 homeopathy 184  
   clinic 188  
 honorary doctorate (Ph.D) in literature 89  
 House of Lords 225  
*Hubb al-watan min al-Iman* Dr. Burhanuddin 205  
 hudud enactment 231  
   laws 224  
*Hukum-hukum Taharah* [The Law of Cleanliness] 289  
 Hussain Osman, Dato 166  
 ḥadīth 91-92  
   tafsīr 243  
 ṭarīqah Sammāniyyah 5

Ibn Hajr 227  
 Ibn Khaldūn 72, 181, 189, 196-198, 200, 209  
 Ibn Sina 233  
 Ibnu al-Rawi 257  
 Ibrahim Hj. Yaakob 188  
 Ibrahim Yacob (Ibhi) 270  
 Idris al-Marbawi 265  
 ijfihad 116  
*ijma'* 211  
   of Muslim scholars 203  
*ijtihad* 111-112, 117-118

Imam al-Ghazzālī 80, 242  
*Imām Bukhārī* 257  
*Iman* 205  
 independence 147, 173  
 independent writer 273  
 India 184-185, 187, 232  
 Indonesia 43, 88  
 influence in the society 104  
 Inner Temple 145  
 Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) 220  
*Internal Security Bill* 195  
 International Islamic University Malaysia 214, 235-236, 240  
 International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) 220  
 introduction to logic 260  
*Iradat* (The faculty of will) 112  
 Ishak Haji Mohammad 188, 190, 192, 195  
*Islah* 140  
 Islam 127, 202, 232  
   and Politics 201  
   Dilitupi Awan Mendung [Islam is Overcast by Clouds] 288  
   in Pattani 8  
 Islamic Bank 150  
   Caliphate 114  
 Islamic Consultative Council (Badan Perunding Islam) 214  
 Islamic criminal laws 30  
 Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and Pacific (RISEAP) 156, 160  
 Islamic Da'wah Foundation (YADIM) 90  
 Islamic Da'wah Institute of PERKIM 156  
 Islamic Development Bank 150-151  
   diplomacy 143

education 4, 35, 49, 235, 244, 254  
 history 3, 259  
 identity 33-34  
 law 218, 224, 228, 230, 232, 234  
   law (*sharī'ah*) 7  
   law '*urf* 238  
   *law in Malaya* 227  
 laws 214  
 Museum of Malaysia 9  
 philosophy 233  
 political ideology 207  
 politics 203  
 principles 9, 229  
 Religious Council of Perak 91  
 Religious Department of Perak (JAIP) 90  
*Review* (England) 108  
 revivalism 130, 135  
 solidarity 149  
 studies 165, 241  
 system 225  
 Thought 287  
 understanding 33  
 unity 152

Islamisation of Law 220  
 Isma'iliyah medical college 184  
 Ismail Awang 276  
 Ismail Che Daud 9  
 Israel 149  
 Istana Kuning 144  
 Istanbul 33  
 Italy 102

*Jabahan al-Diniyali al-Islamiyah* (Organization of Islamic Religious Scholars) 60  
*Jabariyyah* group 114

Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) 97  
 Jamiyyah Da'wah Islamiyyah 271  
 Japan 102  
 Japanese army 188  
     occupation 52, 128  
 Jawi (Malay language but using the Arabic script) 6  
     script 1, 34  
     students 5  
 Jerusalem 149  
 jihad war (*perang sabil*) 4  
 jināyat 35  
*Johan Mangku Negara* (JMN) 215  
 Johore 35  
     English College 108  
*Journal of Malaysian and Comparative Law* 221  
*jual janji* 238  
*Jurnal Hukum* 214, 222  
*jus soli* 190  
  
 Kalinga empire of India 204  
 kampung Changkat Tualang 186  
 kamus tiga bahasa 256  
 Kaum Muda (Younger Generation)  
     Movement to fight for Malaya's independence 86, 183, 248  
 Kelantan 35, 37, 44-45, 49, 52, 65, 90, 130, 264  
     Islamic Religious Council 38  
     To' Kenali 42  
 Kesatuan Melayu Great Britain' (The Malay Association of Great Britain) 146  
 Kesatuan-Melayu Muda, KMM (Association of Young Malays 270  
 Khulasah Nur al-Yaqin 258  
 Khwaja Kamaluddin 108, 128, 140

Kier, A. 131  
*Kifāyat al-Akhyār fī Ḥallī Gāyat al-Ikhtisār* 35  
 King Faisal 149-153, 163  
 Kitab Perbendaraan Ilmu 88  
*kitāb Jawi* 6  
 Korean Muslims 164-165  
 Kota Bharu, Kelantan 38  
 Kulliyyah of Laws 240  
  
 L.A.S Jermyn 131  
*langkah-langkah menuju Allah* [Steps Towards Allah] 287  
 law faculty 214  
     Faculty of University of Malaya 215  
 Legal Profession Act 1976 230  
*Lembaga Melayu* [The Malay Tribune] 107, 188  
*lingua franca* 204  
 London University 213  
 Lubuk Merbau, Kuala Kangsar, Perak 84  
  
*Ma'had Ehyā al-Sharīf* 242  
 Ma'had Il-Ihya' as-Sharif, Gunung Semanggol, Perak 189  
 Ma'ahad Il Ihya' as-Sharif 191  
*Maal Hijrah Award* 89, 215  
 Madīnah 4  
 Madrasah al-Falah 51  
     al-Junid 184, 188  
     al-Khairiah 90  
     al-Masyhor, Penang 183  
     al-Misriyyah 90  
     Idrisiyyah 242  
*Madrasah Manabi' al-'Ulum wa matali' al-Nujum* 51  
 magazine *Al-Hedayah* 48  
*Al-Hikmah* 64

*Pengasuh* 70, 276  
*Saudara* 65  
 Dian 266  
 Mahatma Gandhi 184, 192  
 Maṭba'at al-Marbawiyyah 88  
*Majalah Dian* 277-278, 280  
*Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (Kelantan Council of Islamic Religion and Malay Customs) 47  
 Makkah 4, 6, 8-9, 31, 33-34, 36, 83, 88, 91  
 Maktabah Haji Abdullah bin Muhammad Nuruddin al-Rawi 255, 257-258, 260  
 Malacca Code or *Undang-undang Melaka* 228  
 Malay Archipelago 4, 7, 30, 33, 204, 232  
     aristocrats 127  
     community 33  
     educational system 122  
     Islamic civilization 204  
     language 34-35  
     language in Jawi script 10  
     law 228  
     Literary Association 132  
     Literature 106, 109, 132, 137, 276  
     Literature and Islamic Studies 123  
     Muslim 33-34, 187, 189, 203  
     Muslim customs 193  
     Muslim Nationalist 196  
     Nationalism 207, 209  
     parents 121  
     Peninsula 124  
     pilgrims 31  
     poverty 138

Press 6  
 rulers 108  
 rural areas 123  
 Malay Singaporean Union (Kesatuan Melayu Singapura-KMS) 188  
 society 127  
 system of education 120  
 Translation Bureau 137  
 Vernacular School 139  
 world 88  
 Malaya Communist Party (Partai Komunis Malaya-PKM) 190  
 Malaya Islamic Party (PAS) 194  
 Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) 147  
 Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) 147  
 Malayan Malay Nationalist Party (Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya-PKMM) 190  
 Malayan Union 128, 190-191  
 Malay-Indonesia student movement 86  
 Malays 117  
 Malaysia 43, 88  
 Malaysian Common law 237  
     law 237  
*Maniyyah al-Muṣalli* 30  
 Mansor Adabi 193  
 Maria Hertogh 193, 217  
 Martin van Bruinessen 9  
 Masjid Karwa 245  
 Masjid Muhammadi 39  
*Masjidil al-Ḥarām* 6, 41  
 Mat Kelantan 273  
 Mat Kelantan verified Mat Kilau 274  
 Mat Kilau 273  
 Maxwell 229  
*mazahib* 118



MCKK 132, 137  
MCL (Master in Comparative Law) 236  
Mecca 40-41, 52, 171  
Melayu Raya (Greater Malay) 193, 195-197  
*Memahami Jiwa Manusia Menurut Perspektif Islam* [Understanding the Human Soul from the Islamic Perspective] 283  
Meriam 146  
Middle East 34, 149, 286  
*Mingguan Kota Bharu* 274-275, 278  
mission to London 147  
modernist 135  
Mokhtar Lubis 247  
Mokhtarudin Lasso 190  
moral conduct 125  
mu'āmalāt 35  
Muhammad bin Haji Yaakub, Dr. 196  
Muhammad 'Abduh 130, 183, 247  
Muhammad Iqbal 183  
Muhammad Labib a-'Buhi 264  
Muhammad Nor bin Nordin, Dr. 196  
Muhammad Qutb 264  
Muhammad Rashid Ridha 140  
Muhammad Yusuf Ibrahim, Tan Sri 154, 166  
Muhammadian Anglo-Oriental College 122  
Muhammadi Mosque 265  
Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhāb 3  
Muhammad Arshad 5  
Muhammad Nafis 5  
Muhammad Šāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī 5  
Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī 96  
*mujaddid* 110  
*mujtahid* 117  
Mukhtasar Šaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī. 94  
munakaḥāt 35  
*Muqaddimah* 72  
Muslim 32  
College at Klang 149, 165  
community in Singapore 217  
Council of Europe 143, 152-153  
Heads of State 149  
Malay 109  
Minority Groups 162  
nations 229  
scholarship 34, 36, 42  
society 86, 112  
unity 148  
Welfare Organization of Malaysia (PERKIM) 161  
world 42  
Muslims 30-31, 33, 114, 184, 232  
in India 185  
in South East 32  
Mustafa 257  
Mustaffa Press 272  
Muzium Islam Malaysia (MIM) 10  
*mysticism* (taṣawwuf) 7  
Naqshabandīyyah 185  
Narathiwat 1  
National Council for Islamic Affairs 89  
National Land Code 229  
National Library of Malaysia (PNM) 9, 280  
National Mosque (Masjid Negara) 166  
National University of Malaysia (UKM) 89  
nationalism 208  
Natrah 193, 213, 217, 232  
controversy 216  
tragedy 216

