

EXPLORING THE LIFE OF ḤAMZAH FANṢŪRĪ

A Historical Study

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ملخص

في أثناء ندرة المصادر التي نرجع إليها في دراسة أعمال الأديب حمزة فانشوري، نجد دلائل - مهما كانت مبعثرة- يمكن دراستها لأنها تعطي بعض المعلومات حول حياة هذا الأديب الصوفي، كما أن هناك مصادر تاريخية أكدت هذه الدلائل. كان الأديب الذي ولد في باروس قد ارتحل إلى بعض بلاد العالم الإسلامي للقيام بالدراسات الإسلامية ، الأمر الذي يؤديه إلى اعتناق الوجودية حتى أصبح رجلا هاما لهذه النحلة في هذه المنطقة. ويبدو أن له علاقة جيدة مع مركز السلطة في أتشيه حينذاك رغم أنه ما زال منتقدا للانحرافات التي ارتكبتها مركز السلطة في سبيل مصالح الأمة بصفة عامة. في هذا الصدد، نجد فتاواه الدينية التي تسودها التعاليم الوجودية قد اهتمت بإصلاح السلطة والمجتمع في نفس الوقت. وكانت مساهماته الكبيرة في المجالات الدينية والاجتماعية والسياسية هي التي جعلته ناجحا في أداء رسالاته الدينية.

Abstract

Di tengah kelangkaan sumber dalam melakukan kajian mengenai Ḥamzah Fansuri, terdapat beberapa petunjuk – betapapun masih tercerai berai – yang dapat diangkat dari karya sajaknya yang mampu memberikan beberapa informasi mengenai kehidupan tokoh sastrawan sufi ini. Petunjuk ini juga didukung oleh beberapa sumber sejarah yang ada. Dilahirkan di Barus, Ḥamzah melakukan perjalanan ke beberapa penjuru dunia Islam dengan tujuan melakukan kajian Islam. Hal ini pada akhirnya membawa beliau

menjadi seorang penganut dan arsitek aliran wujūdīyyah yang terpenting di kawasan ini. Hubungannya dengan pusat kekuasaan di Aceh pada saat itu kelihatannya harmonis, namun pada saat yang sama juga kritis terhadap penyimpangan yang dilakukan oleh para penguasa dan petinggi kerajaan. Hal ini dilakukan demi kepentingan masyarakat luas. Dalam konteks inilah perhatian diberikan oleh Ḥamzah secara lebih spesifik, sebagai yang tercermin di dalam berbagai petuah keagamaannya kepada masyarakat — meskipun hal ini dilakukan di bawah panji-panji ajaran wujūdīyyah. Adalah concern keagamaan, sosial dan politik yang tinggi yang ia berikan yang pada gilirannya memberikan kontribusi yang besar bagi keberhasilan Ḥamzah dalam misi keagamaan.

Keyword: Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī, wujūdīyyah, *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, poems, *taṣawwuf*

A. Introduction

It is undeniable the life of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī remains a mystery. Neither traditional sources of the 17th century Aceh, such as the *Hikayat Aceh*, the *Adat Aceh*, and the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, nor outsiders' materials, especially European sources, provide any mention of him. This very fact forces historians to rely on inferential proofs. From a historical perspective, the importance of Ḥamzah is based on the strong assumption that he already played a significant role in Aceh in Southeast Asia in general. It is uncanny to imagine how the *wujūdīyyah* doctrine could have been so popular — both at court and among the community at large — in Aceh during the latter part of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century without any significant role that its master and proponent had played. It is to this direction that this article devotes its study.

The scarcity of sources¹ on Ḥamzah has indeed hampered historians' efforts at reconstructing his life and career. Yet, this does not in anyway justify any attempt at undermined Ḥamzah's historical role — socially, politically and on religion. Ways of reconstructing parts of his

¹ One of the main reasons of this extreme lack of sources on this figure is the destructive policy of Iskandar Thānī (r. 1636-1641) who, under al-Rānīrī's influence, destroyed *wujūdīyyah* works and even condemned some of its leaders to death.

life is through the interpretation of his poems. Indeed, a close scrutiny of his work is helpful enough in conveying us – no matter how small they are in showing us – parts of his life and career. This is to be presented with the help of other supporting historical data.

A. Ḥamzah's Origins, Birthday and Place, and Travel

One of the ongoing arguments about Ḥamzah is the controversy regarding his origins, birthday and place of birth. Indeed, there is no convincing clue that can lead us to determine his birthday with certainty. Yet, the following verses might convey some useful information:

*Ḥamzah nin asalnya Faṣṣūrī,
Mendapat wujud di tanah Shahr Nāwī,
Beroleh khiblafat ilmu yang 'ālī,
Dari pada 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī.²*

Translation:

Ḥamzah, hailing from Faṣṣūr,
Found the Being in the territory of Shahr Nāwī,
His license to transmit the august science,
Traces back to 'Abd al-Qādir, the sayyid from Jīlān.

There is little doubt that Barus, a well-known port located in the western part of Sumatra, was Ḥamzah's hometown. Yet, his birthplace is still the subject of debate. Some scholars argue that even though he was originally from Barus, Ḥamzah was not in fact born there. There are few key words which might help researchers in determining his birthplace, namely *wujūd* and *Shahr Nāwī*. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas refers to the term *wujūd* as a place where Ḥamzah was born. Therefore, to this scholar, although his parents were originally from Barus, Ḥamzah was in fact born in Shahr Nāwī, an old name of the city of Ayuthia.³ For G.W.J. Drewes however the term *wujūd* here means the

² G.J.W. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, *The Poems of Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), Text I, no. 13. For the translations from the Poems I have mostly adapted Drewes' and Brakel's version.

