

**Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn bin Kamāl al-Dīn  
al-Ashī and His *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā  
Malik al-Mulūk***

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**Abstract**

During its heyday, Aceh was not only a commercial, but also an Islamic intellectual centre in the Malay Archipelago that produced several prominent Muslim scholars or ‘ulamā’ who enriched Islamic literary works. Hitherto, the study on native Acehnese ‘ulamā’ of the seventeenth century has largely focused on the illustrious figures of Hamzah al-Fanṣūrī, Shams al-Dīn bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Sumatrānī, and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī al-Sinkilī, while little attention has been paid to another native ‘ālim, namely Shaykh Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn bin Kamāl

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al-Dīn bin Qāḍī Baginda Khaṭīb at-Tarusanī al-Ashī, despite the fact that he held a very prominent position of Qāḍī Malik al-‘Adil, a position equivalent to Supreme Court Judge during the reigns of Sultān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maharaja Lela Ahmad Shah (r. 1727–1735 CE) and Sultān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Johan Shah (r. 1735–1760 CE). Furthermore, the study of his literary works has mainly centred around his works on jurisprudence (*fiqh*), thus neglecting his literary contribution in *tasawwuf*. This article therefore wishes to bring to light his valuable contributions in the field of *tasawwuf* through his work *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* rendered into Malay by the author himself as *Rahsia Menjalani Jalan kepada Raja Segala Raja* so that he is properly recognised not only as a *faqīh*, but also a *Ṣūfī*.

### Keywords

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī, Aceh, *tasawwuf*, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk*

## Introduction

Acheh was once a mighty Malay Islamic Kingdom that became a centre of religious scholarship. Its intellectual life was coloured not only by its foreign scholars, but also by its indigenous scholars. They enriched intellectual life by producing scholarly works of high quality. One of its native scholars was Shaykh Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn bin Kamāl al-Dīn bin Qāḍī Baginda Khaṭīb al-Tarusanī al-Ashī, who succeeded many prominent scholars, namely Hamzah Faṣṣūrī (who flourished circa 1550–1600 CE),<sup>1</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Sūmatrānī (d. 1629 CE),<sup>2</sup> Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658 CE),<sup>3</sup> ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Faṣṣūrī al-Sinkilī

1. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture Malaysia, 1986), 6.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 12.

(1615–1693 CE),<sup>4</sup> and preceded a well-known scholar, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Fālimbāni (1704–1789 CE).<sup>5</sup>

Despite his numerous works, only one work on fiqh entitled *Safīnat al-Ḥukkām fī Takhlīs al-Khiṣām*<sup>6</sup> has been the focus of scholarly study, while another partial study has been carried out on his other fiqh work entitled *Hujjat al-Bālighah ‘alā Jamā‘atin Mukhāṣamah*.<sup>7</sup> His two other works on fiqh, which are *Hidāyat al-Awwām* and *Farā‘id al-Qur‘ān* have been neglected. The lacuna is even pronounced in the field of *taṣawwuf* as no study has been carried out on his two works in this genre entitled *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* and *Manẓar al-Ajlā ilā Martabat al-A‘lā*.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, he has been mostly recognised as a *faqīh*, overshadowing his life as a *Ṣūfī*.

It is consequently no wonder that when discussing the spread of *taṣawwuf* in the Archipelago, most authors<sup>9</sup> would jump the list from Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī al-Sinkilī to

4. Azyumardi Azra, *Ḷaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013), 238.
5. *Ibid.*, 319–320.
6. Muliadi Kurdi and Jamaluddin Thaib, *Safinat al-Hukkam fi Takhlis al Kashsham* (Banda Aceh: Lembaga Naskah Aceh, 2015); A. Haṣjmy, “Naskah-naskah Tua Menyimpan Alam Fikiran Melayu Lama: Sebuah Studi tentang Safinatul Hukkam,” in *Cendekia Kesusteraan Melayu Tradisional* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1987).
7. Ahmad Misbah Muhammad Hilmi et. al, “Manuskrip Hujjatul Balighah Karya Syaikh Jalaluddin Al-Asyri: Kajian Tahqiq Teks Bab Pendakwaan,” in *e-Jurnal Penyelidikan dan Inovasi* 3, no. 1 (2016): 139–165.
8. Wan Mohd. Shaghīr Abdullah, *Ensiklopedia Naskah Klasik Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghīr Abdullah* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2015), 282.
9. See for examples: Azra in *Ḷaringan* and Mohamad Nasrin Nasir, *The Metaphysical Epistemology of Shaykh Shams al Dīn al-Sumatrā‘ī: A Study of the Haqq al-Yaqīn fī Aqidat al-Muhaqqiqīn* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2019), v. Both discuss Shaykh ‘Abd al-Samad al-Falimbāni under the eighteenth century Malay scholars after discussing the seventeenth Malay scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf al-Maqassārī, who was the contemporary of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī. Martin Van Bruinessen jumps the list from Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf al-Maqassārī to Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (d. 1775), who was the teacher of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbāni. Van Bruinessen mentions in *Kitab Kuning* that Shaykh Muhammad appeared about a century after Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf al-Maqassārī. See: Martin Van Bruinessen, *Islam di Nusantara: Kitab Kuning Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Selangor: IBDE, 2018), 190.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Şamad al-Fālimbānī<sup>10</sup> when there was a time gap of several years from the death of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanşūrī al-Sinkilī in 1693 before the latter would have become an accomplished scholar. In other words, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī has been left out from the list. To fill the gaps, this paper will first provide some biographical background of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī which includes his personal life, education, school of thought, his works, and his place in the seventeenth/ eighteenth century Malay scholarly world. It will then provide an overview of his work on *taşawwuf*, namely *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* to show that he was not simply a faqīh, but also a Şūfī master.

### Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī’s Life and Scholarly World

As the author of *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* was a Malay scholar who assumed the most prominent administrative position in the royal court as did his eminent predecessors, namely Hamzah Fanşūrī, Shams al-Dīn, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanşūrī, his scholarly contributions in the Malay world should therefore be equally accorded a proper place and recognition, particularly in the field of *taşawwuf*, which caused some religious unrest in Aceh in the early seventeenth century. As such, it is more appropriate to get to know his background first that entails his personal life, education, scholarly works, school of thought, and his place in the Malay scholarly world.

#### *His Personal Life*

His full name was Shaykh Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn bin Kamāl al-Dīn bin Qāḍī Baginda Khaṭīb al-Tursanī al-Āshī.<sup>11</sup> Henceforth, he will be addressed in this study as Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī.

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10. Azra, *Jaringan*, 319–320.

11. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Katalog Karya Melayu Klasik Koleksi Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2018), 230.

According to Prof. A. Hasjmy, the actual name of his grandfather was also Jalāl al-Dīn.<sup>12</sup> Qāḍī Baginda Khaṭīb was then possibly an honorific name (*laqab*), reflecting the position that his grandfather might have held. On the other hand, the ascription (*nisbah*, pl. *nisab*) “al-Tursanī,” most probably refers to a region from which his ancestors might have originally come. To substantiate such possibility, it is interesting to note that Muliadi Kurdi and Jamaluddin Thaib,<sup>13</sup> Teuku Iskandar,<sup>14</sup> and Muhammad Mustaqim<sup>15</sup> instead use the ascription “al-Tarusanī” for Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī which refers to a kingdom in southwest Sumatra.<sup>16</sup> It is known that some Minangkabau Malays from Tarusan led by their prince fled and settled in Barus in the early sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> The prince, who then ascended as the first Malay ruler of Barus by the name of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm,<sup>18</sup> gave the name Barus after the name of his village in Turasan.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, “at-Tursanī” could be a misspelling of “al-Tarusanī,” a Minangkabau variant for the Malay word “*terusan*.” The map in Figure 1 below shows the place called “Tarusan” in Sumatra as highlighted in the box from which his ancestors might have originated.<sup>20</sup>

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12. A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*, 266.

13. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safinat al-Hukkam*, iii and v.

14. Teuku Iskandar, “Aceh as Crucible of Muslim-Malay Literature,” in *Mapping the Acehnese Past* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 61.

15. Muhammad Mustaqim Mohd Zarif, “Malay Manuscript Cataloguing in Malaysia: Issues and Challenges,” in *The Regional Islamic Libraries Seminar 2016 (RELieS)* organised by the Library of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia at Bandar Baru Nilai, Malaysia, 28th–29th September 2016.

16. Jane Drakard, *A Malay Frontier: Unity and Duality in A Sumatran Kingdom* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Idem, “An Indian Ocean Port: Sources for the Earlier History of Barus,” *Archipel* 37 (1989): 53–82.

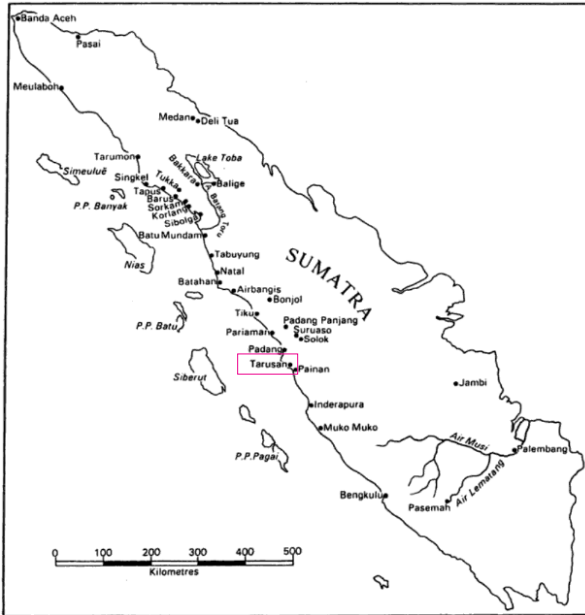
17. *Ibid.*, 59.

18. *Ibid.*, 73.

19. *Ibid.*, 60.

20. Jane Drakard, *Malay Frontier*, vi.

Figure 1 Map of Sumatra showing Tarusan



Source: Jane Drakard, *Malay Frontier*, vi.

Most importantly, it suggests that Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī was of Minangkabau descent.<sup>21</sup> As for “al-Āshī,” it refers to Aceh. “Āshī,” also spelt as “Ashi,”<sup>22</sup> was the name found in the sixteenth century Ottoman Archive<sup>23</sup> which refers to Aceh.<sup>24</sup>

21. Here, Chambert-Loir also uses the ascription (*nisbah*) of al-Tarusanī. See: Henri Chambert-Loir, “Islamic Law in 17th Century Aceh,” *Archipel* 94 (2017): 60.

22. Other variant spellings of Aceh are Atjeh, Atchin, Achin, and Aceh. See: Kamal H. Keapat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 52.

23. Ermy Azziaty Rozali, “Aceh-Ottoman Relation in Bustan al-Salatin” in *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 29 (2014): 93–100.

24. Legend has it that the name “Aceh” came from an Indian word “Aci” meaning sister or the name of a river known as Chedah meaning “indah” (beautiful). For further reading on the origin of the name “Aceh,” see: H. Mohammad Said, *Aceh Sepanjang Zaman* (Medan: Harian WASPADA, 1979), 123–125.

Like his grandfather, his father was also a distinguished scholar in Aceh. This means that he came from an illustrious family of scholars, a tradition that he continued as evidenced from his *laqab* “Faḳīh.” In fact, his sons, namely Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī, Sirāj al-Dīn,<sup>25</sup> and Jamāl al-Dīn, were also eminent scholars. The former wrote seven works<sup>26</sup> that cover the fields of theology (*‘aḳīdah*), Qur’ānic commentary (*tafsīr*), metaphysics (*taṣawwuf*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the most famous of which is *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*,<sup>27</sup> a commentary on al-Sanūsī’s theological work *Umm al-Barāhīn*. He was in fact the most famous scholar in Aceh during the reign of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (r. 1760–1781 CE).<sup>28</sup> Like Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī, Sirāj al-Dīn also wrote a few works; the extant works of his suggest that he wrote mainly on *taṣawwuf* and *‘aḳīdah*. As for Jamāl al-Dīn, only one work is known, entitled *Hidāyat al-‘Awwām*, which discusses several *fiqh* issues with its introduction being an exposition on the twenty attributes of God.<sup>29</sup>

As Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī descended from a well-known family of scholars in Aceh, it is very likely that he was born in Aceh. As for his date of birth, it is not known. What is known is that he was appointed as Qādī Malīk al-‘Adīl. Nevertheless, it might be possible to deduce the years around which he was born and died. Since his eldest son, namely Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī is said to have written his first work

25. Actually, it is not fully certain whether Sirāj al-Dīn was the son of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī or not. However, based on some evidence such as the name of his father and the period that his works were composed as deduced from his extant works, Hġ. Wan Mohd Shaghir strongly believed that he was the son of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī and possibly the youngest child. See: Wan Mohd Saghir Abdullah, *Penyebaran dan Silsilah Ulama Seġarat Dunia Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1999), vol. 7, 17.

26. *Ibid.*, 4.

27. Che’ Razi Jusoh, *The Malay Exposition of Al-Sanūsī’s Umm Al-Barāhīn* (Batu Caves: ISSI, 2016).

28. Rumadi, *Islamic Post-Traditionalism in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015), 42.

29. *Ibid.*, 52.

entitled *Ilmu Tawhid*<sup>30</sup> or *Hidāyat al-‘Awwām*<sup>31</sup> in 1702, it is safe to say that Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī must have been born before 1700. Furthermore, as he was said to have studied directly under Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī, who lived from 1615 to 1693 and returned to Aceh from his study in Arabia in 1661, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī could have probably been born around 1650 to 1660; that is, if it is conservatively assumed that his eldest son wrote his first work at the age of twenty years old, rendering the eldest son’s year of birth around 1682. This is why it is suggested that Shaykh Muḥammad Zayn al-Ashī might have met Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>32</sup> In this regard, placing the year of birth of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī much later than the 1660’s would possibly make his eldest son compose his work at a teenage age; though not impossible, it was unlikely. Moreover, based on the fact that his eldest son replaced him as Qāḍī Malik al-‘Adil during the reign of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (r. 1760–1781), it might be possible that Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī might have passed away around this time, but he must have lived into 1745 based on the year he completed his work entitled *Hujjat al-Bālighah ‘alā Jamā‘atin Mukhāsamah*.<sup>33</sup>

It is to be noted that his eldest son stayed in Mecca for a long period—not only as a student initially, but later as a teacher in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām.<sup>34</sup> In fact, when he began the composition of his works *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* and *Kashf al-Kīram* in 1757 and 1758 respectively, he was still in Mecca.<sup>35</sup> The fact that the works were completed in Aceh suggests that he might have been summoned by Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, who assumed the throne in 1760, to succeed his father, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn. If this assumption is acceptable, then Shaykh Jalāl

30. Wan Mohd. Saghir, *Penyebaran*, vol. 7, 4.

31. Che’ Razi, *Malay Exposition*, 25.

32. Wan Mohd. Saghir, *Penyebaran*, vol. 7, 2.

33. Idem, *Melayu Klasik*, 231; *Penyebaran dan Silsilah Ulama Sejagat Dunia Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1999), vol. 6, 45.