Nik Abdul Rahman 266  
Nik Abdullah 46  
Nik Muhammad Mohiuddin Musa 154  
non-Muslims 114, 232  
OIC Summit 229  
Omar Ong Yoke Lin, Tun 166  
Onn bin Jaafar, Dato' 129, 173, 190-191, 193  
Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) 143, 147, 151, 167  
Ottoman Empire 3  
Owen Chung 166  
Pak Sako 190, 270  
Palestine 187  
Palestinian 186  
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru 192  
PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia) 274  
Patani 1, 3-4, 43, 88  
patience 203  
Penang Free School 145  
*Pendapat Perbahasan Ulama' pada Kejadian Perbuatan dan Perusahaan Hamba* 109  
*Pendeta* 139  
Pendita Za'aba 96  
*Pengasoh* (The Educator) 46-47, 70  
perang sabil 4  
PERKIM 143-144, 154-156, 158-159, 161-162, 164, 166-167  
Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) 10  
Persama Press 250, 255-256, 261  
*Persatuan Melayu Selangor* [The Malay Association of Selangor] 128  
Persatuan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung dan Indonesia" (Malay-Indonesia Student Association 86  
*Persatuan Ulama Malaysia* (PUM) 214  
*Persidangan Iblis* (Conference of Satan) 266  
*Pesantren* 7  
pilgrimage 40  
Pillars of Mankind 179  
Pinhorn, R. H. 145  
PKMM 191-192  
Plato's *Republic and Laws* 233  
*pondok* 45, 51-52, 60, 120, 242  
Ahmadiah 51  
Kenali 44-45, 62  
Pondok of Haji Mat Pauh 51  
Pondok Shaykh Ahmad Fatani 90  
Pondok Shaykh Wan Muhammad at Bukit Chandan, Kuala Kangsar 90  
Pondok Tok Husain al-Mas'udi 90  
Pondok Tok Kenali 90  
Portuguese 204  
practice Homeopathy in Malaya 196  
preachers (*muballighs*) 160  
preaching and not attacking 246  
President of the Malay Students of Malaya in Al-Azhar 271  
Prime Minister's Department 214  
Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia 148  
principal of *Dairat al-Ma'arif al-Wataniyyah* (DMW) 176  
*prinsip-prinsip Ilmu Masharakat* [Principles of Sociology] 286  
printing press 273, 275  
Privy Council 225  
Professor Ismail Hussein 281

Prophet Muhammad 49, 198, 201, 233, 257  
 psychology 282  
     from the Islamic perspective 261  
     in Islam 261  
 published by al-Maṭba‘at al-Marbawiyah 97  
 publisher 273  
 Publisher Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh 98, 102  
 Pustaka Dian 275-277, 280

*qabilah* 205  
 Qamoos-el-djaib Arab-Melajoe Latin (Pocket Dictionary) 93, 97  
 Qamus al-Marbawī 98  
     Idris al-Marbawī 87, 95  
     Penuntut 98  
*qiyas* 211  
*Qudrat* (The faculty of strength or power) 112  
 Qur'an 179, 211, 230, 251  
 Qur'an and sunnah 185  
 Qur'anic Exegesis 69  
 Quraish 259  
 Quranic Competition 166

Rabat, Morocco 149  
 Raffles College 213  
*Rahsia Kebahagiaaan* [The Secret of Happiness] 290  
 Ramadhan War 285  
 Ramlah Adam 184  
 Rashid Rida 108, 183  
 Rauf bin Nur 192  
 Razak, Tun 173  
*Re Maria Hertogh* 219  
 Regional Islamic Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP) 164

religious 111  
 religious issues 110  
 Ringkasan Nur al-Yaqin Sejarah Sayyid al-Mursalin 258  
 Ringkasan Qamus Malayu-Arab Bergambar 97  
 Ringkasan Qamus Melayu-Arab Bergambar 93  
 RISEAP 143, 162, 164, 166  
 Roland Braddel 232

Sa'id Nursi 183  
 Saed Kangkong 266  
*Saikologi Remaja* (Psychology of the Youth) 264, 272, 275-276, 282  
*Saikoloji Takut* [Psychology of Fear] 283  
*Salah Faham Terhadap Islam* [Misunderstandings About Islam] 287  
*Santajiwa* magazine 275  
 Sardon Haji Jubir, Tun 173  
 Satun 1  
 Saudi Arabia 229  
 Saudi Arabian government 153  
 Sayyed Qutb 247  
 Sayyid Alhaj Ibrahim Ma 154  
 Scholars from the Malay World 41  
 Second World War 102, 146, 270  
 Secretary of the British Council in London 129  
 Sejarah Ilmu Ekonomi 260  
 Sejarah Islam 258  
*Rasulullah* [History of the Prophet] 289  
*Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (SAR) [Privately Funded Religious School] 35  
 Majlis 266

Self-Reliance 63  
 Senior Normal Education 131  
*Seruan Azhar* (Call of Azhar) 86-87  
 Setiawan Belia (Youth Club) 267  
 Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawi 183  
 Shaikh Ahmad 43  
 Shaikh Tahir Jalaluddin 107, 110, 130, 140  
 sharī'ah 35, 235  
 Sharif bin Sukar of Malacca, Dr. 196  
 Sharifah Rodziah Syed Alwi Barakbah, Tun 146  
 Shaykh Dā'ud al-Faṭānī 33, 35  
 Shāfi'ī school of law 8  
 Sheikh 'Abd al-Rauf al-Fansuri 40  
 Sheikh 'Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani 40  
 Sheikh 'Ali Maliki 52  
 Sheikh 'Umar Hamdan 52  
 Sheikh Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbani 5  
 Sheikh Abdullah Fahim 170-171, 176  
 Sheikh Abu Bakar Ash'ari 87  
 Sheikh Abu Bakr Baqir 244  
 Sheikh Ahmad al-Fatani 41, 43-44, 46, 81  
 Sheikh Ahmad Khatib 41  
 Sheikh Dā'ud al-Faṭānī 1-10, 30, 32-34, 36, 40, 43  
 Sheikh Haji 6  
 Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harakan 163  
 Sheikh Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari 40  
 Sheikh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Shanawī 8  
 Sheikh Muḥammad Shahāb al-Dīn b. Sheikh Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari 7

Sheikh Mustafa Abdul Rahman Mahmud 241, 243-244, 246-248, 252, 259, 261  
 Sheikh Mustafa Mahmud 260-261  
 Sheikh Mustafa's Works and Contributions 248  
 Sheikh Nawawi Bantani 40  
 Sheikh Wan Abdullah 4  
 Sheikh Wan Idris 4  
 Sheikh Yusuf al-Nabhani 44  
 Singapore 88  
 Singapore's Ambassador to Egypt 214  
 Sir Raja Chulan 131  
 Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan 122, 183-184  
 SITC 133  
 socio-economic 137  
     problems of the Malays 109  
     issues 123  
 Soekarno 190  
 S.O.K. Ubaidullah, Tan Sri Dato' 154  
 Songkhla 1  
 South African policy of Apartheid 147  
 Spanish 204  
 spiritual devotions 79  
     guidance 78  
 Sri Wijaya in Java 204  
 St. Catherine's College, Cambridge University 145  
 State Legislation Council in Kelantan 273-274  
 Straits Settlements (SS) 130, 140  
 struggle of independence 184  
 Sufis 202  
 Sufism 186  
 Sulṭān Maḥmūd II 3  
 Sultan Abdul Halim Shah 145

Sultan Abdul Hamid College 145  
 Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah 144  
 Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) 108, 131, 140  
 Sultan Iskandar 243  
 Sultan Muhammad IV 49  
 Sultan of Perak 187  
 Sultan Yunus 3  
 Sunan al-Tirmidhī 87, 91, 94, 102-103  
 sunnah 211, 230  
*Surat-surat Maududi-Maryam Jameelah* [The Maududi-Maryam Jameelah Letters] 287  
 Surau al-Taḳwa 245  
*Susie Teoh* 218, 232  
*Susie Teoh's case* 219  
 Sutan Djenain 188  
*Syarikat Dian Sdn. Bhd* 277  
 Syarikat Takaful 214  
 Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas 137  
 Syed Nasir Ismail, Tan Sri 273  
 Syekh Abu Bakar al-Ash'ari 84  
 Syekh Jamaluddin al-Afghani 183  
 Syekh Juned Tola 87  
 Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin 87  
 Tabung Haji (Pilgrim Fund Board) 274  
*tafsīr* (Qur'anic interpretation) 92, 241  
*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* 250, 261  
 Qur'ān Marbawī (Quranic Tafsir of Marbawi) 93  
*al-Khazin* 48  
*ibn Kathir* 48  
 Qur'ān Marbawī: Juzu' alif-lam-mim 88  
 Taif 229  
 Tajdid 108, 136, 140  
 Tanah Jawi 4  
*taqlid* (blind imitation) 112, 116-118  
*Tariqah* 65  
*tawhid* 202  
 Teladan Belajar Arab yang Senang (Concise Picture Malay-Arabic Dictionary) 93, 97  
 Tengku Haji Muhammad Othman 258  
 Tengku Ismail bin Tengku Mohd Yassin 128  
 Tengku Kursiah College (TKC) 123  
*Tengku Mariam's case* 225-226, 228  
 Terjemahan Mukhtasar Ibn Abi Jamrah 257  
 Thailand 32-33  
 The Grand Old Man of Malay Letters 136  
*The Muslim* (Singapore) 108  
 The Opinion of Ulama' on the Issue of Human Actions and Efforts 109  
 The Poverty of the Malays 124  
 The PRM 193  
 The Salvation for the Malays 124  
 theology (*kalām*) 7  
 To' Kenali 37-38, 40-41, 43-47, 49-50, 66, 70, 72, 80  
 To' Kenali's Children 62  
 To' Kenali's Demise 61  
 To' Kenali's Essay on Pro-active Attitude 74  
 To' Kenali's Personal Values and Principles 63  
 To' Kenali's Visit to Egypt 44  
 To' Kweng Ahmad 39  
 To' Pulau Manis of Trengganu 47