³ Syed Muhammad al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), 7; Al-Attas, "New Light on the Life of Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī," *JMBRAS* 40, 2 (1967), pp. 46-48.

existence of God. In other word, Shahr Nāwī was a place where Ḥamzah acquired his mystical experience (*wujūdiyyah*).⁴ This mystical meaning, according to this Dutch scholar, is clearly provided in the following verses:

*Rahmān itulah yang bernama Wujūd,
Keadaan Tuhan yang sedia ma'bud,
Kenyataan Islām, Naṣrānī dan Yabūd,
Dari Rahmān itulah sekalian manjūd.*⁵

Translation:

The Merciful is called Being,
The Lord's Being worshipped through all ages,
Islam, Christianity and Judaism,
Came into Being because of that mercifulness.

The mystical meaning of the word *wujūd* is supported by L.F. Brakel who also claims that Barus was Ḥamzah's birthplace.⁶ The ideas of these two scholars are reasonable, considering the dominant mystical elements of the above verses. This is in addition to the unity of the meaning of the verses themselves.

It is interesting to follow the debate on Shahr Nāwī. Al-Attas claims that this is the birth place of Ḥamzah, an idea refused by both Drewes and Brakel who suggest that it is a city where Ḥamzah gained his mystical experience. Yet, these two Dutch scholars are in disagreement in identifying the city. Like al-Attas, Drewes believes that Shahr Nāwī mentioned in Ḥamzah's poems was the old capital city of Siam.⁷ The question which should be raised here is: How could Ḥamzah have visited and lived in the city that is described by Gabriel Ferrand as a place where "Islam has no past, no present and probably no future?"⁸

Historical sources indeed reveal otherwise. It is said that Shahr Nāwī was in fact a cosmopolitan city where people from other regions came to live. Among them were Muslims from Malay, India, Persia, Turkey

⁴ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, pp. 1-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Text X, no. 4.

⁶ L.F. Brakel, "The Birth Place of Hamza Pansuri," *JMBRAS* 42, 2 (1969), pp. 208-209.

⁷ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, pp. 4-5.

⁸ *The First Encyclopedia of Islam* 1913-1936, s.v. "Siam."

and Arab.⁹ In 1554, Fernao Mendez Pinto found seven mosques and about 30,000 Muslim families living in the city.¹⁰ Therefore, it is safe to assume that several Islamic religious leaders also lived there, and the *wujūdiyyah* played an important role amongst Muslims. “It is plausible”, Drewes writes, “that among them Ḥamzah learnt Persian, the lingua franca of Muslim India, and was won over the Wujūdiyyah doctrine, of which he became a most convinced adept.”¹¹

Brakel has a different opinion on this issue. Shahr Nāwī for him was not a city located in Siam, but near Banda Aceh. He bases his idea on statements provided in the *Hikayat Aceh* which say that: “maka Johan Alampun berjalanlah hingga sampai kepada suatu negeri yang bernama Shahr Nu. Maka pada tempat itu dua buah penanggahan.”¹² In other places the *Hikayat Aceh* states that: “tatkala datang mereka itu menghadap bersembahkan segala kelakuan perang Ghoṛi itu, maka Shah Alampun terlalu amarah. Maka Seri Maharaja pun disuruh tangkap buangkan ke Shahr Nu.”¹³ Shahr Nāwī, or Shahr Nu, was therefore, Brakel concludes, a town located not far from Banda Aceh and it was to this town that Ḥamzah went for his retreat and where he finally gained his mystical experience.¹⁴ Brakel further argues that Ḥamzah received his Persian training in Barus, an important port visited by Muslims from around the world.¹⁵

Both Shahr Nāwī of Siam and Shahr Nu of Aceh seem to be identical. This alone creates enough obstacles for scholars in determining the right answer. Yet, considering the cosmopolitan character of the one in Siam it is most probable that Shahr Nāwī was a city located in Siam, where Ḥamzah acquired his mystical experience and learnt Persian.

The period of Ḥamzah’s life also constitutes a controversial issue. It is not the intention of this article to discuss this issue in detail, for some scholars have discussed it at some length, such as H. Kraemer,

⁹ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *The First Encyclopedia*, “Siam.”

¹¹ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, p. 5.

¹² T. Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh* (’s-Gravenhage: Smits, 1959), p. 205.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

¹⁴ Brakel, “The Birth Place,” p. 208.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

C.A.O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, Harun Hadiwijoyo, Hoesein Djajadiningrat,¹⁶ C. Snouck Hurgronje,¹⁷ and Sir Richard Winstedt,¹⁸ to mention a few. It is suffice to state that Ḥamzah lived during the second half of the 16th century and early 17th century.

Ḥamzah's poems reveal some information on his travels. It is said that he visited several places, including Mekkah, Baghdād, Java, Siam and Malaya.¹⁹ It was in Mekkah that he performed a pilgrimage and sought God, as stated in the following verses:

Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī di dalam Makkah,
Mencari Tuhan di Bayt al-Ka'bah,
Di Barus ke Qudus terlalu payah,
*Akhirnya dapat di dalam rumah.*²⁰

Translation:

Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī was in Mecca,
Sought the Lord at the shrine of the Ka'bah,
(Yet) at Barus it was too much trouble to go to Jerusalem,
(For) eventually he found Him in his own house (himself).

In Baghdād Ḥamzah "was received into the Qādiriyah fraternity,"²¹ as he states:

*Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī sedia zābir,
Tersuci pulang pada Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir,
Dari sana ke sini ter-tā'ir tā'ir,
Akhir mendapat pada diri zābir.*²²

Trans.

Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī, originally earthly,
Was purified by 'Abd al-Qādir,

¹⁶ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, p. 2.

¹⁷ C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, Vol. 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 13.

¹⁸ Sir Richard Winstedt, "A History of Classical Malay Literature," *JMBRAS* 3, 3 (1961), p. 113.

¹⁹ Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 8.

²⁰ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XXI, no. 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²² *Ibid.*, Text XVI, No. 15.

He wandered about hither and thither,
Yet at last found Him in his own person.

