

Tok Pulau Manis: Pioneer of Fiqh writings in the Malay Peninsular

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Received: September 11, 2014 Accepted: September 26, 2014 Online Published: November 29, 2014

doi:10.5539/ass.v11n1p84

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n1p84>

Abstract

The proselytising of Islam in the Malay Peninsular depended on the earnestness of the classical Islamic scholars. The spreading of Islam was done through religious talks, Islamic studies classes, and through their writings. Syeikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, also known as Tok Pulau Manis is one of the classical Islamic scholars that was born in the state of Terengganu, which was active in producing religious books especially in the field of fiqh and taşawwuf. However, most of the recent generations are not aware of his legacy and contributions in the spreading of Islam. Therefore, this article attempts to study his life and academic background, and highlights his contribution as one of the earliest classical Islamic scholars that produced fiqh writings in the Malay Peninsula. The result of this study finds that Tok Pulau Manis is an esteemed scholar, which was hold in high regard by the dignitaries including the Sultan Zainal Abidin I himself. His involvement in producing fiqh writings in Jāwī during the 17 and 18th century had placed him as one of the pioneers of the fiqh writing in the Malay Peninsula.

Keywords: Tok Pulau Manis, pioneer, Fiqh writings, Malay Peninsula

1. Introduction

Islam has been found having its root in the Malay Archipelago since 7AD with the emigration of Arabs to Java. In the Malaysian Peninsula (formerly known as Malay Peninsula), the spread of Islam has begun since 14AD. The discovery of a stone tablet in Terengganu in 1303AD has proved that the rulers and their subjects alike in the Malay Peninsula have practised the Shari'ah (Islamic laws) at that time. Next, Islam is becoming more popular in the Malay Archipelago with the intensive efforts by Islamic scholars, both locals and internationals who came from cities such as Baghdad, Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. These Islamic scholars not only preach orally, but also produced writings that encompass wide-ranging fields of Islamic knowledge. Religious-based writings in the Malay Peninsula peaked during the 17th century following the intensive missionary scene that was happening in the Malay Archipelago, which centred in Aceh (Mahayudin, 2000).

Fiqh was one of the important fields to be learned and practiced by Muslims. Since the coming of Islam during the 17th century, classical fiqh writings in Malay were hard to come by and making it hard for the Malays to acquire religious-based writings in their native language. Apart from the lectures that were given by Islamic scholars at that time, Muslims need religious books in Malay as reference points. In dealing with the shortage of religious references in Malay, Tok Pulau Manis has produced his writings in Malay.

2. Method

For this study, the data was collected from various sources namely classical books, hadith, manuscripts of *Kitab al-Kifāyah* and also article journals. To get the data about the background of Tok Pulau Manis, we use an interview method. We have interviewed Tuan Guru Sheikh Tok Ku Ibrahim Mohamad, Principal of Pondok Pulau Manis, at Kampung Pulau Manis, Kuala Terengganu and Ismail bin Embong, who is one of the 8th generation of Syeikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah. We analyse the data by inductive and deductive methods. We then coded the data into specific themes as described below.

3. Birth and Demise of Tok Pulau Manis

Tok Pulau Manis is an Islamic scholar from Terengganu whose lineage that can be traced to scholars that hailed from Baghdad. According to the inscription on his grave in Kampung Pulau Manis, Kuala Terengganu, Tok Pulau Manis was born in the year 1089H/1678AD and died 1149H/1736AD. These dates show that Tok Pulau Manis died at the age of 58 years old.

However, there are contradicting facts that show Tok Pulau Manis was born earlier than the indicated date. In one of his writings, there is a note that indicated that he used to study with a renowned scholar Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani (c. 1025H/1661M- 1101H/1690M). Taking into account of his stated birth date, he was only 12 years old when his learned teacher passed away (Shafie, 1977). In the researchers' opinion, it is illogical for a 12 year old to have studied in faraway lands such as Aceh and Mecca. Stories narrated by his descendants and few other facts postulated by previous researchers indicate that Tok Pulau Manis was born earlier than the inscribed date on his tombstone (Shafie, 1977, Ibrahim: 15 Januari 2011 dan Mohd Saleh, 1983).

His date of death is also illogical and the agreed upon date by various researchers is in the year of 1149H/1736AD, at the age of circa 86 years old. This fact corroborates with information which states that he passed away in his old age (M.C. ff. Sheppard 1949:11). Narratives from his relatives also seem to corroborate this fact (Shafie, 1984).

4. Tok Pulau Manis' Studies

Tok Pulau Manis's studies can be categorised into two stages; studies in Java and Aceh, and in Mecca and Medina. His studies in Java and Aceh can be described as elementary stages while in the latter places can be described as advanced stages. His first teacher was his own father, Syeikh Abdullah bin Syeikh Abdul Qahar. Before migrating to other places, he used to study from the local scholars (Ibrahim, 1999).