Tok Guru Haji Ali 265  
 Tok Guru Haji Yusoff Lega 265  
 Tok Kenali 90, 265  
 tolerance 203  
 towards a history of law in Malaysia and Singapore 232  
 traditional religious institutions (*pondok*) 32-33  
 religious schools 1  
 ulama' 111, 130, 133  
 Tuan Haji Ahmad Badawi Abdullah 194  
 Tuan Haji Ahmad Ghazali Abdullah 194  
 Tuan Haji Ahmad Tuan Hussein 194  
 Tuan Haji Mansor J.P 194  
 Tuan Padang – that is Tuan Guru Haji Taib 40  
 Tuhfah 227  
 Tun Razak Award 215  
 Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj 143, 146, 151-152, 154, 158, 162, 165, 173  
 Tunku Amat Nerang 146  
 Tunku Khadijah 146  
 Tunku Yusuf 145  
 Ṭariqah Shāṭiriyyah 7  
 Ṭā'if 3  
 ulama' 109, 242  
 Umar al-Khattab 228  
 UMNO (United Malays National Organization) 129, 149, 173, 191, 193, 274  
 Executive Council 274  
 Youth 174, 177  
 Youth Federation 174  
 Union of the Malayan and Indonesian people (Kesatuan rakyat Indonesia dan Semenanjung-KRIS) 189  
 United Islamic Movement in Sarawak 158  
 United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) 128-129, 147, 188, 190  
 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 161  
 United Sabah Islamic Organization 158  
 University Malaya 215  
 University of Al-Azhar 41  
 University of Aligarh 184  
 University of Malaya (UM) 123, 140, 214  
 USIA, (Islamic organization of Sabah) 159, 162  
 Ustaz Arbab Tamimi 192  
*Utusan Melayu* [Malay Mail] 104, 107  
 Violet Coulson 146  
 Virginia Matheson 9  
 Wahhābī religious movement 3  
*Wakaf* 225  
*Wakaf* in Johore – The Return of Islamic Law 227  
 Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah 9, 32  
*Waqf* 226  
*watan* 205  
 which Islamic 222  
 Wilkinson, R.J 96  
 William Roff 84  
 Winstedt 229  
 wisdom of the Sufis 204



Yacob Ahmad 266	Za'ba 106-108, 111, 114-118,
Yala 1	120-121, 123, 125, 128-133
Young Malay Union (Kesatuan	Za'ba and Education Issues 120
Melayu Muda-KMM) 188	Za'ba's Achievements 135
Young Men's Physical and Literary	Political Issues 127
Union (YMPLU) 213	<i>dan Melayu</i> (Zaba and the
Young Muslim Men's Association	Malays) 127
(YMMA) 213	Research Fellowship 123
Yusoff Zaky Yacob, Dato' 264,	Zia-ul-Haque 220
266-267, 270, 277, 281, 291	Zionism 186

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# MONOGRAPH on selected MALAY INTELLECTUALS

The Islamic civilization created great minds like Ibn Khāldun, Imam al-Ghazali, Imam Shafie and many more. In Malaysia where Islam is the integral part of the federation and its people, the rise of its very own exemplary minds was only natural. Scholars like Idris al-Marbawī, Sheikh Dā'ud al-Faṭānī To' Kenali, Haji Ahmad Badawi, Ahmad Ibrahim, Sheikh Mustafa, dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Pendeta Zaaba, Yusoff Zaky and others greatly influenced the Muslim minds in the country. Another of Malaysia's prominent Muslim was its father of independence Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj who played a pivotal role in uniting the ummah at the global platform. Though they may not be with us anymore, the legacy that they left us is still very much alive. Muslims in Malaya and later Malaysia greatly benefited from their contributions. This book gives an overview of the role played by great minds from Tanah Jawi in enriching the Ummah's knowledge in Islam. This book also touches on the working of their minds, the way they disseminated their thoughts be it in politics or education and their writings. They all had one thing in common, to help fellow Muslims to dwell deeper into Islam and unite the ummah through their works and thoughts. It is hoped that this book would help the readers to appreciate the contributions of Malaysia's Exemplary Muslims.

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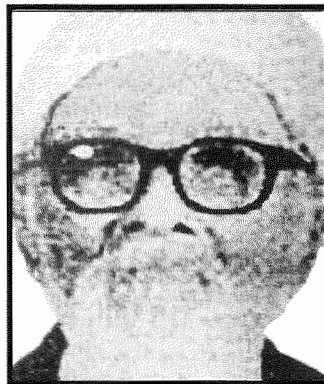
## Chapter 3

### Al-Sheikh Dr. Muḥammad Idrīs Al-Marbawī's Contribution to Islamic Studies in the Malay World

Abdul Salam Muhamad Shukri

#### Introduction

Al-Sheikh Dr. Muḥammad Idrīs bin 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Marbawī al-Azhari al-Malāyuwī gained prominence in the Malay world with his Arab-Malay Dictionary called *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī*. He also wrote a translation and commentary on *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* called "Bahr al-madhi," and is responsible for numerous literary works. His contributions to Islamic studies enriched the Muslim academia in Malaysia and Muslim world in general.



Muhammad Idrīs b. 'Abd  
al-Ra'ūf

Al-Marbawī was concerned with knowledge of language. He wanted the Malays to be proficient in Arabic in order to study Islam. One way to help them is by compiling an Arabic-Malay dictionary. After putting all effort and energy to study Arabic language from many great literatures, he finally succeeded. He managed to arrange different types of dictionaries.

Al-Marbawī strived to improve his fellow citizens through means of knowledge and education. Based on his experience as an editor in *Seruan Azhar*, he also published different encyclopedias in Malay. *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu Kurun 14H* (Encyclopedia of Knowledge in 14 Hijrah) was among his earlier works published in Dhu al-Qadah, 1929.

Besides writing his work, al-Marbawī also established himself as a successful publisher known as the Matba'at al-Marbawiyyah (al-Marbawī's Publisher). He managed to establish the publishing house since his student days and its success was largely attributed to his own literary works and others.

#### Al-Marbawī's Background

Al-Sheikh Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī (1893-1989) or his full name Muḥammad Idrīs al-Marbawī al-Azhari al-Malayuwi is among the distinguished Malay scholars. He was not only well known in the Malay Archipelago but also in the Islamic world especially in Egypt and Makkah. Al-Marbawī also known as H. M. Idris el-Marbawy<sup>1</sup> was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1893 in a village called al-Masfalah<sup>2</sup>, in the vicinity of the Holy city of Makkah.

Al-Marbawī's father, Tuan Haji Abdul Ra'uf bin Ja'afar bin Idris originated from Minangkabau, West Sumatera, but migrated to Malaya (precursor to Malaysia). His father was known as an 'ālim (knowledgeable man) and a pious person. In his village, al-Marbawī's father was a religious teacher and acted as a dā'ī (preacher) as well. He used to travel to and fro between Malaya and Makkah. Such journey was common among the Malays then and evidence suggests that the Malays started to travel to Hijāz (Makkah and Madinah) not long after their conversion to Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Marbawī's mother, Asma' binti Abdul Karim bin Dusah originated from Kota Lama Kiri, Kuala Kangsar, Perak. al-Marbawī's father married to Asma' in early 1890s. After their marriage, they traveled to Makkah and then decided to settle there.<sup>4</sup> As far as living

1 See al-Marbawī, *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu Kurun 14 H*, vol. 1, (Cairo: Matba'at al-Marbawiyyah, 1347/1929).

2 See al-Marbawī's statement in his *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, n.d), 292.

3 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East with a Bibliography of Malay Printed Works published in the Middle East* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2000), 5-6.

4 See Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idris Abdul Ra'uf al-Marbawī: Sejarah dan Sumbangannya di Bidang Penulisan, Academic exercise, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1990, 15-16.



in Makkah was concerned, there was no problem since many Malay families also lived there. According to William Roff,<sup>5</sup> there were at least 500 Malay families living in Makkah in 1916.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Marbawī is the eldest among six siblings. His brothers were Haji Abdullah, Haji Tahir, Haji Harun, Haji Abdul Kadir and Haji Hasan. From a different mother, al-Marbawī also had two sisters, i.e. Hajjah Khadijah and Hajjah Hafsa.

Al-Marbawī spent his early life in Makkah. However, there is little information about his life there. It is said that he received his early religious education in Makkah. In 1913, his family decided to return to Malaya, after staying in Makkah for 22 years.<sup>7</sup> Upon their return Lubuk Merbau, Kuala Kangsar, Perak. His pen name "al-Marbawī" originates from the name of the village.

Al-Marbawī's father was a firm believer in education for his children. Therefore, he sent al-Marbawī to school even though the latter was already an adult. Upon his return to Malaya at the age of twenty in 1913, al-Marbawī was schooled at Lubuk Merbau Malay School for the sake of learning Malay language. After staying more than ten years in Malaya and having completed his studies in various institutions, he became a religious teacher in Perak before pursuing his studies at al-Azhar University<sup>8</sup>, Cairo in 1924.

His education in Egypt was sponsored by his father. In al-Azhar he met some Malay students. Among them Syekh Abu Bakar al-Ash'ari (1904-1970) who entered al-Azhar in 1925,<sup>9</sup> Syekh Junid Tola<sup>10</sup> and Hussein Said.<sup>11</sup> In al-Azhar University, he worked very hard to enhance

his knowledge. He obtained his degree al-'āliyah (equivalent to a bachelor degree) from al-Azhar. However, the date of his graduation was not clear. Somehow, it is said that he was the first Malay from Perak who received that degree.