34. Idem, *Penyebaran*, vol. 7, 3.

35. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 342.



al-Dīn al-Āshī must have died at the age of about 100 years old. In fact, his eldest son also died at an advanced age in 1770.<sup>36</sup> What is more important is that if the assumption on the year of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn's birth is acceptable, it means that he was born when the Wujūdiyyah had already regained its place in Aceh after the departure of Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī in 1644, following the latter's defeat in hostile debates with Sayf al-Rijāl and a loss of patronage from Sultānah Ṣafīyyat al-Dīn (r. 1641–75 CE),<sup>37</sup> who replaced her husband, Sultān Iskandar Thānī (r. 1636–1641 CE).<sup>38</sup> It also means that he lived about the first half of his life in the seventeenth century, while about the second half, he lived in the eighteenth century.

### *His Education*

He must have obtained his early education from his father and grandfather who themselves were well-known scholars in Aceh.<sup>39</sup> Like other Aceh scholars of his time, he also travelled to other Muslim countries in search of knowledge.<sup>40</sup> In his case, he travelled to India and Mecca.<sup>41</sup> However, there is no information as to who his teachers were or when he studied abroad. Regardless of this, based on his work *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk*, his most important teacher seems to be Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī bin Ismā'īl bin Aghā Muṣṭafā bin Aghā 'Alī al-Rūmī, who in turn was a student of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Fanṣūrī, under whose request the book *Ithāf al-Dhakī*

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36. Husni Mubarrak, "From Aceh for Nusantara: The Contribution of 18th Century Acehese Ulamas in the Integration of Science," in *Heritage of Nusantara International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 6, no. 1 (2017): 10.

37. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 223–224.

38. *Ibid.*, 221.

39. Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Penyebaran* vol. 6, 41; A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*, 266.

40. Yusny Saby, *Islam and Social Change: The Role of the Ulama in Acehese Society* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2005), 57.

41. A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*, 266.

that expounds on *wahdat al-wujūd* was written by Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (1616–1689).<sup>42</sup> Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī was probably the most important teacher because his name appears in the manuscript in the two *salāsilah* of his Ṣūfī orders (*ṭarīqāt*) as the shaykh from whom he directly received authorisation to practise the Shaṭṭariyyah and Qādiriyyah orders. This may suggest that he did not receive any initiation into *ṭarīqah* when he studied abroad. Furthermore, it is suggested that he might have had the opportunity to study directly under Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>43</sup> The possibility that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī was his immediate teacher may be supported by the fact that he addressed the author of *Mūrāt al-Tullāb* as “our shaykh” (*shaykhunā*) in the preface of his work *Safīnat al-Hukkām fī Takhlīṣ al-Khiṣām*.<sup>44</sup> If true, it is nevertheless not clear why he did not receive the *ṭarīqah* authorisation directly from Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>45</sup>

Since Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī was his immediate teacher before his sojourn in search of knowledge abroad,<sup>46</sup> Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī must have studied at a traditional Islamic institution of learning known as *dayah* in Aceh established by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī and Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>47</sup>

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42. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 248.

43. Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Penyebaran*, vol. 6, 41.

44. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safīnat al-Hukkām*, iv.

45. One possible reason was that he did not reach the suitable age for the initiation into *ṭarīqah* when he studied under Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī. Upon the death of the latter, he continued his study under Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī and took the *ṭarīqah* authorisation.

46. It is said that it would take several years (*belasan tahun*) before a student in a *dayah* could master reading Arabic books and then be allowed to further his study abroad. See: Mohd Syukri Yeoh Abdullah et al., *Umdat al-Muhtajin: Panduan Perjalanan Rohani Masyarakat Alam Melayu* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2015), 33.

47. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 269. Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī was in charge of *Dayah* Manyang Leupu in Banda Aceh. See: Mohd Syukri Yeoh, *Umdat al-Muhtajin*, 43.

In this regard, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī must have likely studied the main subjects normally taught in the *dayah* in that century: Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, theology, Prophetic traditions, and Qurʾānic exegesis.<sup>48</sup> It must be noted that Qurʾānic exegesis must have been included in the curriculum since Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Fanṣūrī was the first Malay scholar, who wrote a complete Qurʾānic exegesis entitled *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*<sup>49</sup> with the assistance of his closest student, Baba Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī.<sup>50</sup> *Tasawwuf* was also taught at this *dayah* in which spiritual journey (*sulūk*) was only practised at the advanced level.<sup>51</sup> As noted earlier, he must have studied the book of jurisprudence, *Mirʾāt al-Tullāb* under Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Fanṣūrī, whom he addressed as our shaykh.

#### *His School of Thought*

As for his school of *fiqh*, he belonged to the *madhhab* of al-Shāfiʿī, which has been the dominant legal school in the Malay world. Nevertheless, he is said to have preferred the Ḥanafī *madhhab* in some rulings related to commercial transactions.<sup>52</sup> In this regard, he must have gained his knowledge of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* from his study in India. As for the school of theology, he subscribed to the Ashʿariyyah school as could be deduced from his work *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* in which he mentions about *sifat dua puluh* (twenty attributes) in [33r, 14–17].<sup>53</sup>

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48. Yusny Saby, *Islam and Social Change*, 40.

49. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 256–257.

50. *Ibid.*, 269.

51. Mohd Syukri Yeoh, *Umdat al-Muhtajin*, 42.

52. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safinat al-Hukkam*, vi.

53. The numbering here refers to the *recto* page 33 and lines 14 to 17 of the manuscript obtained from Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia labelled as MS2653 while in this paper, it is labelled as PNMI.

Dan murād daripada maʿrifah di sini iaitu mengetahui dan mengiʿtiqādkan iaitu thābit bagi Allāh sifat dua puluh diajarkan Nabī akan dia pada segala ʿawwām...

Translation: And what is intended from the illuminative knowledge (maʿrifah) here is to know and believe that it is firm that Allāh possesses the twenty attributes as taught by the Prophet to the masses...)

The same work also indicates that he belonged to the Shaṭṭārīyyah and Qādirīyyah Orders based on the *silsilah* which he presented towards the end of this work.

### *His Works*

Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah has compiled the works authored by Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī in the former's *Katalog Karya Melayu Klasik*.<sup>54</sup> The list is as follows:

1. *Hidāyat al-ʿAwwām pada Menyatakan Perintah Agama Islam*, which is a work on jurisprudence that starts with a brief exposition on the pillars of faith, followed by an elaboration on the four main topics of Islamic jurisprudence: worship, commercial transaction law, family law, and criminal law. This work was composed at the request of Sultān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Maharaja Lela Ahmad Shah<sup>55</sup> and appears as the first *kitāb* in a personal compilation of *kutub* by Shaykh Ismāʿīl ʿAbdul Muṭallib al-Ashī entitled *Jamʿ Jawāmiʿ al-Musannafāt* (A Compiled Collection of Works),<sup>56</sup> but it was first included in the compiled work only in the fourth

54. Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Melayu Klasik*, 230–232.