He then continued his study in Aceh, which at that time was the centre of knowledge in the Malay Archipelago, before continuing his study in Mecca. Due to its popularity and status, Aceh is also known as 'Serambi Mekah (Note 1)' (Ibrahim, 1999). Tok Pulau Manis was known as an outstanding student of the renowned Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel (Azra, 1994). His study in Aceh was later proved by his hand-written copy of Tafsiran Baiḍawī that was written in Malay by Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel (Shafie, 1989).

Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel was a student of two famous scholars in Mecca, Syeikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī dan Syeikh Aḥmad al-Qusaīsī. Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel at that time was a religious advisor to the Palace, which was a learned scholar of hadith, fiqh, uṣūl ad-dīn, nahu, saraf, tafsir, taṣawwuf, and a leader of Ṭarīqah (Note 2) Shatariyyah. Contend that one of his students, Abdul Malik bin Abdullah is well-versed in hadith, tafsir, nahu, saraf, fiqh and taṣawwuf, Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel was then agreed to induct him into Ṭarīqah Shatariyyah (Shafie, 1999).

Tok Pulau Manis has immigrated to Mecca circa 1680s during his 30s. To date, there is no official account on the first Malay to have studied there. Nevertheless, past studies seem to indicate that Tok Pulau Manis is one of the pioneers. He then returned home and significantly contributes to Islam just like scholars such as Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Nawawi al-Bantani and Syeikh Daud al-Fatani (Redzuan, 1998).

Among the three fields of aqidah, taṣawwuf, and fiqh, Tok Pulau Manis is certainly an ardent student on taṣawwuf. The second most favourite subject is fiqh. His main teacher is Syeikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī. His writings seem to have indicated that he relied heavily from the fiqh books such as *Daw al-Shama'ah* by Syeikh Jalaluddin al-Suyūṭī, *Munyah Ahl al-Warā'* by Syeikh Aḥmad al-Qusaishi, *Minhaj al-Ṭālibīn* by Imam Nawawī, *Tatimmah* by Ibn Matūlī, al-Ḥawī by al-Mawardī and *Nihāyah* by Imam al-Ramlī (Shafie, 1985).

In the field of uṣūl ad-dīn, Tok Pulau Manis had opted for the approach of Imam al-Ash'arī which was adopted by *ahl as-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah* (Sunrites). This approach is also adopted by the leaders of *Ṭarīqah Shādhiliyyah* namely Abū al-Hassan al-Shadhilī and Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī (Shafie, 1989). According to his writings, Tok Pulau Manis does not only specialised in the above-mentioned fields, but he also had a deep understanding on other fields such as *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *mustalah* dan auxiliary fields such as *nahu*, *saraf*, *balaghah* and *al-sīrah al-nabawiyyah*. His vast knowledge in these disciplines has made him as an esteemed Islamic scholar (Shafie, 1985).

In his 40s, Tok Pulau Manis decided to leave Mecca for his hometown. It is hypothesised that his return was associated with the death of his teacher Syeikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī in the year of 1101H/ 1690M. This is because his return coincided with the demise of Syeikh Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī.

5. Contributions of Tok Pulau Manis

Subsequent to his return, he found that the locals were in great need of his knowledge that he had gathered in almost 2 decades of wayfaring to Aceh, Mecca and Medina. Tok Pulau Manis' contributions to the studies of Islam in Terengganu can be categorised into three; namely, the setting up of the pondok (Note 3) system, religious writings, and his capacity as the Palace advisor on matters relating to Islam.

5.1 Institutionalisation of Pondok System

Tok Pulau Manis had become a pioneer in the institutionalisation of pondok in Terengganu. He has built his home close to the Kampung Pulau Manis Mosque. The Sultan, along with Tok Pulau Manis have moved their administration and learning centres to Kampung Pulau Manis respectively. The move has made Kampung Pulau Manis as the administrative and spiritual capitals of Terengganu. Not long after that, students from the Malay Peninsula and its neighbouring countries in the Archipelago came to Terengganu to be under his tutelage (Ibrahim, 1999). Besides becoming one of the earliest centre of education, the study area was filled with books, which were used as a teaching and reference tools. He used books that he brought from Mecca, Aceh and some of his own writings (Shafie, 1991).

In summary, it can be deduced that Tok Pulau Manis is one of the classical scholars that was educated in the Middle East and gave significant contributions to his hometown. He mastered various disciplines and authored books in the fields of *taṣawwuf* and *fiqh*, which became reference books during his time. Further, some of his books are still being printed and used as reference books in the local madrasa and Islamic studies centres. His role as the Palace advisor has eased his teachings of Islam.