Besides formally enrolling in al-Azhar, he also studied ḥadīth under the guidance of al-Sheikh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Samālūṭī at al-Jāmi' Saydinā al-Ḥusayn, one of the Mosques close to al-Azhar. Al-Marbawī used to learn Sunan al-Tirmidhi from al-Samālūṭī, and he admired the work of al-Tirmidhī very much. Therefore, he decided to translate and comment this marvelous work.<sup>12</sup> Al-Marbawī spent a lot of time to finish this pioneering work. After completing his study from the Azhar, he decided to stay in Egypt in order to work as a writer and publisher.

Al-Marbawī had two wives. The first wife Hajah Khadijah binti Mohd. Adham is a Malaysian. The second, Munirah 'Abd. al-Wahhab is an Egyptian. al-Marbawī married Hajah Khadijah before traveling to Egypt. Hajah Khadijah bore him 10 children but only one survived. The surviving child Mariam binti Sheikh Muhammad Idris later became a religious teacher at the Raja Taiyah Girls School in Ipoh, Perak. However al-Marbawī had no children from his second marriage.

According to his friends and colleagues, his demeanour is gentle and friendly. He dislikes idle talks but loves talking on religious issues. He led a simple life, avoiding smoking, and fills his days with writing from early morning until midnight. He always wears his Azhar gown (jubah) and Muslim turban. He was cautious about his health and keeps himself physically fit.

## Al-Marbawī's Literary Works

Al-Marbawī's literary life flourished in Egypt. His literary works began earlier when he was still a student at al-Azhar.<sup>13</sup> He took an active part

5 See William Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1980), 88.

6 Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idris Abdul Ra'uf al-Marbawī, 16.

7 Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 tahun: Ulama' yang terus berazam Mencurahkan Sumbangan," in *Dakwah*, Oktober, 1987, 6; "Tokoh Ma'al Hijrah 1408H (1987): Allahyarham Syekh Mohd. Idris Bin Abdul Rauf Al-Marbawī," in <http://www.islam.gov.my/informasi/islam/tokoh/hijrah08.html>.

8 On al-Azhar University, see J. Jomier, "Al-Azhar (al-Djamiyah al-Azhar)," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I: 813-21; also Karl Vollers and J. Jomier, *al-Azhar* (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-Lubnānī, 1984).

9 Haron Din, "Al-Syekh Abu Bakar al-Ash'ari, 1904-1970: Ulama Tegas dan Berani," in *Ulama Silam dalam Kenangan*, ed. Ismail Mat (Bangi, UKM, 1992), 13-19 (13).

10 Mohd Radzi Othman and O.K. Rahrnat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam*, 190.

11 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 54.

12 Al-Hāfiẓ: Abī Bakr Muḥammad 'Abdullāh al-Ashbīlī known as Ibn al-'Arabī al-Mālikī (d. 543H) has written commentaries entitled 'Ārīḍat al-aḥwadhī 'alā al-Tirmidhī, see Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhith fi 'ulūm al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1987), 35.

13 Al-Marbawī mentioned his address in Cairo as H. M. Idris El-Marbawī, Al-Azhar, Ruoak Jawa, Cairo, Egypt, see al-Marbawī, *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu*.



in the Malay-Indonesia student movement. al-Marbawī first involved in the publication of the monthly journal in Egypt called *Seruan Azhar* (Call of Azhar). He became one of the editors of a newly founded journal which was published by the "Persatuan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung dan Indonesia" (Malay-Indonesia Student Association or al-Jāmi'ah al-Qāhiriyyah al-Jāwiyyah), known also as al-Jāmi'ah al-khayriyyah (the Welfare Society). Besides the *Seruan Azhar*, the Society also published another journal in late 1927 called *Pilehan Timoer* (Choice of the East).<sup>14</sup> Both of them were also circulated in the Malay Peninsula and this later brought a new periodical called *Semangat Islam* (Spirit of Islam) which lasted for about eighty months.<sup>15</sup>

The first edition of *Seruan Azhar* was published in October 1925. It is stated on the front cover of the journal that the Chief-Editor for this journal was Djanan Tayeb (d. 1945)<sup>16</sup> who was also the President of the Society with four other columnists, namely Ilyas Ya'aqob, Abdul Wahab Abdullah, Mahmud al-Yunusi and Idris al-Marbawī. The motto of this journal was "Bersetia Jaya, Bercerai Merbahaya" (Loyalty successful, Disunity dangerous) written in Jawi script.

This journal highlights all relevant issues in the Muslim society which include religion, economy, society, and politics. Besides, the journal also incorporated current issues, Malay poetry such as pantun (rhyming quatrain with inner assonance), syair (quatrain of four lines with single rhyme) seloka (quatrains of four rhyming lines) and some advertisements.

*Seruan Azhar* attracted the inspiration of the *Kaum Muda* (Younger Generation) Movement to fight for Malaya's independence from the British colonial power. It was said that the reformed ideas of

al-Sheikh Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) and many of his followers shaped this movement's struggle. This journal was published, firstly, to disseminate knowledge and education, and secondly to denounce British colonialism. For Egypt itself, the British Commissioner had already issued a declaration of its independence in February 1922.<sup>17</sup>

Many articles written by al-Marbawī in *Seruan Azhar* emphasized the importance of knowledge. He also affirmed the role of women in education. However, he did not actively participate in politics. In March 1928, al-Marbawī became the acting chief editor for the journal. Others who assisted him were Sheikh Abu Bakar Ash'ari, Ahmad Ataullah and Abdul Kahar Muzakkir. However, due to financial difficulty and shortage of manpower, it ceased publication in May 1928 after publishing thirty-one issues.<sup>18</sup> A wealthy Malay student by the name of Hj. Othman bin Abdullah is said to have financially backed the journal's publication.<sup>19</sup>

Among al-Marbawī's brilliant piece was the Arabic-Malay dictionary called the *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* and the Malay translation and commentaries on Sunan al-Tirmidhi known as *Bahr al-madhi* (The Sea of Honey), a twenty-two volumes write up. The fourth edition of the *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* was published in 1935 while the *Bahr al-madhi* was published from 1933 till 1957. Both were published by al-Azhar publisher, Mustafa al-Halabi in Cairo.

He worked with two other Malay scholars, namely Syekh Juned Tola and Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin, to arrange Arab-Malay dictionary.<sup>20</sup> But his two colleagues is said to have returned earlier leaving al-Marbawī to complete the endeavour alone.<sup>21</sup> But after putting all effort and energy to study Arabic language from many great works, he finally succeeded in compiling this dictionary. However there is a dispute over the fact both of his colleagues returned home earlier.<sup>22</sup>

14 See Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 87-90; Husin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia from Revivalism to Islamic State* (Singapore: National University Press, 1993), 22; Md Sidin and Mohammad Ridzuan mention that this Society was established in 1923, see Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 48.

15 William R. Roff, *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States 1876-1941*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 12.

16 He was the first Indonesia student to obtain the 'Ālamiyya degree from al-Azhar in 1924, see Mona Abaza, *Changing Images of Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1993), 5; Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 48.

17 A.S. Bin Salamon, *Azhar and Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: al-Rahmaniah, 1988), 32.

18 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 66.

19 Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 88.

20 Al-Marbawī, *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* introduction.

21 Mohd Radzi Othman and O.K. Rahmat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam: Satu Kajian di Negeri Perlis dan Hubung Kaitnya dengan Malaysia* (Pulau Pinang: USM, 1996), 190.

22 See Ismail Hj. Ibrahim, Ismail Abd Rahman and Mat Asin Dollah, "Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin, 1869-1956: Reformis Islam," 20-29.



Besides writing, al-Marbawī also established his own publishing house known as the Maṭba‘at al-Marbawīyyah (al-Marbawī’s Publisher). al-Marbawī managed to establish his publishing house during his student days in al-Azhar. His work, *Kitab Perbendaraan Ilmu* which was published in 1929 cited his publication address at al-Azhar, Ruoak Jawa, Cairo. As for the word “Ruoak” (Arabic *ruwāq* or *riwāq*) refers to dormitories and workrooms of the students of Al-Azhar often divided according to provinces and nationalities.”<sup>23</sup>

Later at the end of his *Tafsir Qur’ān Marbawī: Juzu’ alif-lam-mim* which was published in 1938, stated that the address of his publishing house was at No. 108, Shāri‘al-Azhar, Cairo.<sup>24</sup> One of the advertisements clearly showed that the operations of this publishing company include publication, sale and purchase of books and selling of printing tools like Arabic fonts which came in different sizes.

## Al-Marbawī’s Days in Al Azhar

Al-Marbawī is widely acknowledged especially throughout the Malay world. The dictionary he compiled is widely used by many from Southeast Asia especially from Malaysia, Indonesia, South Thailand (Patani), and Cambodia besides those who lived in Makkah and Egypt. It has been pointed out that between 1930-1950 nearly all teachers and students used al-Marbawī’s dictionary as their reference.<sup>25</sup> This dictionary is popular among students of Arabic and Islamic studies. It has been reprinted many times in Egypt, Malaysia and Singapore.

After having stayed in Egypt for a long time, al-Marbawī returned to Malaysia for a short visit in 1967. At the age of seventy-four, he still felt that his society was in need of his contribution, and Egypt was the best place for his work and family. So he returned to Egypt after a while.

23 Hans Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, Third ed. (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Language Services, 1976), 368.

24 Al-Marbawī, *Tafsir Qur’ān Marbawī: Juzu’ alif-lam-mim* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Marbawīyyah, 1357/1938), 205.

25 *Utusan Melayu*, 18 May 1975 cited by Mahani Mokhtar, 34-35.

Al-Marbawī’s contribution to uplift the Malaya in the field of education specifically in Arabic and Islamic studies did not go unnoticed. In 1980 National University of Malaysia (UKM) decided to confer him with the honorary doctorate (Ph.D) in literature. The decision to confer him with this degree had been agreed earlier during the Senate Meeting on 25th February 1980. On the 5th of July 1980, he was conferred with the doctorate degree when he was eighty-seven years old.<sup>26</sup> Upon this second return to Malaysia, it is said that his family insisted that al-Marbawī should stay in Malaysia for good. He however returned again to Egypt after the event.