Mention of Ḥamzah's visit to Shahr Nāwī as stated above has briefly been provided. Yet, it is also important to shortly discuss his visit to Java, i.e. Kudus. Al-Attas believes that Ḥamzah went to Java for a visit,²³ based on the following verses:²⁴

*Ḥamzah Faṅṣūrī di dalam Makkah,
Mencari Tuban di Bayt al-Ka'bah,
Di Barus ke Qudus terlalu payah,
Akhirnya dapat di dalam rumah.*

Drewes however argues that there is no clue suggesting that Ḥamzah used to visit Kudus (Java). For him, Kudus here means Jerusalem. It was due to too much trouble that he found to go there that he declined to visit the city, and instead stayed in his house where he finally found God. This idea seems more acceptable, especially when it is viewed from the unity of the stanza itself.

B. Ḥamzah, Political Center and Social Concern

It is unfortunate that due to the scarcity of sources available, Ḥamzah has frequently been portrayed as an exclusive figure, who had no social concern and political involvement. Even though our main sources provide no mention of this figure, there are some substantial accounts — with the support of other sources — which can be extracted from his poems regarding his social and political concern.

As mentioned above, an approximation of the duration of Ḥamzah's life is given, namely during the latter part of the 16th century and early 17th century, ranging from the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh al-Mukammil (r. 1589-1604) to the early part of Iskandar Muda's reign (r. 1607-1636).²⁵ This can be seen in his poems in which his relation

²³ Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 9.

²⁴ For further discussion on this issue, see Drewes, *The Poems*, pp. 9-10.

²⁵ Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 14; *The Poems*, p. 2; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, Vol.2, p. 13.

with the sulṭān, to some extent, can be observed. In his poems entitled *Ikāt-Ikatan 'Ilm al-Nisā'*, Ḥamzah states:

*Hamba mengikat sha'ir ini,
Di bawah haḍrat raja yang walī.²⁶*

Translation:

Your slave composed these verses,
Under the auspices of the saintly king.

In other place Ḥamzah writes:

*Shāh 'Ālam raja yang 'ādil,
Raja qutub sempurna kāmīl,
Walī Allāh sempurna wāsil,
Raja 'arīf lagi mukammīl.²⁷*

Translation:

Shāh 'Ālam is a just king,
The Pole, whose perfection is complete,
(He) is the saint of God, who is eminently united (with God),
(He) is the gnostic king, the most excellent.

These verses clearly convey a harmonious relationship that Ḥamzah had with the sulṭān.

Ḥamzah believed that the sulṭān possessed the highest political authority in the country. At the same time he also praised the ruler to be a ṣūfī leader. It is not the intention of this article to discuss the political authority of the sulṭān. Yet, Ḥamzah's recognition of the ruler as a *walī Allāh* (saint, or a friend of God) draws our attention.

In the first place the attribution of the epithet *walī Allāh* to the sulṭān implies that he is to possess a "religio-ṣūfistic authority." The term *walī* in Islam means a pious person who is bestowed functions that can perform miracles, in other words, the "intermediary (*shafī'*) between God and man."²⁸ Al-Bayḍāwī writes that *walīs* are "those who are near to God through their obedience and whom God equips with the gift of

²⁶ Quoted in al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern Vol. 2 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971), p. 264.

His mercy (*karāmah*).²⁹ In the context of the Muslim kingdoms in Southeast Asia, it must be remembered that Islam had to compete with pre Islamic tradition and became an ethos in the formation of both political and religious tradition. Islam was later adopted and adapted in the life of the court and its tradition. Indeed, a ruler was in need of a new political tradition which was in line with the spirit of the new religion. From this perspective, Islamic symbols were adopted. Firstly, the title of the ruler was transformed into an Arabic/Islamic one. In Melaka, for instance, a Srivijaya's title of *sri maharaja* was changed into an Islamic one, *sulṭān*. Even though the epithet *sri paduka* was still in use, it "was no longer an incarnate Hindu god but the shadow of Allah upon earth"³⁰ (*ṣi'll Allāh fī al-arḍ*). This is among the epithets attributed by the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* to Iskandar Thānī,³¹ and the *Sejarah Melayu* to Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh, and the *Undang-Undang Melaka* to Sulṭān Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd Shāh (the last ruler of Melaka).³²

As a "shadow of God," the ruler was to behave under God's guidance and consent. Therefore, the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* states that the installment of Iskandar Thānī (Sulṭān Mughāl) to the throne was based on God's guidance (*petunjuk Allāh*).³³ The *Hikayat Aceh* also affirms that every Acehnese ruler was chosen by God to rule the country. That being the case, this source states that: "Apakala Allāh subḥānahu wa ta'ālā hendak menyatakan 'azamatNya dan kibriaNya kepada segala isi 'alam dunia, maka dijadikanNya seorang hambaNya yang pilihanNya akan raja dalam sebuah negeri."³⁴

The adoption of this title lead to the belief that the sulṭān was also to act as *amīr al-mu'mīn* (Commander of the Faithful), an epithet

²⁹ Quoted in *Ibid*.

³⁰ Richards Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 70.

³¹ T. Iskandar, (ed.), *Bustanu's Salatin*, Bab 2, Fasal 13 (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), pp. 36, 44.

³² Liaw Yock Fang, *Undang-Undang Melaka* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 64.

³³ T. Iskandar, (ed.), *Bustanu's Salatin*, p. 43.

³⁴ This statement is repeated six times in the *Hikayat Aceh*. See Iskandar, *De Hikajat*, pp. 75, 85, 90, 95, 97, 99.

taken from Islamic tradition.³⁵ This is the concept known as “the unity of both politics and religion within the one community,” meaning that there is a need to unite an Islamic community (*ummah*) under a ruler who possesses both political and religious authorities.