55. Idem., *Penyebaran*, vol. 6, 42.

56. Husni Mubarrak, *Nusantara*, 10. The list of works compiled in this collection could be viewed here: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/jam-jawami-al-musannafat/oclc/744473962>.

print as published in 1310 H/1892 CE. The writing of the *kitāb* was commenced on the 5th of Muḥarram 1140 H/1727 CE.<sup>57</sup>

2. *Manẓar al-Ajlā ilā Martabat al-Aḷā*, which deals with the seven degrees of existence. Its copy was obtained from the personal collection of a descendent of Tuan Guru Hj Maḥmūd bin Muḥammad Yūsuf of Kampung Pusin, Yala, Pattani, who made a copy of the work in 1273 H/1856 CE. The work was commissioned by Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Johan Shah ibn al-Marḥūm Sulṭān Ahmad Shah and was completed in 1152 H/1739 CE. This work is also bound together with *kitāb Farā’id al-Fawā’id al-Fikr fī Imām al-Mahdi* of Shaykh Dāwūd bin ‘Abdullāh al-Faṭānī.<sup>58</sup>
3. *Safīnat al-Hukkām fī Takhlīṣ al-Khiṣām*, which is a book of jurisprudence composed principally on the basis of the Shāfi’ī school of law. However, when it comes to the commercial transaction law, the author would prefer to refer to the Ḥanafī school of law.<sup>59</sup> It consists of two parts: the first part consists of two introductions; the first introduction explains the definitions of law terminologies contained therein such as the five degrees of approval, namely obligatory (*wājib*), forbidden (*ḥarām*), recommendable (*mandūb*), reprehensible (*makrūh*), and neutral (*mubāh*),<sup>60</sup> while the second introduction contains admonitions to judges in meting out punishments;<sup>61</sup> the second part then deals with commercial transaction law, family law, and criminal law; however, worship or devotional duties are not discussed.<sup>62</sup> It is interesting to note that the *kitāb* includes a lesson on arithmetic at its

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57. Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Naskhah Klasik*, 282.

58. Idem, *Melayu Klasik*, 230.

59. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safīnat al-Hukkām*, vi.

60. Ibid., 6.

61. Ibid., xii.

62. Ibid., v; A. Hasjmy, *Naskhah*, 268.

end most probably to assist in commercial transactions and inheritance.<sup>63</sup> Its writing was begun on Friday, the 4th of Muḥarram 1153 H/1740 CE at the request of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Johan Shah.<sup>64</sup> There are two extant copies of the work: one complete copy which has 651 pages is kept at Aceh Museum with a call number 07.03 while the other less complete copy which has only 502 pages belongs to M. Yunus Jamil; this was the copy used by Prof. A Hasjmy in his study of the work.<sup>65</sup> The former copy was Romanised by Muliadi Kurdi and Jamaludin Thaib and published by Lembaga Naskah Aceh in 2015.<sup>66</sup>

4. *Hujjāt al-Bālighah ‘alā Jamā‘atin Mukhāṣamah*, which was written at the request of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Johan Shah, starting on the 4th of Muḥarram 1158 H/1745 CE and finished on 27th Rabī‘ al-Akhir 1158 H/1745 CE. It deals with prosecution and evidence in criminal law.<sup>67</sup>
5. *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk*, which is the focus of this study. Although the name of the author is not mentioned in the manuscript, Ustadh Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir believes that it is a work of Shaykh Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn based on the fact that the spiritual chain stated therein is exactly the same as the one stated in his work listed in number (2) above in which the authorship of this work is clearly stated as that of Shaykh Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn.<sup>68</sup> In fact, both works elucidate *wahdat al-wujūd*. However, this work also discusses the spiritual exercises that an aspirant (*sālik*) has to undergo to achieve the illuminative knowledge (*ma‘rifah*) of God. They include the methods of the remembrance of God

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63. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safinat al-Hukkam*, 471.

64. A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*, 267.

65. *Ibid.*, 266.

66. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safinat al-Hukkam*.

67. Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Penyebaran* vol. 6, 45; *Melayu Klasik*, 231. This work has been partially studied, focusing on the chapter on “Pendakwaan.” See footnote 7. As such, the work remains in manuscript forms.

68. *Ibid.*, 230.

(*dhikr Allāh*) and a solitary retreat or seclusion (*khalwah*). It also touches on the fourteen founding Ṣūfī paths (*ṭarīqāt*) which have given birth to other succeeding Ṣūfī paths. In addition to the missing authorship, the work also does not mention the date of writing and completion.<sup>69</sup>

It must be noted that he wrote all of the above works in Jāwī Malay, indicating his significant contributions in enriching scholarly works in Malay and in making scholarly works more accessible to the Malay masses.

*His Place in the Eighteenth Century Malay Scholarly World*

The above listed works and his position as Qāḍī Malik al-‘Ādil show that Jalāl al-Dīn was an important figure not only in the royal court, but also in the intellectual and scholarly life in Aceh. This is supported further by the fact that three of his works were commissioned by Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Johan Shah and one by Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Maharaja Lela Ahmad Shah. According to Husni Mubarrak, due to his erudition in jurisprudence, he was conferred the title *al-‘ālim al-‘allāmah* (a highly learned scholar).<sup>70</sup> However, his influence in the Malay scholarly world does not seem to go beyond Aceh. For example, Azyumardi Azra in *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII* mentions his name only in relation to his famous son, namely Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī with a passing remark that the son must have inherited Jalāl al-Dīn’s erudition in jurisprudence.<sup>71</sup> According to Henri Chambert-Loir:<sup>72</sup>

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69. Ibid., 232.

70. Husni Mubarrak, *Nusantara*, 9.

71. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 342.

72. Chambert-Loir, *Islamic Law*, 60.

In contrast to Abdurrauf [sic], Jalaluddin [sic], the author of the *Safīnat al-Hukkām*, is totally unknown and his work is mentioned in none of the solid studies about Indonesian ulemas [sic], Malay religious books or Malay literature.

The reason for the obscurity of his life was probably that he lived when the controversy of the *Wujūdīyyah* had waned down. This is in contrast to his four prominent predecessors, who were embroiled in the controversy. The controversy germinated with Hamzah Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī who introduced the teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd* through their writings in Malay.<sup>73</sup> Later, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī harshly attacked them on their supposedly deviant teachings that cost the lives of their followers, one of whom was Kamal al-Dīn al-Jāwī, the successor of Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī.<sup>74</sup>

‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī came to the scene by trying to take a middle-road. In so doing, he attempted to ground *taṣawwuf* in the Sharī‘ah as the Malay masses who were not yet well-grounded in the Sharī‘ah at that time were confused when first exposed to the Ṣūfī doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*—this doctrine became widespread because the masses had access to the doctrine in Malay writings.<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that besides the controversy, the scholars were also known for other contributions. For al-Rānīrī, he was already well-known for being the first scholar to have written a work on jurisprudence in Malay,<sup>76</sup> albeit focusing only on devotional duties.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī was well-known to have made available in Malay for the first time a complete work on

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73. Megawati Moris, *Al-Ghazzālī’s Influence on Malay Thinkers: A Study of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī* (Selangor: ISSI, 2016), 41.

74. Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narrations of A Sufi Past* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 14.

75. Megawati, *al-Ghazzālī’s Influence*, 60.

76. *Ibid.*, 57.

77. al-Attas, *Commentary*, 25.



*tafsīr* entitled *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by translating *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.<sup>78</sup>

Another potential reason for his obscurity could have been due to the fact that only one of his works entitled *Hidāyat al-ʿAwwām* was intended for the masses while other works were composed for specific groups of readers. For example, his two works on jurisprudence, *Safīnat al-Hukkām fī Talkhīṣ al-Khiṣām* and *Hujjat al-Bālighah ʿalā Jamāʿatin Mukhāṣamah* were intended for law experts. The works on *tasawwuf* are always meant for a specific group of people called the Ṣūfīs and not for the masses.<sup>79</sup> This would have limited their circulations and eventually led them to be forgotten along with the author. This is complicated further by the fact that hitherto, none of his biographies mentions about his students<sup>80</sup> apart from his sons, most notably Muḥammad Zayn al-Āshī.<sup>81</sup>

Despite initially sliding into obscurity, his scholarly contributions have gradually come to light. In this regard, his contributions in jurisprudence have received some recognition.<sup>82</sup> In fact, his originality in composing *Safīnat al-Hukkām fī Talkhīṣ al-Khiṣām* by not following the conventional format—namely worship, commercial transaction law, family law, and criminal law—and not simply by adopting Arabic works is duly recognised.<sup>83</sup> Most importantly, the work is a testament to his erudition in making Islamic jurisprudence practical and relevant to the current issues of that time.<sup>84</sup> In fact, his two works on jurisprudence, namely *Hidāyat al-ʿAwwām* and *Farāʾid al-Qurʾān* have been compiled in *Jamʿ Jawāmiʿ al-Muṣannafāt* and widely

78. Megawati, *al-Ghazzālī's Influence*, 61.

79. H. Ahmadi Isa, *Ajaran Tasawuf Muhammad Nafis dalam Perbandingan* (Jakarta: PT RajaGrafindo Persada, 2001), 9–10.

80. Even the three authors who made a devoted study on Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī did not mention his students. See: Wan Mohd. Shaghir, *Penyebaran*, vol. 6; A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*; Muliadi Kurdi and Jamaluddin Thaib, *Safīnat al-Hukkām*.

81. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 342.

82. Muliadi and Jamaluddin, *Safīnat al-Hukkām*, ii; A. Hasjmy, *Naskah*, 265–266.

83. Chambert-Loir, *Islamic Law*, 61.

84. *Ibid.*

taught at traditional learning institutions in Indonesia.<sup>85</sup> It is worthy to note that he might have been the first Malay scholar to have advocated that judges should be receptive to deliver judgments on the basis of the other schools of jurisprudence in certain cases if there were merits to do so:<sup>86</sup>

Aku benci akan orang yang tetap ia pada madhhab bapaknya dan shaykhnya pada suatu hukum serta diketahuinya hukum itu tiada maslahat bagi ummat Muhammad pada masanya, lagi dapat ia berpindah kepada yang lain daripada madhhab bapaknya dan shaykhnya...

(I hate someone who stubbornly clings to the school of his father or his teachers in a certain legal case when he knows clearly that the legal ruling [in his school] does not bode well to the proper interest of the Muslims of his time and when he has an opportunity to pass the judgment on the basis of other schools).

Nevertheless, there is still a lacuna in recognising his proper place in *taṣawwuf*. Based on the *silsilah* that he provided in *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk*, it is clear that he was following in the footsteps of his teachers, namely Dāwūd al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī in *taṣawwuf*. This is why he also expounded the doctrines of the seven degrees of existence (*martabat tujuh*) and transcendent unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and in *Asrār al-Sulūk* and *Manẓar al-Ajlā ilā Martabat al-A’lā*. That is, he advocated the same doctrine as expounded by

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85. Husni Mubarrak, *Nusantara*, 14.

86. Chambert-Loir, *Islamic Law*, 54n4. The statement only appears in the Introduction of *Safinat al-Hukkam* in the 2004 edition due to printing errors in the 2015 edition.

‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Fanṣūrī in *Tanbīh al-Māshī*. As stated by Oman Fathurahman:<sup>87</sup>

Secara singkat dapat saya kemukakan bahawa ajaran-ajaran *taṣawwuf* dalam teks *Tanbīh al-Māsyī* memberikan gambaran sosok Abdul Rauf sebagai seorang ulama Ṣūfī yang ikut menyebarkan *wahdatul wujud*, atau *wujūdīyyah*.

(In brief, I can state that the Ṣūfī teachings of ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf as expounded in *Tanbīh al-Māshī* projects him as a Ṣūfī scholar who partakes in advocating *wahdat al-wujūd* or *wujūdīyyah*).

In fact, as an exponent of the doctrine of *wujūdīyyah*, Jalāl al-Dīn was therefore an inheritor of the doctrine in the Malay Archipelago from Hamzah al-Fanṣūrī, who expounded *wujūdīyyah* in *Asrār al-‘Arifīn*, *Sharāb al-‘Ashiqīn*, and *al-Muntahā*,<sup>88</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī, who elucidated the Ṣūfī doctrine in *Jawhar al-Haqā’iq*,<sup>89</sup> and Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, who explicated the Ṣūfī doctrine in *Hujjat al-Ṣiddīq*<sup>90</sup> and *Latā’if al-Asrār li-Ahl Allāh al-Atyār*.<sup>91</sup> Later on, the same doctrine was propagated by Jalāl al-Dīn’s successors, namely, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Fālimbānī,<sup>92</sup> who elaborated the doctrine in *Sayr al-Sālikīn ilā ‘Ibādat Rabb al-*

87. Oman Fathurahman, *Tanbīh al-Māsyī: Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud: Kasus Abdurauf Singkel di Aceh Abad 17* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 23.

88. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), xiii.

89. Rohaimi Rastam, *Jawhar al-Haqā’iq Shaykh Shamsuddīn al-Sumaterāi: Tahkik dan Analisis Permata Segala Hakikat* (Kajang: Perusahaan Tukang Buku KM, 2020), xxii.

90. al-Attas, *Commentary*, 53–79.

91. Muhammad Zainy Uthman, *Latā’if al-Asrār li-Ahl Allāh al-Atyār of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī: An Annotated Transliteration together with a Translation and an Introduction of His Exposition on the Fundamental Aspects of Ṣūfī Doctrines* (Johor Bahru: Penerbit UTM Press, 2011).

92. Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan*, 319–320.

*Ālamīn*,<sup>93</sup> Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī (1735–1812 CE), who explained about the doctrine in *al-Ḍurr al-Nafīs*,<sup>94</sup> and Dāwūd al-Faṭānī (1740–1847 CE), who wrote about the doctrine in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Ṣūfi*.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, the above discussion shows that he may be considered not only as being in the same league as his prominent predecessors, but also serving as a link between the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century Malay scholars; it is worth reminding that he was born in the seventeenth century and lived into the eighteenth century. In this regard, failures to take into account of his scholarly contributions would render a vacuum or a lack of continuity between the two succeeding centuries of the Malay scholarly world.