Seven years later, al-Marbawī’s contribution to the nation and Muslim ummah was again acknowledged. al-Marbawī was chosen as the first recipient of Maal Hijrah award in 1987. In the meeting of the National Council for Islamic Affairs held on January 17, 1986, it was decided that one important figure should be chosen as an example for all Malaysians to emulate. For this purpose, al-Marbawī was selected as the inaugural candidate for the award. He received the award on 26th August 1987 together with RM40,000, a ticket to perform pilgrimage in Makkah, a Certificate of Appreciation and a Medal.<sup>27</sup> The event was aired by Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), and in his short speech, al-Marbawī humbly said that his knowledge is scanty, emulating the Qur’an, “... and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafe but little.” (Q 17:85). He also asked all Muslims to unite.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Marbawī contributed the money he received from the award for establishment of a college named after him. The college was established on March 1988 in Ipoh.<sup>29</sup> The objective of this college is to provide religious education to all segments of society. Among subjects taught in

26 His speech on this auspicious occasion was not kept by the University. According to Puan Salmah, a public relation officer at the National University (UKM) Archive, she only kept speeches beginning from 1981 until now. The University Archive, however, kept the 8th UKM Convocation Book.

27 He tried to return to Egypt but was stopped by his daughter, an interview with Assoc. Professor Dr. Mohammad Ridzuan Othman in History Department on 30 April 2003.

28 Faridah M. Sani, “Sekitar Maal Hijrah,” *al-Islam*, October 1987, 36.

29 This college located at No. 18A (1 st Floor), Taman Ipoh, Ipoh Garden Selatan, see Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idris Abdul Ra’uf al-Marbawī 61-62, and also an interview with Assoc. Professor Dr. Mohammad Ridzuan Othman.

this college included *tilāwah* and *tajwīd* of the Qur'an as well as 'ulūm shar'īyyah (i.e. 'aqīdah, 'ibādah and akhlāq). Among the programmes of this College is organizing the *nadwah Islamiyyah* (Islamic conference). In order to ensure the progress of the College, cooperation had been arranged between the college and other institutions such as Islamic Da'wah Foundation (YADIM), Islamic Religious Department of Perak (JAIP) and Association of the Middle East Students.<sup>30</sup>

It was reported that by the age of ten, he has memorised 16 out of 30 parts of the Qur'an besides numerous *ḥadīth*. al-Marbawī who was well – versed in the Malay language, continued his studies in Islamic knowledge at various religious schools (*madrasah*), called “pondok” (school and lodgings for students of religion). First, he went to the Pondok Shaykh Wan Muhammad at Bukit Chandan, Kuala Kangsar, in Perak. One of his teachers was the Mufti of Perak, Haji Wan Muhammad Wan Hussain (1849-1929).<sup>31</sup> Then he went to the Madrasah al-Khairiah also called Pondok Tok Husain al-Mas'udi, named after its principle Haji Husain Mohd. Nasir al-Mas'udi al-Banjari (1835-1935)<sup>32</sup> at Pokok Sena, Seberang Prai.

He then moved to Madrasah al-Misriyyah or Pondok Shaykh Ahmad Fatani in Padang Lalang, Bukit Mertajam, Penang. After completing his studies there, he went to Kelantan in the East Coast, and learned Islamic studies and Arabic language from Tok Kenali (1868-1933)<sup>33</sup> at Pondok Tok Kenali. According to Abdullah al-Qari Salleh (A.Q.H.A.S), Tok Kenali's influence on al-Marbawī was very strong especially in the field of Arabic. Tok kenali's teaching had inspired him to arrange the Arabic dictionary.<sup>34</sup>

30 Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idris Abdul Ra'uf al-Marbawi 61-62.

31 Shauki Majid, “Tokoh Maal Hijrah Tokoh Tawaran jadi Mufti,” *Dakwah*, December 1989, 13.

32 Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idris Abdul Ra'uf al-Marbawi 17; see also Mohammad Redzuan Othman, “Haji Wan Muhammad Wan Hussain (1849-1929),” unpublished (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka, n.d.).

33 See Ishak Rejab, “Haji Husain Mohd. Nasir al-Mas'udi al-Banjari, 1863-1935,” in Ulama Silam dalam Kenangan, ed. Ismail Mat (Bangi, UKM, 1992), 38-49; Ismail Awang, “Tuan Husain Kedah (1863-1936),” in Ismail Che Daud (ed.), *Tokoh-tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung* (1), ed. kedua (Kota Bharu: Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, 1998), 193-206.

34 Muhammad Yusof known as Tok Kenali, see Shafi'i Ibrahim, “Tok Kenali, 1868-1933,” in Ulama Silam dalam Kenangan, ed. Ismail Mat (Bangi, UKM, 1992), 30-37; Yusoff Zaky Yacob,

Later he worked as a Qur'an and religious teacher in Perak after getting a letter of appointment Islamic Religious Council of Perak. The Council also agreed to appoint him as a visiting Qur'an teacher. However, his father was not satisfied with al-Marbawī's education and his position and wanted him to continue studies.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Marbawī went back to Makkah with his father and only then he decided to continue his studies at al-Azhar University. It's worth noting that al-Marbawī, in the first place followed the old rule of the Azhar educational system. In the old rule, two diplomas were awarded, *ahliyyah*<sup>36</sup> after a minimum of eight years studies, and '*ālimiyyah*'<sup>37</sup> after twelve years.

Around 1930s, a new rule was introduced which was called *qism al-nizām*. The new rule divided al-Azhar educational system into three stages, namely *ibtidā'iyyan* (primary), *thānawiyyah* (secondary) and *kulliyah* (faculty). The primary course was four years, the secondary five years, and the higher four years in one of the three faculties, namely *sharī'ah* (Islamic law), *uṣūl al-dīn* (Theology) and al-lughah (Linguistics). As far as their subjects were concerned, for al-shahādah al-'āliyyah, students have to pass eight subjects, and for al-shahādah al-'ālimiyyah twelve subjects.<sup>38</sup>

According to al-Marbawī's own account in his introduction to *Baḥr al-madhi*, he studied *ḥadīth* especially Sunan al-Tirmidhī under al-Shaykh Muhammad Ibrāhīm al-Samālūṭī, one of the great Azhar scholars in *ḥadīth* who taught *ḥadīth* for so many years in al-Jāmi' (Mosque) of Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn in Cairo, close to the Azhar. Besides that he also learnt other works such as *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim. He however mentioned that the Sunan al-Tirmidhī is a very special work that is worthy of translation and commentary. It is said that he had read the Sunan seven times before starting to translate and comment it.<sup>39</sup>

“Tok Kenali (1868-1933),” in Ismail Che Daud (ed.), *Tokoh-tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung* (1), ed. kedua (Kota Bharu: Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, 1988), 121-32.

35 Abdullah al-Qari Salleh (A.Q.H.A.S), *Kamus Idris al marbawi* (Kuala Lumpur: Darul Nu'man), Sumbangsih.

36 Faridah M. Sani, “Tokoh Maal Hijrah Pertama,” *Al-Islam*, October 1987, 50-52 (50).

37 Rank of competency.

38 Rank of scholarship of an 'ālim, conferred by diploma of al-Azhar, Hans Wehr, *Arabic English Dictionary*, 637.

39 See J. Jomier, “Al-Azhar (al-Djāmi'ah al-Azhar),” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I: 818; also Karl Vollers and J. Jomier, *al-Azhar*, 67-68.

After graduating from al-Azhar, al-Marbawī decided to stay in Egypt in order to contribute to the enhancement of knowledge although many of his friends returned home.<sup>40</sup> al-Marbawī was very dedicated and pious. Ever since his childhood until his last days, he contributed to writing and research. Until his last breath, he still continued his work by engaging to finish his tafsir. Before his death, he managed to finish until the part (juz) twenty-two of the Qur'an.

## Al-Marbawī's Contributions to Islam

He spent much of his academic life in Egypt especially in writing, translating, and editing/rectifying books<sup>41</sup> as well as involving in printing and publishing.<sup>42</sup> According to Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak and Mohammad Ridzuan Othman, the most successful Malay publisher in Egypt was the Maṭba'at al-Marbawīyyah in 1927.<sup>43</sup> Another Malay publishing press was the Maṭba'at al-taqaddum al-'ilmiyyah which published the journal *Pilehan Timoer* and other works.<sup>44</sup>

Al-Marbawī's works covered various fields of Islamic studies including Arabic, tafsīr, ḥadīth and fiqh. Besides focusing on Islamic studies and Arabic, he also prepared a few encyclopedias in Malay.<sup>45</sup> He also wrote articles on various issues such as on the importance of

40 See review of the work in <http://al-ahkam.com.my/forum/showflat.php?Cat=&Board=Bahrul&Number=9573&page=0&view=collapsed&sb=2&o=&fpart=1>.

41 The Journal is available in the University of Malaya library under the called number (BPI SA th. 1-3), in microfiche form.

42 al-Marbawī edited and rectified the work of Sheikh Dawud al-Fatani entitled *Ghāyat al-taqrīb fi al-irṭh wa'l-ta'ṣīb*, see Abdul Kadir Haji Muhammad, *Sejarah Penulisan Hukum Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1996), 39; Sheikh Junid Tola al-Azhari, *Kaifiat Mengadakan Wakaf Muslimin* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Marbawīyyah, 1927), 29pp, see Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 82.

43 It is mentioned that the work of Sheikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin (1869-1956) entitled "Ini Huraian yang Membakar Persuratan Haji Bakar pada menyatakan Hukum Dua Rakaat Qabliyat al-Jumaat" was printed by al-Marbawīyyah printing, see Abdul Kadir Haji Muhammad, *Sejarah Penulisan Hukum Islam di Malaysia*, 85.

44 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 67.

45 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 67.

knowledge, the role of women and others. He also used to write Malay pantun (rhyming quatrain), seloka and syair in the journal *Seruan Azhar*.