The notion that the sulṭān was to hold the highest political authority and his epithet as *walī Allāh* shows the respect that Ḥamzah had towards the ruler. Even Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ri‘āyat Shāh (d. 1604) was granted the highest ṣūfistic epithet of *sempurna kāmīl* and *al-mukammīl*,³⁶ which also means *al-insān al-kāmīl* (perfect man). This very fact implies the close relationship that Ḥamzah had with the ruler. Another proof for this is the fact that he composed his poems, entitled *Ikāt-ikatan ‘Ilm al-Nisā’*, under the auspices of al-Mukammīl or, at least, was dedicated to this ruler.³⁷

The cordial relationship that he had with sulṭān seemed to have reached its highest point when Ḥamzah was also involved at court and most likely held a position of *shaykh al-Islām*. John Davis, who visited Aceh in 1599, wrote that there was a religious leader who was highly respected by both the ruler and the people.³⁸ When paying a visit to the sulṭān in September 1599, Frederick de Houtman witnessed a *shaykh* acting as his chief councillor, and it was this *shaykh* who later (January 1601) attempted to convert him into Islam, after the same effort made by *qādīs* had failed.³⁹ When conducting a trade negotiation with Aceh’s

³⁵ A claim that this tradition originates from Hindu tradition, as suggested by L.F. Brakel, seems to be an exaggeration. This Dutch scholar writes: “As such, he [Sulṭān] approximates closely the Hindu ideal of the *Cakrauatin*, who rules the world and represents an incarnation of Visnu.” See L.F. Brakel, “State and Statecraft in 17th Century Aceh,” in A. Reid and L. Castle, eds., *Pre-Colonial State System in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), p. 58.

³⁶ Al-Attas suggests that *al-mukammīl* should be read as *al-mukammal*, referring to Sayyid al-Mukammal. This change was made for the purpose of fitting it “into the rhyme scheme.” See his “New Light,” p. 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ John Davis, *The Voyages and Works of John Davis, the Navigator*, ed. by A.H. Markam (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 151.

³⁹ W.S. Unger, ed., *De oudste reizen van de zeeuwen naar Oost Indies, 1589-1604* (‘s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), pp. 74, 96-102. See also, Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam, Contacts and Conflicts 1596-1950*, trans. by Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, B.U., 1993), pp. 11-16.

authorities in 1602, James Lancaster, a British envoy, dealt with – whom he called - a “chief bishop” of the state, known in Aceh as *shaykh al-Islām*.⁴⁰ Perhaps the religious and political figure mentioned in the report was the same person, and he was most probably Ḥamzah Faṅṣūrī. To claim that the person was Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī seems unrealistic, since at that time he was still at the earliest stages of his career.

The close relation that Ḥamzah had with the sultān and his significant religious and political role in the state did not however have any impact on his role as a spiritual leader of the people at large. He repeatedly urged his people to keep distance from tyrannical rulers. He writes:

*Abo segala kamu yang menjadi faqīr,
Jangan bersuḥbat dengan raja dan amīr,
Karena Rasūl Allāh bashīr dan nadhīr,
Melarang kita ṣaghīr dan kabīr.*⁴¹

Translation

Oh all ye that have taken the vow of poverty,
Do not be friend Princes and Rulers,
For the Messenger of God, bringer of joyful tidings and warnings,
Has forbidden us to be divided into both the low and the high class.

Another interesting point concerning Ḥamzah’s relation with ruler is his views on *orang kaya*. He writes:

*Jikalau bersuḥbat dengan orang kaya,
Akhirnya engkau jadi binasa.*⁴²

Translation:

If you make friends with wealthy people
You will accordingly be spoiled.
*Birahimu da’im akan orang kaya,
Manakan dapat tiada berbahaya,*

⁴⁰ Sir James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591-1603*, ed. by W. Foster (London: The Haklyut Society, 1940), p. 96.

⁴¹ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XI, no. 1

⁴² Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 23.

'*Ajīb sekali akan hati saya,
Hendak berdakap dengan Mulia Raya.*⁴³

Translation:

All along your heart goes out to wealthy people
Then how would you not incur danger
Most wonderful to the heart of the servant
Is the prospect of embracing the Exalted One.

Literally, the term *orang kaya* means “rich men.” Indeed, they were traders who dominated the state’s economy. Yet it should be noted here that in the context of Southeast Asian history this economic status eventually brought them to their substantial political role in the state. This can be seen in their political behaviors. In Aceh, for instance, this elite group dominated several political positions, including the *perdana menteri orang kaya sri maharaja*, *orang kaya laksamana*, and *orang kaya raja lela wangs*. In Johor, they were also granted the title *orang kaya*. Perhaps the most important political maneuver initiated by this group in Aceh took place during the so-called “vacuum” era, i.e., the period between the reigns of Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ri‘āyat Shāh al-Qahhār (1539-1571) and Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ri‘āyat Shāh al-Mukammil (1589-1604), when the power of ruler was at its low ebb;⁴⁴ and during the female ruler’s reign, from 1641 to 1699. On *orang kaya*, Augustin de Beaulieu writes:

The *orang kaya* lived extravagantly, and following the affections of their nature were addicted to novelties, then were insolent, and proud. The great wealth their predecessors had left them, in lands and houses in the city, as well as gold and silver, supported this life; no kings have oppressed them nor foreign nation plundered them. The town was six times as populous as it is at present, and was so crowded that it was difficult to move in the streets. The wealth of the island being scattered in diverse hands, there was such a great number of merchants that there was no city in the Indies where trade so flourished. Moreover, there was no *Alfandaque* [customs office], or other duties than that of the *tjap*, so

⁴³ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XIV, no. 8.

⁴⁴ J. Kathirithamby-Well, “Royal Authority and the *Orang Kaya* in the Western Archipelago, Circa 1500-1800,” *JSAS* 17, 2 (1986), p. 263.

that merchants could do their business in a fortnight... The *orang kaya* had beautiful, large, solid houses, with cannons at their doors and a large number of slaves, both as guards and servants. They went out superbly dressed, with large retinues, respected by the people. Such great power very much diminished royal authority, and even safety, as the *orang kaya* had such authority and power, that when they tired of the domination of one king, they massacred him in order to install another. Thus, a king was very lucky if he enjoyed his crown for two years. If he lasted longer it was with such exertion and such obligations towards several *orang kaya*, that nothing remained of his dignity except his title.⁴⁵

It was towards this group that Ḥamzah warned his people to be aware of, for the religious commitment of this group seemed to be weak. He writes:

*Iqrārnya tiada ditaṣḍīqkan,
Karena tiada dengan sebaiknyanya.*⁴⁶

Translation

Their conviction has never been attested,
For it is not sincere.