### **An Overview on *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk***

To provide some insights into *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk*, this paper will state the sources of the manuscripts, provide the physical descriptions of each of the manuscripts, and outline the main subject matters discussed in the work.

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93. Syekh Abdus-Shamad al-Palimbani, *Sairus-Salikin: Perjalanan Orang yang Salik kepada Allah* (Pokok Sena: Khazanah Banjariah & Pustaka Darussalam, Mei 2014), vol. 4, 252–260. See also: Khalif Muammar A. Harris, “Faham Wahdat al-Wujūd dan Martabat Tujuh dalam Karya Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbānī” *TAFHIM* 8 (2015): 97–131.

94. Muhammad Khairi Mahyuddin, *Al-Tawhīd from Sūfi’s Perspective: An Analytical Study of al-Ḍurr al-Nafīs of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī* (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Jawi Malaysia, 2021), 81. See also: H. Ahmadi Isa, *Ajaran Tasawuf*, 41.

95. Mohd Zain Abd Rahman, “An Annotated Translation of Transliteration of *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī Bayān Ramz Ahl al-Ṣūfi* of Shaykh Dāwūd al-Faṭānī,” MA diss. (ISTAC, 2000), 18.

*The Sources of the Manuscripts*

As to date, there are six manuscripts of *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* as found in Malaysia; two manuscripts are in the private collection of Khazanah Fathaniyah while the other four are kept in Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM). The manuscripts obtained from Khazanah Fathaniyah can be found in a compilation of manuscripts in a volume entitled *Koleksi Kitab: Risalah Fi Bayani Hukmī Bai'ī War Riba*, Syeikh Abdul Qadir bin Abdur Rahim al-Fathani, Bukit Bayas, Terengganu: Koleksi Nadir No. 40<sup>96</sup> dated 1997, and the hard cover indicates that Ustadh Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah (WMS) was the compiler. This study makes use of the manuscript copies donated to RZS-CASIS as found in the above compilation. The first manuscript of *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* from this collection, labelled as WMS can be found starting from page 143 up to page 206 while the second manuscript labelled as WMS2 runs from page 208 to 284<sup>97</sup>. As for PNM manuscripts, they are kept on Floor 11 of PNM in Kuala Lumpur and catalogued as MSS 2653, MSS 2466, MSS 3213, and MSS 2853. In this article, the manuscripts are identified as follows:

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96. This compilation consists of four works in manuscripts, namely *Risālah fī Bayān Hukmī al-Bay' wa al-Ribā*, *Daqā'iq al-Hurūf*, *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* (two versions), and *Perhubungan Bughyat al-Tullāb*. It also provides the biography of Shaykh Wan 'Abd al-Qādir bin 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Fathani and two appendices in which Appendix I talks about the important copyists of manuscripts in the Malay world while Appendix II gives an overview on the authors of manuscript works in the Malay world.
97. Although the manuscript is said to start with page 143, it is possible that the version referred to in *Melayu Klasik* on page 232 refers to WMS2 instead of WMS. This is because WMS which starts on page 143 only has 66 pages while *Melayu Klasik* describes the manuscript as having 77 pages.

Table 1 The sources of the manuscripts and their locations

No.	Manuscript Descriptions	Manuscript Identification	Location
1	WMS personal collection (pp. 143 to 206)	WMS	CASIS Library
2	WMS personal collection (pp. 208 to 284)	WMS2	CASIS Library
3	MSS 2653	PNM1	Floor 11
4	MSS 2466	PNM2	Floor 11
5	MSS 3213	PNM3	Floor 11
6	MSS 2853	PNM4	Floor 11

It must be noted that WMS2 and PNM4 are actually exactly the same manuscript; that is, one is just a photocopy of the other. However, the copy obtained from PNM, namely PNM4 is incomplete while the copy in Hj Wan Mohd. Shaghir's compilation is complete. To be specific, the former only has 37 pages out of 77 pages as found in the latter.

#### *The Physical Descriptions of the Manuscripts*

The descriptions of each manuscript will focus on its physical characteristics such as the number of pages, the handwriting styles, the number of lines per page, the margin size, and paper type; its readability; its completeness in terms of text and pages; its unique feature if any; and the information about the copyist, copying date, and place:

#### *PNM1*

This manuscript has 94 pages or 48 folios. It has more pages as it has a large content margin of 20 cm of height and 12.5 cm of width and a relatively large handwriting; in fact, it has the largest handwriting of all the five manuscripts. In this regard,

although the manuscript has 19 lines, the words in PNM1 are mostly sufficiently spaced from one another due to its larger margin. What is more important is that it has neither missing pages nor damages. Additionally, there are no words that are ink-smearred. These positive aspects of the manuscript make the manuscript relatively easy to read. This is facilitated further by the fact that like WMS, it also has cue words written at the bottom left corner of recto pages of folios. Another positive aspect is that in terms of textual completeness, this manuscript suffers only minor missing texts, thus making it the most complete manuscript.

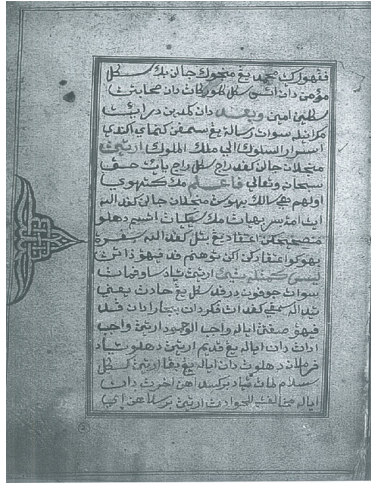
The above aspects point to the possibility that the manuscript might have been prepared for someone of a high stature. Such possibility is supported by its uniqueness: the front page and the left margin of the second page are beautifully decorated, and the content margins for each page are lined as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below, respectively:

Figure 2 The front page (recto) of PNM1 which is highly ornamented



Source: PNM1

Figure 3 The second page (verso) of PNMI showing a decorated margin



Source: PNMI

Another unique feature of PNMI is that two reading indicators are written on its margins:

1. “*Bāligh*,” or “*qaf bāligh*” or, “*kāna qaf bāligh*” which appears on page 5 recto, 8 recto, 14 recto, 15 verso, 19 verso, 20 recto, 22 recto, 23 verso, 26 verso, 33 verso, 36 recto (*kāna qaf bāligh*), 37) recto, and 43 recto (*qaf bāligh* and *bāligh*). The phrases may mean “agreed place reached in reading.”
23. “*Qirā’ah qaf*” or “*qaf qirā’ah*” which appears on 10 recto, 12 verso, and 13 verso. The phrases may mean “agreed reading up to there.”

Despite the reading indicators, the colophon does not mention the name of the owner of the copied manuscript; nor does it mention the name of the copyist. However, it does give the date the copying work was finished: “*Tammat al-kitāb* pada hari Sabtu, tiga puluh haribulan *Shawwāl* pada hijrah al-Nabī



*ṣallaLlāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* 1287 *sanat al-dāl awwal*, equivalent to 23rd January 1871 CE.” Interestingly, right at the bottom of the word *Tammāt*, there is a signature in Roman alphabets dated 1371 H (1951 CE), probably that of a collector. There is also a mathematical subtraction of  $1370-1287 = 83$  years carried out by the collector.