On Arabic, he compiled Arabic-Malay-Arabic dictionaries, the famous one is the *Qamus Idris al-Marbawi: Arabi-Malayu*. Besides this dictionary, he also arranged three other dictionaries which include *Qamoes-el-djaib Arab-Melajoe Latin* (Pocket Dictionary: Arab-Malaya Latin), *Ringkasan Qamus Melayu-Arab Bergambar dan Teladan Belajar Arab yang Senang* (Concise Picture Malay-Arabic Dictionary and Easy Tips to Learn Arabic) and *Qamus Penuntut* (Students' Dictionary). Compared to his *Qamus Idris al-Marbawi*, the 13 other dictionaries did not get much attention.

In the field of tafsīr, al-Marbawī is considered prolific when he produced various tafsir literature besides translating some tafsīrs. His works include *Tafsīr Qur'ān Marbawī* (Quranic Tafsir of Marbawi),<sup>46</sup> *Qur'an Bergantung Makna* (Translation of the Qur'an), *Tafsīr Juz' 'amma* (Interpretation of Juz' 'Amma), *Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah* (Interpretation of al-Fatiḥah), *Tafsīr Sūrah Yā sīn* (Interpretation of Sūrah Yā sīn),<sup>47</sup> *Tafsīr Nūr al-yaqīn* (Interpretation of Light of Certainty) and *Tafsīr Faṭḥ al-qadīr* (Interpretation of Opening of the Possessing Power). The advertisement for *Tafsīr Sūrah Yā sīn* can be found at the end of *Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī* published by the Cairo publisher. It is said to be a part of translation of *Tafsīr Faṭḥ al-qadīr* of al-Shawkānī. The price is also stated as forty malīm (Millièm)<sup>48</sup> or sixty-cents Singapore.<sup>49</sup>

46 Tokoh Maal Hijrah, "Tokoh Ma'al Hijrah 1408H (1987): Allahyarham Syekh Mohd. Idris Bin Abdul Rauf al-Marbawi," in <http://www.islam.gov.my/informasi/islam/tokoh/hijrah08.html>; Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 Tahun: Ulama' yang terus berazam mencurahkan sumbangan," in *Dakwah* (October, 1987), 5-6; Faridah M. Sani, "Tokoh Maal Hijrah Pertama," in *Al Islam* (October, 1987), 50-52; Tajuddin Samah, *Tokoh Ulama Nusantara* (Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing, 1993), 77-83.

47 al-Marbawī, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Marbawī: Juzu' alif-lam-mim* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Marbawīyyah, 1357/1938) is available in the University Library Malaya, Za'aba Collection.

48 al-Marbawī, *Tafsīr Yā sīn* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlādu-h, n.d.) Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 83.

49 al-Marbawī, *Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī*, Cairo edition; see also Mazlan Ibrahim, "Kitab-kitab tafsir Melayu di Nusantara," in Abdullah Hasan (ed), *Prosiding Persidangan Antarabangsa Melayu Beijing ke-2*, 2 vols, (Kuala Lumpur: 2002), 1: 72-73; (Fr. Millièm) malīm, malīm



Tafsīr Qur'ān Marbawī: Juzu' alif-lam mim is considered as one of the Malay tafsīrs in Malay Archipelago.<sup>50</sup> It covers only from sūrah al-fātiḥah until al-baqarah, and was published by al-Marbawī's own publisher. It consists of 204 pages excluding the introduction, and was written in classical Malay. In the introduction, al-Marbawī mentions his sources in writing his Tafsīr which include Tafsīr of Fakr al-Rāzī, of Khāzin, of al-Bayḍawī, of al-Nasafī, of Ibn 'Abbās and of al-Jalālayn. At the end he stated that the work finished on the Monday night of the 22nd of Rabi' al-awwal 1357/1938. He mentioned that it was going to be followed by Tafsīr sūrah Āl 'Imrān.<sup>51</sup> However, other volumes were not available for discussions.

In the field of ḥadīth, he translated and commented on Sunan al-Tirmidhī which he called Baḥr al-mādhī: Mukhtasar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī.<sup>52</sup> Other works include *Kitāb Bulūgh al-marām* and *Kitāb Hidangan Guru: Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī dan Muslim* (Teachers' Guide: Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī dan Muslim) (2 volumes). According to Shauki Majid, *Kitāb Hidangan Guru* was prepared for the teachers' guide in teaching ḥadīth.<sup>53</sup>

On fiqh, his works are *Punca Agama dan Pati Hukum-hukum Ibādat* (The Foundation of Religion and the Essence of Rules of 'Ibadah), *Nizām al-ḥayāt* (Law of Life) and *Asas Islam* (Uṣūl al-Islam) (Foundation of Islam). The advertisement for *Asas Islam* can also be found at the end of *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* published by the Cairo publisher. It is said that this book discusses the topics of ablution, prayers and other related matters together with some pictures. Its price for a copy was ten malīm (milliēm).<sup>54</sup>

On encyclopedia, al-Marbawī worked hard to write Malay encyclopedias which include *Kitab Jāmi' al-'ulūm* or *Kamus Segala Ilmu* (Encyclopedia of All Knowledge),<sup>55</sup> *Mu'jam al-kā'ināt* (Lexicon

is the smallest monetary unit in Egypt (= 1/1000 pound), see Hans Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 924.

50 Al-Marbawī, *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu*.

51 Mazian Ibrahim, "Kitab-kitab tafsīr Melayu di Nusantara," I: 72-73.

52 Al-Marbawī, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Marbawī*, 204;

53 al-Marbawī, *Baḥr al-mādhī: Mukhtasar Ṣaḥīḥ; al-Tirmidhī*, 22 vols in 6 (Cairo: Sharikah Maktaba wa Maṭba'ah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1933-1957).

54 *Kitab Bulūgh al-marām* is the work of Ibn Ḥajar on ḥadīth and fiqh.

55 Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 tahun," 6.

of the Existent Things) (4 volumes) and *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu Kurun* 14 H. (3 volumes).<sup>56</sup> *Kitab Perbendaharaan Ilmu* was written as a monthly journal consists of 32 pages of each edition. The volume one of this work was published in Dhu al-Qa'dah 1347/1929. Volume one of this work is available in the University Malaya Library. It was mentioned in its front page that this work covers all aspects of rational and traditional knowledge. This includes Malay language, religious problems, tafsīr, ḥadīth, tawḥīd, tasawwuf, history, geography, rational knowledge, parenting, economy, health, medicine, biology; uses of root tree and fruits and others.

There are also some pictures to make learning easier. Young Muslim scholars should emulate his untiring effort. Out of many dictionaries that were written, the *Qamus Idris al-Marbawī* is the most popular and widely used dictionary. The fourth edition was published in Cairo in 1354/1935 by the Azhar publisher, Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, and edited by 'Abd al-Wasif bin Muḥammad. It consists of two volumes. Volume one has 18,000 words (from the letter alifuntill ḥa) in which 700 words are explained with pictures. While volume two (from the letter 'ayn until yā) also consists of 18,000 words with nearly 500 words explained with pictures. Thus this dictionary contains 36,000 words in total. There are also numerous pictures to make learning easier. Al-Marbawī also added some religious judgment (ḥukm) of lawful and unlawful things. In his preface for his *Qamus*, he mentioned that his intention of writing this dictionary is to help Malay students learning Arabic.<sup>57</sup>

Before being printed, al-Marbawī wrote his dictionary using handwriting. Sometimes he used to draw the picture on his own, and also took some pictures from newspaper cutting. In preparing this dictionary he used many references especially from classical and modern Arabic dictionaries and fiqh books. We can derive some of them from acronyms in his *Qamus*. He pointed out the following works: *Kitāb asās al-balāghah* by al-Zamakhsharī, *Kitāb al-Bujayrimī sharḥ*

56 al-Marbawī *Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī*, Cairo edition.

57 An encyclopedia in Malay was among works which was under preparation, Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 Tahun: Ulama' yang terus berazam mencurahkan sumbangan," in *Dakwah* (October, 1987), 5.

Fath al-Wahhāb, Kitāb Tāj al-‘arūs sharḥ al-Qāmūs of al-Zabīdī, al-Munjid (al-Qāmūs),<sup>58</sup> Kitāb Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā,<sup>59</sup> Kitāb Dā’irat ma’ārif al-qarn al-‘ishrīn,<sup>60</sup> Kitāb Fath al-wahhāb,<sup>61</sup> Kitāb al-Qāmūs al-‘aṣrī,<sup>62</sup> Kitāb al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ of Firuzabadi, Kitāb Mukhtār al-sihāh of al-Razī, Kitāb al-Miṣbāḥ al-munīr of al-Fayyūmī and Kitāb Minhāj al-ṭullāb of al-Nawawī. Al-Marbawī, however, did not mention Lisān al-‘Arab written by Ibn Manẓūr in the acronyms.

Besides Arabic sources, al-Marbawī also referred to Malay sources. Mahani Mokhtar mentioned some references that al-Marbawī used in preparing his dictionary, namely Malay-English Dictionary written by R.J. Wilkinson which was published in Singapore in 1901, and the work of Pendita Za’aba (1875-1923), Buku Daftar Ejaan Melayu Jawi-Rumi.<sup>63</sup>

The published Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlādu-h in Rabī’ II 1354/1935 was published in fourth edition.<sup>64</sup> This has been reprinted many times. According to the Publisher, the fourth edition came with some improvements and corrections with the approval of its author by adding some words and pictures.<sup>65</sup> Mahani Mokhtar mentioned that al-Marbawī’s dictionary had been reprinted more than 24 times

in Egypt.<sup>66</sup> Later on the Pustaka Nasional of Singapore had permission from its Publisher in Cairo to reprint the dictionary. Another publisher, which reprinted this dictionary, was the Darul Fikr of Kuala Lumpur. In its edition, the publisher added another feature in this dictionary by using for its Arabic term for easier references. Pocket-sized Al-Marbawī’s dictionary is also available.