Another dimension of Ḥamzah's life that is worth mentioning here is his social concern, especially issues concerning social stratification that existed in Aceh at the time. He, for instance, raised the issue of slavery. On this phenomenon, Ḥamzah writes:

*Abo segala kamu anak 'ālim,
Jangan bersubbat dengan orang ṣālim,
Karena Rasūl Allāh sempurna ḥākim,
Melarang kita sekalian kbādim.*⁴⁷

Translation:

Oh all ye that are of pious family,

⁴⁵ Augustine de Bealieu, "Memoirs du Voyage aux Indes Orientales," pp. 110-111, in Melchisedech Thevenot, *Relations de divers Voyage Curieux* (Paris, 164-6) as quoted in A. Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power in Aceh, 1550-1750," in Reid and Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State System*, pp. 47-48.

⁴⁶ Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XII, no.1.

Do not befriend the oppressors,
For God's Messenger, the highest authority,
Has forbidden all of us to become servants.

*Abo segala yang menjadi faqīr,
Jangan bersuhbat dengan raja dan amīr,
Karena Rasūl Allāh bashīr dan nadhīr,
Melarangkan kita ṣaghīr dan kabīr.*⁴⁸

Translation:

Oh all ye that have taken the vow of poverty,
Do not befriend Princes and Rulers,
For the Messenger of God, bringer of joyful tidings and warnings,
Has forbidden us to be divided into both the low and the high class.

The word *ḡālim* here refers to master, while *kbādīm* means servant. It is not the teaching of Islam to divide the community into social strata, such as both master and servant. This is what Ḥamzah meant when he insisted that “[Rasūl Allāh] melarang kita ṣaghīr (low class/servant) dan kabīr (high class/master).” Therefore, it is safe to suggest that the term “kabīr” here refers to both aristocrats and *orang kaya*.

Ḥamzah's great concern about social class seems to have been induced by the common practice of slavery among the Muslim community at large. The need for laborers for both trade and construction had significantly increased significantly the demand for slaves. Prior to the coming of the Portuguese, Melaka had a large number of slaves coming from Java. One of the Melaka businessman, Utama Di Raja, is reported to have possessed about 8000 slaves.⁴⁹ The Melaka people used to say: “it is better to have slaves than to have land, because slaves are a

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Braz de Albuquerque, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalborqueque*, ed., trans. and annot. by Walter de Gray Birch, Vol. 3 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 109.

protection to their masters.”⁵⁰ It is also reported that in Aceh “the kings uses them to cut wood, dig stone from quarries, make mortar and build.”⁵¹

C. Ḥamzah versus Qāḍīs

Ḥamzah’s poems also reveal some information on conflicts taking place between himself and qāḍīs. Strong criticism launched by the qāḍīs on ṣūfīs was responded by Ḥamzah by, among others, asking those who follow the true path of *taṣawwuf* not to be bothered by the anger of the qāḍīs, so that they would be capable of achieving the highest place.⁵² Ḥamzah writes:

*Yogya kau tuntutan shurbat yang baqī,
Pada orang mabuk lupakan serabi,
Jangan kau takutkan gusar qāḍī,
Mangkanya dapat da’wamu ‘alī.⁵³*

Translation:

Require the everlasting beverage,
In the state of intoxication one forgets about the bottle,
Do not fear the anger of the qāḍī,
Then your claim will be high.

Ḥamzah argues that there is a grave mistake on the part of the qāḍīs in their understanding of the term *shurbat*, which should have not been interpreted in its literal meaning, but rather from a mystical perspective. He then states:

*Khabarkan ini pada mawlānā qāḍī,
Shurbat nin bening warnanya ṣāḥī,
Barang yang meminum dia mabuk dan fānī,
Mendapat mahbūb yang bernama Bāqī.*

⁵⁰ W.P. Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya Compiled from Chinese Sources* (Djakarta: Bhratara, 1960), p. 128.

⁵¹ Beaulieu, “Memoir de Voyage,” as quoted in A. Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 135.

⁵² Al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 21.

⁵³ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XIX, no. 9.

Translation:

Tell this to our lord the judge,
This drink is pure and its color transparent,
Anyone drinking it gets inebriate and lost to this world,
He attained the Beloved Whose name is the Eternal.

*Shurbat itu bukannya arak,
Di dalam api dunia tiadakan masak,
Dengan api dunia yogya kau jarak,
Supaya dapat minum sejelak.*

Translation:

This drink is not arak,
It will never be distilled over a fire of this world,
Keep your distance from the fire of this world,
So that you may drink your fill of this beverage.⁵⁴

Having explained the true meaning of the word *shurbat*, Ḥamzah recommended the *qāḏīs* to drink it, as clearly stated in the following verses:

*Minuman itu terlalu ṣāfi,
Yogya akan shurbat mawlānā qāḏī,
Barang meminum dia Tuhan rāḏī,
Pada kedua 'ālam ia ḥayy al-bāqī.⁵⁵*

Translation

This drink is most pure,
It is suitable even for our lord the judge,
Anyone partaking of it finds grace with God,
His is eternal life in both worlds.

The polemics was no doubt induced by different approaches used by both sides in viewing the term. Ḥamzah, along with his followers, viewed the term *shurbat* from a mystical perspective, while the *qāḏīs* saw it from its literal meaning as “alcoholic beverage,” such as *arak*. The *qāḏīs*’ great concern in this matter is very much understandable however,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

intoxicating beverages, especially those of *tuak* and *arak*, were widely consumed by society at large. For this very reason, the government imposed strict regulations regarding the production and the consumption of alcoholic liquors and harsh punishments were imposed upon those who broke the rules.⁵⁶

Another polemics between Ḥamzah and the *qāḍī*s concerns the issue of 'uryān (naked). Ḥamzah writes:

*Minuman itu yogya kau permain,
Supaya lupa engkau akan kain,
Buangkan wujudmu cari yang lain,
Inilah 'uryān pada abl al-bāṭin.*⁵⁷

Translation

Cherish this drink,
So as to forget about the garment,
Abandon your own being, strive for a different one,
This is the esoteric meaning of "naked."

