

Al-Ghazzali's Influence on Malay Thinkers: A Study of Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani

Alhamdulillah, as part of our initiative for the revival of the Islamic intellectual, spiritual and civilizational traditions, we are pleased to announce our latest book, "Al-Ghazzali's Influence on Malay Thinkers: A Study of Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani" authored by Dr. Megawati Moris from IIUM.

Awareness and appreciation of our great knowledge traditions seem very much lacking in our present day Muslims thus resulting in a loss of identity and sense of belonging and pride towards our own intellectual legacy. The cutting off of Muslims from their heritage within the larger and longer knowledge traditions has caused myopic or nearsighted views of Islam which are mainly confined and biased to only the very recent "chaotic and indisciplined" of so called "reformist-led socio-political development" mentality of the 20th century Islam.

This latest book is an attempt to remedy this destructive and disastrous mindset by introducing one of the great scholars in the Malay world - Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani whose ways of knowledge were deeply rooted in the al-Ghazzali's intellectual and spiritual traditions.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani without any doubt was one of the great scholars in the Malay world and even in some parts of the Arab world such as in the Hijaz and Egypt during his time. Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad's works on al-Ghazzali really surpassed other scholars in this region. Thus to elevate Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad as "al-Ghazzali of the Malay world" would not be an exaggeration even though certainly he did not achieve the high status and recognition as al-Ghazzali did worldwide as well as in all the sciences as a scholar.

It's not an exaggeration because he stood in the same tradition as al-Ghazzali did and was well-known for it in the Malay world and parts of the Arab world such as in the Hijaz and Egypt. Hence, he was "the al-Ghazzali of the Malay world" since he was an important representative of the same traditions in tasawwuf, kalam and fiqh which al-Ghazzali belonged. Besides and more importantly he was one of the foremost commentators and transmitters of al-Ghazzali's teachings in the Malay world until today to the extent one would say that the Malays knew and understood al-Ghazzali's teachings through his exposition and teachings.

We hope the publication of this book will give a renewed interest and a greater sense of appreciation on how deep and closely connected the Islamic teachings in the Malay world were to the centers of Islamic intellectual, spiritual and civilizational traditions more than 1000 years ago. It is our goal to revive and draw from this Malay Islamic intellectual and spiritual traditions

to tackle the literalism and liberalism trends - the outcomes of both ignorance and arrogance about the Islamic intellectual, spiritual and civilizational traditions which are essentially two sides of the same coin - facing our Muslim society today. Wallahu'alam.

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