Besides the above editions, there is also another improved edition of this dictionary by Darul Nu’man which published it into normal and pocket sizes. According to its publisher, this dictionary was presented in an interesting way and easy to be understood. This new edition also corrected some mistakes, and replaced some of its old words with new ones as well as its spellings according to the resolution in Seminar on Malay Words Heritage organised by the Pusat Islam (Islamic Center) of Malaysia, now known as Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). Each word is explained with pictures.<sup>67</sup> The foreword was from Abdullah al-Qari Haji Salleh (A.Q.H.A.S).

Al-Marbawī was also aware that there were some Malays who cannot read Jawi scripts fluently, and in order to attract them to learn Arabic, he came up with another dictionary which used Roman scripts instead of Jawi for its Malay explanations. He called this dictionary Qamoes-el-djaib Arab-Melajoe Latin which was published by al-Maṭba’at al-Marbawīyah.<sup>68</sup> Al-Marbawī mentioned at the end of this dictionary that he finished writing it in 1355/1936.<sup>69</sup> Volume one consists of 368 pages (from the letter alif (A) until tā’ (Tz) and there are 320 pages in volume two (from the ‘ayn (‘) until yā’ (J)). Al-Marbawī’s method was first to transliterate the Arabic word into Latin or Roman, and to be followed with the Arabic word in bracket together with its meaning in Latin or Roman script. However, spelling of Malay word in Roman was in accordance with the current spelling.

Al-Marbawī had also published the Malay-Arabic dictionary called Ringkasan Qamus Malayu-Arab Bergambar dan Teladan Belajar

58 al-Marbawī, Kitāb Perbendaharaan Ilmu (Cairo: Maṭba’at al-Marbawīyah, 1929). Vol. one of this encyclopedia is available in the University of Malaya Library, Za’aba Collection (AP95 M2KP1).

59 al-Marbawī Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī, iv.

60 The dictionary arranged by Luwīs Ma’luf, al-Munjid fi’l-lughah wal-adab wal-‘ulūm (Beirut: Maṭba’ah al-kathulikiyyah, 1928).

61 This is an encyclopedia written by Muḥammad Mūsā Damīrī, 2 vols (Cairo: Muḥammad ‘Alī: Sabih, 1900).

62 This is an encyclopedia written Farid Wajdi (1875-1954), 10 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979).

63 Zakariyyā ibn Muḥammad Anṣārī, Fath al-wahhāb bi-sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭullāb, 2 vols. (Cairo: Sharikat wa-maṭba’at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1948).

64 Elias Antoon, al-Qāmūs al-‘aṣrī: English-Arabic, 9th ed. (Cairo: Maṭba’at ‘aṣriyyah, 1953).

65 Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idrīs Abdul Ra’uf al-Marbawī, 32; al-Marbawī also knew Za’aba personally since Za’aba received Marbawī dictionary, Qamus-el-Djaib as a present from the author himself. In the front page, we can see clear al-Marbawī’s words: “Ḥadih min al-mu’alif ilā Ḥadrat al-Fāḍil Ustādh al-Hājj Zayn al-‘Abidin bin Aḥmad (Za’bā)”. Za’aba acknowledged this present by signing and dating it on 8th August 1950, see the Za’aba’s collection in the University of Malaya library.

66 al-Marbawī, Syekh Mohd. Idrīs b. Abdul Rauf al-Azhari, Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī: Arab-Malayu, (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlādu-h, 1354H).

67 al-Marbawī Syekh Mohd. Idrīs b. Abdul Rauf al-Azhari, Qamus Idrīs al-Marbawī: Arabi-Malayu 4 ed. (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, n.d).

68 Mahani Mokhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Idrīs Abdul Ra’uf al-Marbawī, 36.

69 See religious books published by Darul Nu’man, <http://www.darulnuman.com/buku/kat02.html>; <http://www.orangkita.com/bookstore/dnpg02.htm>.



Arab yang Senang in 1351/1932. This dictionary was also published by Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlādu-h.<sup>70</sup> This dictionary has two parts. For the first part, al-Marbawī wrote 62 language study pages, full of practical help explaining how Arabic works and how to benefit most from this dictionary. The second part began from page 63 until 192 and was arranged from the letter alif until nya' in Jawi script. It also came up with some pictures to make learning easier. The advertisement at the end of the Qamus al-Marbawī of the Cairo edition stated its price as 50 malīm (cent) per copy<sup>71</sup>. Another dictionary that he published is Qamus Penuntut.<sup>72</sup>

As far as his work in ḥadīth is concerned, discussion is only limited to his translation and commentary on *Sunan al-Tirmidhī wa-huwa al-Jāmi' al-Ṣiḥāh*<sup>73</sup> which he called *Baḥr al-mādhi: sharah mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*. Other works are not yet available for discussion. *Baḥr al-mādhi* is the most marvelous work of al-Marbawī. This work consists of 22 volumes. Some edition published was bound in 6, and other in 11. In the introduction, he mentioned the background behind his work on this Sunan.

"Adapun kemudian daripada itu, maka lebih dahulu aku masuk dalam mengarang kitab ini dengan tawādu' aku kepada Allah subḥānahu wa-ta'ālā kiranya dipohonkan tiada salah menerangkan sedikit perkataan ini kepada segala saudaraku: Adalah kemudian daripada sudah mengaji Kitab yang bernama Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī sudahlah jatuh di dalam hatiku berahi dan suka kepadanya oleh aturannya dan kenyataannya pada segala hukum Sharī'ah Nabi kita Muhammad (SAW) dengan kerana beribu-ribu bab dan aḥādīth serta diikutnya tiap-tiap ḥadīth itu bukan main lagi diperhalusnya dan lain daripadanya beberapa ilmu.

70 al-Marbawī, Qamoos-el-djaib Arab-Melajoe Latin, 2 vols bound in one. (Cairo: Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī Matba'at, n.d.), see Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak & Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 83; This dictionary is available in the Library of University of Malaya, Za'aba Collection (PJ6636 M2mar); Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 Tahun: Ulama' yang terus berazam mencurahkan sumbangan," in *Dakwah* (October, 1987), 6.

71 al-Marbawī, Qamoos-el-djaib Arab-Melajoe Latin, II: 320.

72 al-Marbawī, Ringkasan Qāmūs Malayu-Arab bergambar dan Teladan Belajar Arab yang Senang (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlādu-h 1351/1932); This dictionary is available in the International Islamic University library (rPj6636M3M9522QI932).

73 al-Marbawī, Qamus Idris al-Marbawī, Cairo edition.

Kepada aku tiap-tiap kali aku mengaji dan mengadap guruku Haḍrat Ṣāḥib al-Faḍīlat Mawlanā Murabbī arwāḥu-nā al-Ustādh al-Akbar: Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Samālūtī min hay'at 'ulama' al-Azhar al-Sharīf [daripada Majlis Ulama al-Azhar al-Syarif] Qāhirah (Miṣr) dekat Azhar al-Sharīf, sudahlah aku berasa minum madu, dengan kerana itulah bersungguh aku tiap-tiap pagi pergi menerima padanya dengan ketiadaan lugu [iaitu, merasa senang, puas, kenyang]. Iaitu kemudian daripada khatam mengaji Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim kepadanya dengan beberapa banyak ulama' yang mendapat ijazah tinggi dan rendah. Dan berapa ratus murid Azhar.

Kemudian apabila aku pulang ke rumah tiadalah aku berpaling melainkan aku jalankan batang qalam aku di pipi saḥīfah-saḥīfah [helaian kertas] sebagaimana yang aku ingat dan aku faham daripadanya berikut dengan sedikit-sedikit perkataan Imām Shāfi'ī di dalam al-Umm, dan perkataan Nawawī di dalam Sharḥ Muslim dan perkataan al-Qaṣṭalānī dan Ibn al-'Arabī dan lainnya, ialah semata-mata ikhlas hatiku bagi wajah Allāh kerana mesiarikan [menyiarkan] ḥadīth Rasulullah (SAW) dan meninggikan "kalimat Allāh hiya al-'ulya" kepada segala saudaraku yang tiada tahu di dalam bahasa Arab dan dipohon pada Allah kiranya manfaat bagi umum umat Muḥammad (SAW), dan harapkan jadi petaruhan di sisi Allah bagi Hari Akhirat. Dan kiranya tiadalah ia hujjah ke atasku di sana. Maka dengan kenyataan di atas tadi dan lagi akan datang aku namailah kitab aku ini dengan nama *Baḥr al-mādhi: li-sharḥ mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*.<sup>74</sup>

(Translation: Now then, as I had written this work with full of humbleness to God most high, let me explain to all my brothers the following: When I finished studying Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī, my heart was overcome with adoration to this work especially for its arrangement and its account of Islamic law of our Prophet Muḥammad (SAW), since it has cited thousands of aḥādīth as well as other knowledge with a careful rendering, and arranged them into different chapters. For me each time when I studied under my teacher Haḍrat Ṣāḥib al-Faḍīlat Mawlanā Murabbī arwāḥu-nā al-Ustādh al-Akbar: Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Samālūtī

74 Shauki Majid, "Bakti 95 Tahun: Ulama' yang terus berazam mencurahkan sumbangan," in *Dakwah* (October, 1987), 6; this dictionary is not available to the writer.

from the Council of Ulema of al-Azhar al-Sharif, Cairo (Egypt) [who taught] near the Azhar al-Sharif, I was overwhelmed with its sweetness [literally honey], so that every morning I eagerly went to him without any fatigue. It happened after finishing studying *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with him and with other scholars who graduated with upper and higher degrees as well as with hundreds of Azhar students. And then when I returned home, I immediately wrote them in a piece of papers what I could remember and understand from him, adding them with the words of Imām Shāfi'ī in al-Umm, of al-Nawawī in *Sharḥ Muslim*, of al-Qaṣṭalānī, of Ibn al-'Arabī and others. This is my sincere effort for the sake of God in order to spread the ḥadīth of the Prophet (SAW) and uplift the Word of God that became uppermost for the sake of all my brothers who do not know Arabic. I asked God that others from the ummah of Muhammad can also benefit from it, as well as it will benefit me in the Hereafter if there is no other proof other than that. With this statement and others in future, I named my work *Baḥr al-mādhī: li-sharḥ mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*.)