And

*Ajī'ū butūnakum ma'nanya 'ālī,
Manakan dapat oleh perut yang tiada kbālī,
Wa 'arrū ajsādakum jika hendak kaucari,
Jangan pada 'uryān yang dibukum qāḍī.*⁵⁸

Translation:

"Go hungry" are words of a lofty meaning,
But how could they be understood by the satiated,
"Bare your bodies", but should you aspire after this,
Then better not after indictable nakedness.

*Walī itulah yang menurut firman,
Menyembah Tuhan seperti kata Qur'ān,
Tandanya wāṣil lagi dan burhān,*

⁵⁶ For further discussion on this matter see, Amirul Hadi, "Islam and State in Seventeenth Century Aceh," *Ph.D Dissertation* (Montreal: McGill University, 1999), pp. 223-225.

⁵⁷ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XXV, no. 8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Memakai pakaian senantiasa 'uryān.

Translation:

Those are the saints who in obedience to the Divine Word,
Worshipped God as they were told in the Qur'ān,
Token and proof that they had attained union,
Were that though clothed they were constantly naked.

*'Ajīb sekali akan orang bāṭin,
Da'wanya 'uryān dā'im berkain,
Mainnya itulah sempurna main,
Dengan dirinya 'uryān, tiada dengan lain.*

Translation

How astonishing were the initiated,
Claiming to be naked they were always clothed,
Exquisite banter on their part,
For to themselves they were naked, to others they were not.

*'Uryān inilah yang dipakai Nabī,
Dan Asad Allāh banginda 'Alī,
'Uryān inilah yoga kau ketahui,
Mangkanya dapat tawhīdmu qawī.⁵⁹*

Translation:

This nakedness was proper to the Prophet,
And to God's valiant lion lord 'Alī,
With this nakedness you should be familiar,
Then your profession of God's unity will go strong.

Indeed, it was in this mystical perspective that the conflict between Ḥamzah and the *qāḍī* originated.

D. *Taṣawwuf* and the *Shari'ah*

It is important to discuss briefly the definition of *taṣawwuf* and its relation with *shari'ah* in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the kind of *taṣawwuf* promulgated by Ḥamzah. There are several definitions of *taṣawwuf* given by both *sufīs* themselves and scholars. Abū

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 295/907), for instance, insists that “*taṣawwuf* is neither external (*rasm*) nor knowledge (*ilm*), it is all virtue (*ḥuḍūr*).”⁶⁰ Junayd (d. 297/909) explains that *taṣawwuf* “is that your devotion to God is not for any other purpose.”⁶¹ Sahl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustārī (d. 283/897) states that *taṣawwuf* “is to eat little, to seek peace in God and to flee from people.”⁶² In short, all the definitions given above characterize *taṣawwuf* as “the code of the heart” (*fiqh al-bāṭin*), “the purification of the soul” (*taẓkiyyat al-nafs*), or “the feeling of God’s presence” (*al-iḥsān*).⁶³

Another meaning given to *taṣawwuf* is “a quest for reality, an enlightenment or a gnosis (*ma’rifah*).”⁶⁴ This definition is provided by early *ṣūfīs*, such as Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240). In his work, R.A. Nicholson begins his discussion on sufism by quoting Ma’rūf al-Kharkī who defines *taṣawwuf* as “the apprehension of divine realities.”⁶⁵

Another understanding of *taṣawwuf* concerns the experience of *fanā’* and *baqā’*. Junayd states that *taṣawwuf* “is that God makes you die to yourself and live with Him.”⁶⁶ Jāmī (d. 898/1493) insists that “*wilāyat* means the effacement (*fanā’*) of man in God and his survival (*baqā’*) in Him.”⁶⁷ This is the definition adopted by Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624) when he says that “*wilāyat* means *fanā’* and *baqā’*.”⁶⁸

Al-Attas claims that Ḥamzah was influenced by early *ṣūfīs*, including Ibn ‘Arabī.⁶⁹ This can be seen, among others, from his understanding of *taṣawwuf* which was strongly colored by that of Ibn ‘Arabī who sees it as a quest for realities. This can be seen in his poems, as follows:

⁶⁰ Farīd al-Dīn al-Attār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 2 (Teheran, 1331 A.H), p. 46.

⁶¹ Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, ed. by ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf (Cairo, 1972), p. 552.

⁶² Al-Attār, *Tadhkirat*, vol. 1, p. 237.

⁶³ Muḥammad Abdul Haq Anshari, *Sufism and Shari‘ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirbīndī’s Effort to Reform Sufism* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 31.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶⁵ Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Arkana, 1989), p. 1.

⁶⁶ Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, p. 551.

⁶⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, as quoted in Anshari, *Sufism*, p. 33.

⁶⁸ Anshari, *Sufism*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ Al-Attas, *Mysticism*, p. 14.

*Jika telah kau turut shari'atNya,
Mangkanya kau dapat asal tariqatNya,
Ingat-ingat akan haqīqatNya,
Supaya tabu akan ma'rifatNya.*

Translation:

Once you are following God's law,
You have grasped the principle of His "Path",
Be constantly aware of His "Reality",
So that you may attain His "Knowledge."
Ma'rifat itu sempurna 'alī,
Pada sekalian Islam terlalu ghālī,
Itulah ilmu yogya kau cari,
Supaya jadi engkau rūḥānī.⁷⁰

Translation:

That "Knowledge" is superior by far,
And of immense worth to all Muslims,
That is the knowledge, after which you should strive,
So that you become spiritual.
Aho segala kita yang bernama 'awwām,
Yogya kau turut ma'rifat yang tamām,
Karena ma'rifat itu hakikat kalām,
Menyampaikan kita ke dar al-salām.