### WMS

The manuscript has only 64 pages. This includes the cover page prepared by Hġ. Mohd Shaghīr which bears a typed title: “*Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk: al-Ālim al-‘Allāmah al-Shaykh al-Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn ibn al-Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn al-Āshī*.”<sup>98</sup>

Except for page 1 which has 20 lines due to *Basmalah* and the last page which has 17 lines, like PNM1, the manuscript also has 19 lines per page, but with a content margin of 14 cm of height and 10 cm of width. Consequently, trying to accommodate 19 lines in a small margin caused the hand writing to be small and the words to be close to one another; as such, it may be painstaking to decipher certain words as a reader may be mistaken by nearby letters to be part of the words. As a result, these shortcomings render it difficult to read the manuscript as evidenced from the sample shown in Figure 4 below.

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98. The correct title is actually *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* which matches with the Malay title given by the author himself, which is “*Rahsia Menjalani Jalan kepada Raja Segala Raja*.”

Figure 4 A sample of the handwriting as found in the manuscript. A cue word is written at the bottom left corner of the recto page



Source: WMS

However, the biggest shortcoming of this manuscript is that it has the largest missing text that runs for several passages despite having no missing pages.

PNM2

This manuscript has only 25 pages as it is incomplete. It ends right before page [25v, 5] at the sentence: “Maka asal itu martabat ahadiyyah dan....” Unlike PNM1, its front page is plain, that is, it has no decorations. It has 21 lines of texts per page written within a content margin of 20 cm of height and 12.3 cm of width. It has beautiful handwriting which makes

it easy to read. It is even interesting to note that all the words on the right content margin are perfectly aligned; none goes beyond the boundary. Nevertheless, in terms of readability, its main shortcoming comes from the fact that it has few pages in which the ink of a few lines of the text has blotted as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 A few textual lines in which the ink has blotted



Source: PNM 2

Like WMS and PNM1, PNM2 also has cue words, but they are found at the bottom left corner of verso pages instead of recto pages. This would be helpful to trace the page sequences if somehow the papers are left loose. What is unique about PNM2 is that it has copious glosses written on the margins; in fact, it has an elaborate explanation on the permanent archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*). This could suggest that the manuscript might

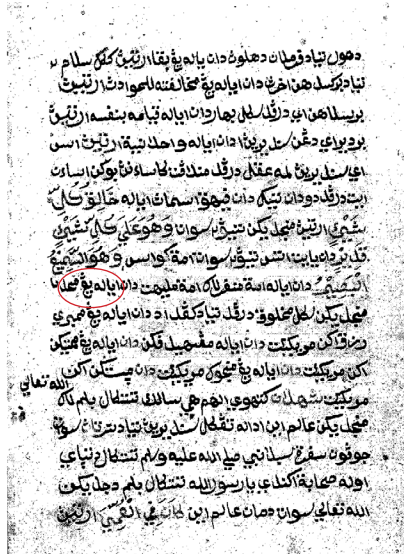
have been copied by a student himself and later on he added glosses during his study, especially as the glosses have a similar handwriting style. Apart from detailed explanation on certain words or terms, PNM2 also helps identify the breaks in the poetic lines that run from [12v, 7] to [13r, 6] as it provides a symbol at the end of each line.

As the manuscript is incomplete, the information on the copyist and the date the manuscript was copied down is not available.

### *PNM3*

This manuscript is also incomplete as it runs to 38 pages only. Although it has 13 more pages than PNM2, it ends earlier than PNM2 and PNM4. This fact makes it the most incomplete manuscript. The reason it has more pages is that it only has 17 textual lines per page written within a relatively large content margin of 18.5 cm of height and 12.5 cm of width. This allows the handwriting to be of a relatively large size. Moreover, the text is basically free from any defect such as due to ink smearing and damaged pages. These positive aspects render the manuscript easy to read. This is facilitated further by its uniqueness: all the Arabic words, especially the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadith are equipped with diacritical marks (*shakl*). Another unique feature of this manuscript, albeit negative, is that it contains words that were not spelt completely due to space constraints; that is, this occurred when the words would have gone off the left content margin if spelt in full. Instead of striking through the words, they were spelt in the next line as shown by an example in figure 6 below.

Figure 6 The word “menjadikan” was partially spelt in line 9 as shown in the circle

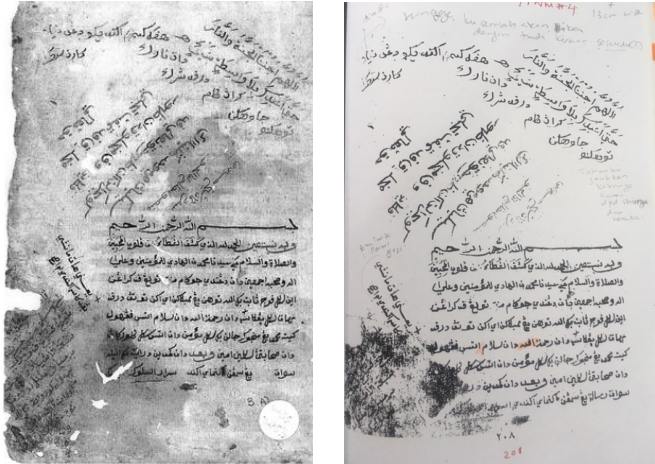


Source: PNM 3

PN4/WMS2

PNM4 and WMS2 are exactly the same copy based on the same handwriting, extraneous notes contained therein, especially on the front page and the defects on the texts as shown by figure 7 below.

Figure 7 The front pages of PNM4 (left) and WMS2 (right) showing extraneous notes and a gloss.



Source: PNM 4 (left) and WMS 2 (right)

It is to be noted that probably the way WMS2 was photocopied makes some words in the last three lines of the text and the notes at the bottom left of the margin covered by black spots, hence unreadable. However, they are visible in PNM4. A similar problem occurs on page 209 of WMS2 in which the phrase “...kan segala makhluk” in line 16 is covered by a black spot, most probably also due to photocopying. While PNM4 copy reveals the left margin of the front page has suffered some damages, WMS2 does not show the damages as the colour of its paper layout is entirely white.

PNM4, as obtained from Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, only has 37 pages; its last page is page 19 recto which corresponds to page [24v, 13] of PNM1, ending at the word “demikianlah.” On the other hand, WMS2, which is the complete copy obtained from Wan Mohd Saghir’s compilation, contains 77 pages that run from page 208 to 284. This means that PNM4 has 40 missing pages. As WMS2 and PNM4 must have originated

from the same source, it is rather bewildering that PNM4 is incomplete. To explain away such discrepancy, it might have been possible that at the time Wan Mohd Saghir photocopied the source manuscript, it was still complete. However, when Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia acquired the manuscript later on, the manuscript was no longer complete.

Furthermore, an analysis on PNM4 and WMS2 reveals that they might have been copied from PNM1 as their contents are almost exactly the same as that of PNM1 even in terms of spelling errors found therein. PNM1 is assumed as the source manuscript because its front page is beautifully decorated while the other two have a plain front page. Two variants that were found are as follows:

1. While PNM1 uses the short form of the salutation to the Prophet Muhammad represented by the letters *ṣād* and *mām*, PNM4 and WMS2 use the complete form, namely *ṣallaLlāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.
2. While PNM1 has a repetitive word of “yang terdahulu (in Jawi)” on page 39 of 77, WMS2 does not have it (as stated earlier, PNM4 only has 37 pages). Instead, the latter misspelt it as “yang terhulu (in Jawi).”