To recapitulate al-Marbawī has learned this *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* with al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Samālūṭī from al-Azhar scholars who taught ḥadīth in the Mosque of Saydinā Husayn in Cairo. He also has learned from him *Sahih Muslim*. In his work, he has referred to *Kitab al-Umm* by Imām Muḥammad Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* by Imām al-Nawawī and al-Qaṣṭalānī, and the works of Ibn al-'Arabī who commented on *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*.

This work consists of 8,200 problems pertaining to religious and worldly matters. This is the first Malay translation and commentaries of the work. Concise information of the 22 volumes in six parts are as follows:

*Part 1:*

- Volume 1: Purification and its related matters (1352/1933)<sup>75</sup>
- Volume 2: Prayer and its related matters (1352/1933)
- Volume 3: Prayer (continue) (1353/1934)
- Volume 4: Prayer (continue) and zakat (1353/1934)

<sup>75</sup> Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī wa-huwa al-Jāmi' al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, 5 vols. ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Abd al-laṭīf (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1980).

*Part 2:*

- Volume 5: Fasting and its related matters (1353/1934)
- Volume 6: Pilgrimage (1353/1934)
- Volume 7: 'Umrah and Funeral (1355/1936)
- Volume 8: Funeral (continue) and Marriage (1356/1937)

*Part 3:*

- Volume 9: Divorce, Invoking mutual curse (li'ān) and Business Transaction (1357/1938)
- Volume 10: Business Transaction, Religious rules (aḥkām), Blood Money, and its related matters (1358/1939)
- Volume 11: Sacrifice, Vows and Oaths and Sirah of the Prophet (1358/1939)
- Volume 12: Jihād, Dress and Food (1359/1940)

*Part 4:*

- Volume 13: Drinks, Goodness (birr) and Relation (ṣilah) (1359/1940)
- Volume 14: Relation (ṣilah), Medicine, Inheritance, Bequest, Allegiance (wala'), gift (hibah), and Predestination (qadar) (1359/1940)
- Volume 15: Trials (fitan), Dream Interpretation (ru'yā) and Testimonies (1359/1940)
- Volume 16: Dream interpretation, Testimonies (continue) and abstinence (zuhd) (1359/1940)

*Part 5:*

- Volume 17: Characters of Hereafter, Gentleness (rafā'iq), and piety (wara') (1360/1941)
- Volume 18: Characters of Paradise, Hell, and faith and its related matters (1360/1941)
- Volume 19: Knowledge, and Asking Permission and its related matters (1360/1941)
- Volume 20: Manner, Examples, Reward [for Reciting] the Qur'an (1360/1941)

*Part 6:*

Volume 21: Qur'anic Interpretation (tafsīr) (1374/1955)

Volume 22: Tafsīr sūrah al-Mā'idah and other sūrahs [until al-kahf] (1374/1955)

The first volume of al-Baḥr al-mādhī was published in 1352/1933, and the final volume finished on the night of the 2nd Jumād al-Ākhir 1377/24th December 1957 when he was sixty-four years old. So we can say that he took roughly 24 years to finish it. The volumes were published in stages by the same publisher for his Qamus, namely the Publisher Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh.<sup>76</sup> As a whole even though it took him so many years, al-Marbawī worked very hard since 1941, and by then 20 volumes were published.

According to al-Marbawī, his work stopped for 16 years following the eruption of the Second World War between the English with German, Japan and Italy. Again he resumed the work (vol. 21) on Thursday 26th Sha'bān 1374/19 May 1955 and managed to finish on 25th Rabī' al-Awwal 1376/10th December 1955. If we take this date, it means that al-Marbawī stopped writing volume 20 around 1939, but was only published in 1941. The final volume was written immediately, and was finished on the Night of 2nd Jumād al-Ākhir 1377/24th December 1957. There are also some discrepancies as far as the date of publication is mentioned in the edition and the statement of al-Marbawī. However, al-Marbawī statement in the book is more reliable and can be relied upon.

As far as methodology is concerned, al-Marbawī translated the matn (text) of the ḥadīth only, and ignored the sanad (chain of transmitters). His focus was on explanation and elaboration of ḥadīth, It can be said that his interests were on the content of the ḥadīth, and not on the problem of authenticity of the ḥadīth itself. In his works, he systemized them according to the chapters as in Sunan al-Tirmidhī itself. This is to accommodate the reader to refer back to the original text. He also added some information and explanation in the column of problems. Referring to the first ḥadīth on the role of intention, he began with a brief introduction. He mentioned the matn and sanad of the ḥadīth

itself. In the problem matter related to this ḥadīth he enclosed it with entry number. For the convenience of the readers, they can refer to the entry number to get to the problem itself, or to have more elaboration on that particular ḥadīth. Some problem is interrelated, and we can just refer to the entry number given by the writer.

In the classification of ḥadīth, he still used the hadith terminologies such as ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan or gharīb. As for the part of content, he divided it into two; first the content that referred to the chapter of the ḥadīth, and second, the content of the problem based on the specific entry number given in the discussion.

Al-Marbawī's Baḥr al-mādhī is still influential and in use in Malaysia. In order to facilitate Malay readers with this work, Abdullah al-Qari Haji Salleh (A.Q.H.A.S) has worked out a summary of the Baḥr al-mādhī which used Roman script instead of Jawi script in his *Intisari Bahr al-Mazi: Hadith-hadith serta Hukum Sembahyang (Mengandungi 454 Masalah Agama)* [Summary of Baḥr al-mādhī: On ḥadīth and Rules of Prayer (454 religious problems)]. It is a great contribution if the whole work can be transcribed into Roman script, possibly with a new explanation and arrangement.

Comparing al-Marbawī's work, al-Baḥr al-mādhī and Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Marbawī did not comment on the whole of the Sunan. The volume twenty-two of Baḥr al-mādhī stopped abruptly on tafsīr sūrah al-Kahf, while Sunan al-Tirmidhī goes on until al-mu'awwidhatayn (The last two chapters of the Qur'an, i.e. the sūrah al-Falaq and al-nās). The Volume five of the Sunan on manāqib (virtues) was also left by al-Marbawī without any commentary. It is not clear whether he left it because he thought that the commentary is sufficient, or he would like others to continue his work. Then it is up to any Malay scholars to hold the responsibility to continue al-Marbawī's work.

The same is true of his dictionary. He wanted others to write a more advanced Arabic-Malay dictionary. He used to say that people should not just rely on his dictionary which was written in 1930s. More work had to be done in addition to his dictionary. He however disapproved initiative by some squatters who just wanted to add or improve his dictionary. In other words, those scholars or individuals must do a dictionary on their own, and of course al-Marbawī's work could be their reference.

<sup>76</sup> al-Marbawī, Baḥr al-Madhi: Mukhtasar Sahih al-Timidhi, vol. 1 (Cairo: Sharikah Maktabah wa-maṭba'ah al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1933), 2-3.



## His Influence in the Society

Al-Marbawī's name was known throughout the Malay archipelago especially among Muslims in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines. In Egypt and Makkah, he was well-known as an Arabic linguist who was fluent in the fields of hadith, tafsīr and fiqh.

As reported in *Utusan Melayu* on the 18th of May 1975, al-Marbawī's dictionary was widely used throughout Southeast Asia and the Middle East among the Malay speaking people. Up to today, a survey has not yet been carried out to get feedback from its users. However, judging from its reprints, al-Marbawī's dictionary is still widely used until today.

Baḥr al-mādhī is still influential in Malaysia. Many Muslim preachers and religious teachers use it in their teachings and in classes especially in mosques and suraus. In Penang, for example, Ust. Shamsuri Haji Ahamd used Baḥr al-mādhī in his lectures or kuliah (religious classes and teachings) in many mosques. One of the web site mentioned the following advertisement:

Audio & Teks Kuliah Pengajian Kitab Bahrul Mazi:

Kitab Bahrul Mazi Merupakan Kitab Utama Di Dalam Kuliah-Kuliah Ustaz Shamsuri Di Kebanyakan Mesjid-Mesjid. Kitab Ini Adalah Karangan Syeikh Al-Marbawi Yang Menjadi Syarah Kepada Hadis-Hadis Riwayat Imam Abu Isa At-Termizi. Untuk Maklumat Lanjut Sila Ke Laman Utamanya Di <http://members.nbci.com/bmazi/>

(Translation: Audio & Text of Lectures for Lesson in Kitab Baḥr al-mādhī)

Kitab Baḥr al-mādhī is the most important reference for Ustadh Shamsuri's lectures in most mosques. The book is the work of al-Shaykh al-Marbawi as commentaries to many ḥadīth related by Imām Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī. For more information, please visit the main website: <http://members.nbci.com/bmazi/>

Web site for "Pengajian Kitab Bahrul Mazi (Ust Shamsuri)" through Internet however cannot be assessed. However, Ust. Shamsuri's

teachings based on Baḥr al-mādhī are available in cassettes which are widely sold in the market. Besides that other suraus (small Muslim prayer halls) also used Baḥr al-mādhī as their reference. For example, the web site E-Kariah Ladang for Surau Haji Awang, Kampung Ladang Sekolah, 20000 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu Darul Iman, mentions al-Marbawī's work as reference for fiqh problems. Others also used Baḥr al-mādhī as reference on al-ahkam online.

Other works of al-Marbawī are not very well-known. This is because most of them are difficult to be found in the market. However, a former al-Azhar graduate mentioned to the writer that al-Marbawī's Tafsīr Sūrah Yā sīn is available in his collection, and he still uses it in his religious lectures in mosques and suraus.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that al-Marbawī's contribution to Islamic studies in the Malay world is enormous. He can be considered as one of the models for new generations of Malay scholars to emulate. Efforts must also be taken to preserve his works and other writings, and make them available for later generations. This is because many of his works are the testament of a brilliant and far sighted scholar.