Translation:

Oh all ye that are called laymen,
Strive after perfect knowledge (gnosis),
For that is the essence of the science of religion,
Which makes us attain the abode of peace.
Ma'rifat itulah yang terlalu 'ajīb,
Akan pakaian walī yang beroleh naṣīb,
Barang mengetahui dia menjadi ḥabīb,
Kepada Rabb al-'ālamīn manzīlnya qarīb.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text II, no. 7-8.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Translation:

With that marvelous knowledge,
Those saints who shared it were familiar,
Anyone mastering it becomes one of the beloved,
And abides near to the Lord of the worlds.

*Ma'rifat itu yogya kau cari,
Pada jamī' al-'ālamīn tiada ia kbālī,
Jika belum engkau beroleh ma'rifat yang 'ālī,
Dari pada taubat naṣūḥa jangan kau ghāwī.⁷²*

Translation:

After this (mystical) knowledge you should strive,
References to it are lacking nowhere in the entire universe,
But if you are still devoid of this lofty knowledge,
Then stick the true repentance.

Having reached the level of *ma'rifah*, another station to be sought is the *ḥaqīqah* which finally brings us the state of being united with the *Wujūd* (God). Ḥamzah mentions this in the following verses:

*Ḥamzah nin jangan kau cari,
Bangsanya bukan insānī,
Rupanya sungguh fānī,
Wāsilnya dā'im dengan Ḥaqqānī.⁷³*

Translation:

Do not look for Ḥamzah,
His kind is not human,
His person, though perishable,
Is in constant union with the Real Being.

*Di laut 'ulyā yogya berhanyut,
Dengan hidup suwari jangan berkalut,
Katakan "Ana al-Ḥaqq" jangan kau takut,
Itulah ombak menjadi laut.⁷⁴*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Translation

Let yourself be swept away in the Lofty Ocean,
Do not be confused by this seeming life,
Say "I am the Supreme Reality"; do not be afraid,
It means that the wave has passed into the sea.

At this point, it is clear that Ḥamzah destiny was to be united with the One. This is important to mention here in order to comprehend his concept of the *sharī'ah*.

For Ḥamzah, the *sharī'ah* plays a significant role in Muslim life, as clearly stated in the following verses:

*Shari'at Muḥammad terlalu 'amiq,
Cabayanya terang di bayt al-'atiq,
Tandanya ghalib lagi sempurna tariq,
Banyaklah kafir menjadi rafiq.*

Translation:

Muḥammad's religion is very profound,
It brightly irradiates the ancient shrine,
Indicative of its superiority and the perfection of its way,
Is that it turned countless unbelievers into followers.

*Aho segala kita yang membawa iman,
Jangan sewaktu mengkaji Qur'an,
Halal dan haram terlalu bayan,
Jalan kepada Tuhan dalamnya 'iyan.*

Translation:

Oh all ye who are believers,
Do not recite the Qur'an at set times only,
What is lawful and what is forbidden are most plainly revealed there,
Clearly marking the roads towards God.

*Qur'an itu ambil akan dalil,
Pada miqat Allah supaya thaqil,
Jika kau ambil shari'at akan wakil,
Pada kedua alam engkaulah jamiil.*

Translation:

Take the Qur'an for your guide,

So that you may turn God's balance in your favor,
With the law for your advocate,
You will fare well in both worlds.

Kerjakan ṣalāt lagi dan ṣā'im,
Inilah ma'na bernama qā'im,
Pada segala malam kurangkan nā'im,
Napikan alam kerjakan dā'im.

Translation:

Perform the ritual prayer and practice fasting,
The explanation of "qā'im" is this:
Reduce your sleep every night,
Be constantly occupied with renouncing the world.

Ukbrujkan dirimu dari pada sayyi'āt,
Jangan taqṣī mengerjakan ḥasanāt,
Tuntut olehmu hakikat ṣalāt,
Supaya wāṣil adamu dengan Dhāt.

Translation:

Get rid of your sins,
Do not be lacking in carrying out good works,
Strive after the essence of the ritual prayer,
So that your being may attain union with the Divine Essence.

Ṣalāt itu terlalu kamāl,
Di dalamnya liqā' lagi dan wiṣāl,
Apabila lenyaplah daripada waham dan khayāl,
Engkaulah sulṭān yang tiada bermithāl.⁷⁵

Translation:

The ritual prayer is sublime,
Encompassing both meeting and union,
If you get rid of delusions and fancies,
You will be a ruler without compare.

The above quoted verses from Ḥamzah's poems raise some questions, among the most important are: What is Ḥamzah's concept of the *sharī'ah* in relation to his *wujūdīyyah*'s doctrine? Is it possible to combine the *sharī'ah*,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

which is identified with outer behaviors, with sufism, which is characterized mainly with its inner reality?

Recently, the *sharī'ah* is mostly defined as a set of religious laws intended to respond to the ongoing problems in society. This limited understanding of the *sharī'ah* has reduced it to be identical with *fiqh* (Islamic law). Indeed, the *sharī'ah* has a wider concept as it covers religious teachings intended to govern all aspects of human life.⁷⁶ In general, the concept of the *sharī'ah* given by *ṣūfī* seems to be different from one to another. Some of them view the *sharī'ah* as form (*sūrah*), not reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of the life of Muslims. From this perspective, reality exists outside of the *sharī'ah*. Others believe that there are no other realities outside the *sharī'ah*. In other words, the *sharī'ah* is both form (*sūrah*) and reality (*ḥaqīqah*). Among the prominent proponents of this concept is Ahmad Sirhindī.