### **An Overview of the Subject Matters Discussed in the Manuscript**

The title of the work, namely *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* already indicates that the work is an exposition of metaphysical doctrines as it touches on the secrets of travelling to God. In the preamble, the author even warns the aspirant traveller (*ṣālik*) about the enormous danger of traversing the path to God. That is why the author begins his work with a brief exposition on the fundamentals of *tawḥīd*, affirming the uniqueness of God’s Essence and His Attributes and Names—basically the twenty attributes of God in a nutshell. Only then does the work delve into metaphysics.

In terms of the major content, *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* basically consists of two major parts: the first part discusses the doctrines of the degrees of existence (*marātīb al-wujūd*), while the second part discusses the devotional acts, including the types of *dhikr*, manners (*adāb*), methodologies, and supererogatory acts which are required in the purification of the heart which is the essence of the spiritual journey (*sulūk*).

*Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* discusses *marātīb al-wujūd* in terms of the descent of the Absolute Being (*tanazzul*) and the ascent of His servants to Him (*taraqqī*). The descent describes the ontology and the cosmology; that is, how God is ontologically related to His creatures, including the origin of the worlds.<sup>99</sup> This ontological relation is basically related to the self-manifestation of God (theophany) through degrees of existence. On the other hand, the ascent (*taraqqī*) then describes the spiritual journey (*sulūk*) of the heart towards God to come to the self-realisation of the traveller (*sālik*) about the ontological truth and reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of existence (*wujūd*) when he arrives at the illuminative knowledge of God (*maʿrifah*).

With regard to *tanazzul*, *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malīk al-Mulūk* explains it through the doctrine of the seven degrees of existence (*martabat tujuh*) as expounded by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Hīndī al-Burhānfūrī (d. 1620 CE) in his epistle *al-Tuḥfat al-Mursalāh ilā al-Nabī ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.<sup>100</sup> This is stated in [5r, 12-16] of PNM1.<sup>101</sup> This is understandable as the doctrine

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99. Oman Fathurahman, *Ithāf al-Dhakī: Tafsīr Wahdatul Wujūd bagi Muslim Nusantara* (Jakarta Selatan: Penerbit Mizan, 2012), 64. See also: Idem, *Tanbīh al-Māsyī*, 46.

100. See the Malay transliteration of this epistle by Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah in Syeikh Muhammad Bin Fadhlullah al-Burhanfuri al-Hīndī, *Tuḥfat al-Mursalāh* (Taman Melewar: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2018). Wan Mohd. Shaghir based his transliteration on two Malay translations of the epistle: one probably by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʿīf or his students and the other by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī in the form of interliners of the Arabic text.

101. See [5r, 12–16]: “As such, this is the seven degrees [of existence] in summary, but with regard to the sequences as mentioned above, it is only for mental understanding; and in truth, only Allāh the Most Exalted knows their sequences.



is very popular among the Ṣūfis in the Malay Archipelago.<sup>102</sup> The doctrine describes the descent in the following seven degrees: *aḥadiyyah*, *waḥdah*, *wāḥidiyyah*, *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*, *‘ālam al-mithāl*, *‘ālam al-aḥsām*, and *‘ālam al-insān*. The first three degrees are eternal while the remaining four are created.

As for the exposition of the ascent of His servants to Him (*tarāqqī*), Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī describes the three worlds traversed by a *sālik* in the spiritual journey of his heart: firstly, the world of power (*‘ālam al-jabarūt*); secondly, the world of sovereignty<sup>103</sup> (*‘ālam al-malakūt*) and the world of the unseen (*‘ālam al-ghayb*); and thirdly, the world of the kingdom and the world of sense and sensible experience<sup>104</sup> (*‘ālam [al-]mulk*<sup>105</sup> *wa al-shahādah*<sup>106</sup>). It is important to note that *Asyār al-Sulūk* interweaves the doctrine of the transcendental unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) with the discussion on the spiritual journey made through the remembrance of God (*dhikr*). This is because the vision of Islam on reality and truth (*ru’yat al-islām li al-wujūd*)<sup>107</sup> is achieved through illuminative knowledge (*ma’rifah*) or the

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102. On the request of his Jāwī students, one of whom was Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf, Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Hasan al-Kūrānī (1616–1690 CE) wrote a commentary on *Tuhfat al-Mursalah* in a work entitled *Ithāf al-Dhakī bi Sharḥ Tuhfat al-Mursalah ilā al-Nabī*. See: Oman Fathurahman, *Ithāf al-Dhakī*, 2. The Arabic critical version of the epistle was produced by Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Rajab Ali Hassan of the Faculty of Usul al-Fiqh, al-Azhar University and published by Dār al-Iḥsān in Cairo, Egypt in 2020.

103. Ismail Anqarawi, *The Lamp of Mysteries: A Commentary on the Light Verse of the Quran* (Oxford: Aqna Publishing, 2011), 55n1. It is also translated as the angelic world. See: Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Petaling Jaya: Islamic Book Trust, 2008), 270.

104. Mustafa al-Badawi, *Sufi Sage of Arabia: Imam ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Alawi al-Haddad* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2005), 200.

105. The *‘ālam al-mulk* is translated as the World of Kingdom. See: Ibid., *Sufi Sage*, 211; *al-Manḥal al-Ṣafī*, 74. It is also translated as the physical world; see: al-Badawi, *Sufi Sage*, 200.

106. The *‘ālam al-shahādah* is translated as the World of Sense and Sensible experience. It is also translated as the visible world. See: al-Attas, *Commentary*, 486; al-Badawi, *Sufi Sage*, 200.

107. al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 2.

intuition of existence which warrants direct spiritual experience of tasting (*dhawq*).<sup>108</sup>

As *Asrār al-Sulūk* unequivocally states that the path which could deliver a servant to the presence of his God is solely by way of the remembrance of God (*dhikr*),<sup>109</sup> it therefore allocates a large part of the work on elucidating it. In a nutshell, the discussion on *dhikr* in *Asrār al-Sulūk* could be basically divided into the following:

1. The types of *dhikr*.
2. The manners (*adāb*) in the performance of *dhikr*.
3. The time periods for the performance of *dhikr*.
4. Other litanies and supererogatory rituals.

## Conclusions

Thus, this paper has established that despite his initial obscurity, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ashī was one of the important figures in the Malay scholarly world, especially in Aceh. This is based on the fact that he came from a family of illustrious scholars, going back to his grandfather. His son, Muḥammad Zayn not only continued his legacy, but also became more famous than him. His position as Qāḍī Malik al-ʿĀdil testifies unequivocally to his importance. That is why it is his works on jurisprudence that have first brought his contributions to light. His work entitled *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* suggests that he belonged to the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, just like his prominent predecessors. Furthermore, he also adopted the *martabat tujuh* in his explaining the doctrines of the degrees of existence (*marātib al-wujūd*). *Asrār al-Sulūk ilā Malik al-Mulūk* also establishes that he was not simply a *faqīh*, but also a *Sūfī*. Above all, he served as an important link between the seventeenth and eighteenth century Malay scholars.

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108. Idem, *Commentary*, 182 and 245.

109. He said: “After that, drown yourself in the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) because the path that delivers a servant to his God is not attainable except by way of the remembrance of God (*dhikr*)” [16r, 6–9].

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