Born in India in 971/1564, Sirhindī was a *ṣūfī*, who was also known as *mujaddid al-alf al-thānī* (the reformer of the second millennium). He was a prolific writer who composed several works, including topics concerning the concept of *nubuwwah* and *wilāyah*, the relation between the *sharī'ah* and the *ṭarīqah*, and theories of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat al-shuhūd*.⁷⁷ Sirhindī perceive the term *sharī'ah* as “the usual sense of the rules and regulations of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah concerning worship and rites, morals and society, economy and government, along with the elaboration and applications of these rules by scholars which agree with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.” The *sharī'ah*, for him, also had a wider concept that “along with the rules and laws also includes faith and belief, values and ideals, as well as the Prophet's way to cultivate piety and achieve God's pleasure. In other words, the *sharī'ah* means everything which God has prescribed (*shara'a*) directly or through the Prophet, and is identical with the Prophetic religion.”⁷⁸ By this concept of the *sharī'ah* Sirhindī developed the idea which sees the *sharī'ah* as a reality. To this *'alim*, there is no other reality outside the *sharī'ah*. Therefore, the *ṣūfī*

⁷⁶ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. “Islamic Law: Shari'ah.”

⁷⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. “Ahmad Sirhindī.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

ṭarīqab for him “is only a means to achieve the realities of religious life as defined by the *sharī‘ab*.”⁷⁹

It is on this salient conception of the *sharī‘ab* that the difference between Ḥamzah and Sirhindī is seen. In his poems Ḥamzah writes:

*Sharī‘at akan tirainya,
Ṭarīqat akan bidainya,
Ḥaqīqat akan ripainya,
Ma‘rifat yang waṣīl akan isainya.*⁸⁰

Translation:

The sacred law is its curtain,
The Path its blind,
Reality its stake (?),
Uniting gnosis its content.

*Sharī‘at akan katamu,
Ṭarīqat akan kerjamu,
Ḥaqīqat akan anggamu,
Mangkanya sampai wāḥid namamu.*⁸¹

Translation:

Take the law for your word,
The Path for your doings,
The Reality for the object of reflection,
Then your name will be “One.”

The above verses reveal that, for Ḥamzah, the *sharī‘ab* is only a means to attain a unity with God (*waḥdāniyyah*), as the destiny of human being. This is the truth, an idea which was also promulgated by Ibn ‘Arabī earlier. While for Sirhindī, as mentioned above, human being are to behave in accordance with the prescriptions laid down in the *sharī‘ab*. Therefore, *ṭarīqab* is only a means to achieve the human destiny as prescribed in the *sharī‘ab*.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁸⁰ Drewes and Brakel, *The Poems*, Text XXVI, no. 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

E. Postscript

The extreme scarcity of sources constitutes the main obstacle in one's efforts at conducting a comprehensive study on Ḥamzah Faṅṣūrī as a historical figure. The foregoing discussion has attempted to explore — no matter how small they are — few aspects of the life of this *ṣūfī*-poet. On one hand, some of his polemical poems might imply Ḥamzah's cynical attitudes towards ruler and his officials. Yet, in general his relation with the center of power seems to be in harmony. His main concern however was the salvation of the people at large, as evident in his vigorous religious appeals, albeit most of the time this had to be done by criticizing rulers and state's dignitaries. Being an *'ālim*, Ḥamzah was expected to behave this way. Therefore, one sees Ḥamzah who once praised and even attributed the highest *ṣūfīstic* authority to the sulṭān as a *walī*, but at the same time was critical towards the misconduct of rulers and state's dignitaries.

Even though it is still premature, there is every reason to believe that Ḥamzah occupied the highest religious authority in Aceh as *shaykh al-Islām*, a position later held by Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī and 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkilī. This office indeed had its both religious and political implication. It is from this perspective that one has to examine the reason behind Ḥamzah's success in propagating his teachings among the community at large, and even the *wujūdīyyah* was adopted by the Acehnese state as its official religious doctrine. This would not have been possible without cordial relation that Ḥamzah had had with the center of power and, most importantly, the respect that the state had showed towards the doctrine and its proponent.

The support shown by Iskandar Muda (r. 1607-1636), the strongest ruler in Acehnese history, was also significant. It was this ruler who later appointed Ḥamzah's student, Shams al-Dīn (d. 1630), to hold the office of *shaykh al-Islām* and to act as his chief chancellor and deputy. The significant role that Shams al-Dīn played in the state — both religious and political — in turn helped intensify the popularity of the *wujūdīyyah* doctrine. This fact alone constitutes enough reason behind the failure of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658) in his mission to vanquish Acehnese

“heterodox” mystical practices, which he termed “the deviant and straying *wujūdīyyah*” (*wujūdīyyah yang zindīq dan mulhid*).⁸² This was despite the fact that he had gained full support from the center of power and was therefore able to implement his harsh policies: issuing a *fatwā* (legal ruling) defining *wujūdīyyah* followers as disbelievers, condemning their leaders to death, and burning their works before the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque.⁸³ In the final analysis, it can be observed that the strong influence that Ḥamzah had in Aceh throughout the 17th century was shown in the short period that al-Rānirī had in Aceh (around 7 years, from 1637 to 1644) and the revival of the *wujūdīyyah* to be the official state’s religious doctrine. Indeed, in 1644, al-Rānirī lost the ruler’s patronage and was eventually forced to leave the country. Another ‘*alim*, Sayfal-Rijāl who was himself a *wujūdīyyah* proponent, assumed the position.⁸⁴

⁸² Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī, *Tibyān fī Ma’rifat al-Adyān*, reproduced in facsimile in *Twee Maleise geschriften van Nūruddīn Ar-Raniry*, ed. by P. Voorhoeve (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955), p. 3.

⁸³ See al-Rānirī, *Tibyān*, p. 5; and his al-Fath al-Mubīn ‘alā al-Mulhidīn (1068/1657). MS in Ahmad Daudy’s personal collection (Banda Aceh), copied in 1279, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁴ P. Voorhoeve, “Van en over Nūruddin Al-Rānirī,” BKI 107 (1951), 353; Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Nuruddin Ar-Raniry* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1983), p. 45.

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