5.2 Tok Pulau Manis' Books

Tok Pulau Manis has not only acted as the mufti but authored books that were used as teaching tools as well as being reference books by the society at that time. Tok Pulau Manis has actually written few books during his times in Aceh. Nevertheless, those books were mainly reproductions and translations (Shafie, 1984).

With deep knowledge of *taṣawwuf*, Tok Pulau Manis has managed to write a book named *Hikam Melayu* during his study in Mecca that turned out to be his magnum opus (Ibrahim, 1999). It was a lecture on *Matan Hikam* by Imām Tāj al-Dīn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandary that subscribed to Shādhilī (Shafie, 1984). In the *Hikam Melayu*, it stated that:

“(And) in fact it has been requested of me by few of my *salik* brethren to translate to Jawi so as it would be advantageous to the new students, and I consented to do so, with the knowledge made understood by Allah Taala to me, I extended them by means of explication within my *kifāyah* (general obligation) to those new students and I seek refuge in Allah Subhanahu wa Taala's perfection and I hope to reap the reward bequeathed to the students of knowledge, in this world and the next with the blessings of Sayyid al-Mursalīn wa ālihī wa ṣahbihī ajma'īn”

The above passage shows Tok Pulau Manis' standing amongst his peers. This book was used as a teaching material in Mecca. Since Mecca during the time was a hub for printing and publishing Islamic studies books, this book was widely copied, printed and disseminated in the Malay Archipelago. This book is still in use in villages and cities alike.

Though Tok Pulau Manis is widely known through his magnum opus – *Kitab Hikam Melayu*, but he had managed to write three more books on *fiqh*, i.e. *Kitab al-Kifāyah*, *Risalah al-Naql* and *Risalah Kayfiyyah Niyyah*. Among these three, *Kitab al-Kifāyah* is the most voluminous since it covers the debate on various topics, *inter alia*, ablution, prayers, burial management, fasting, and tithe payment. Details on these books will be explained further in the following sections.

5.3 Appointment as the Royal Advisor to the Sultan of Terengganu

Since his return to Terengganu, Tok Pulau Manis has been appointed as the royal advisor to the Sultan of Terengganu. He has the capacity of issuing fatwas relating to Islamic laws and its subsequent implementation. For instance, he wrote a book called *Risalah al-Naql* to clarify on the issue of Friday prayer's congregation. It was because the number of congregators was insufficient to initiate such prayer. *Risalah al-Naql* was written by him to expound the opinions of venerable scholars on such issues (Shafie, 1989).

The narrative of Tok Pulau Manis' exploits as a mufti is also being passed down by his descendants from one generation to the next. According to Dato' Haji Ambak, Tok Pulau Manis is a *faqīh* (an expert in *fiqh*), *ṣūfī*, and *arif*. It was proved by the fact that *Kitab Hikam* was not merely translated by him, but it was arranged and analysed according to the reality of the time (Dato' Haji Ambak Bin Ismail, 1st February, 2011). Haji Ismail Bin

Embong asserts that Tok Pulau Manis is an ‘ulamā’ which was ahead of his time. During a ‘Maal Hijrah’ conference in Terengganu, a resolution was tabled to immortalise his name as a historic one. Finally, a secondary Islamic boarding school was renamed into ‘Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Tok Pulau Manis’.

6. Fiqh Books by Tok Pulau Manis

Tok Pulau Manis is one of the local scholars who have written books on fiqh in the Malay Peninsula. He was very keen on the subject because of the scarcity of reference book in his native language during late 17th and early 18th century. His books was used extensively by the locals residents and by people outside Terengganu as well.

There are at least three books on fiqh that can be attributed to Tok Pulau Manis, i.e. Kitab *al-Kifāyah*, *Risalah al-Naql* and *Risalah Kayfiyyah Niyah*. Tok Pulau Manis had written extensively since his days in Aceh but those books were mainly re-copies and translation in nature (Shafie, 1984).

6.1 Kitab *al-Kifāyah*

The second most important work by Tok Pulau Manis is Kitab *al-Kifāyah* that discusses uṣūl ad-dīn and fiqh. It discusses issues on ‘aqidah, and fiqh rulings on taharah, ṣalāt, fasting, zakat, animals that are ḥalāl, and ḥarām for consumption, and burial management (Malik, n. d.). This book was written with the locals in mind and is no longer in print. The researcher was unable to locate other version except for two books, which are in the custodian of National Library of Malaysia and Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

The literal translation of the word “*kifāyah*” means ‘enough’. Therefore, the title itself connotes the essence of the book—imperative and sufficient as a ‘basic building block’ for a Muslim. Kitab *al-Kifāyah* is a book that covers the comprehensive debates on the fundamental knowledge of a Muslim individual or otherwise known as fardh al-‘ayn.

Upon further examination on these Kitab *al-Kifāyah* manuscripts by the researchers found no indication of the official date of when the book was written. However, according to Ismail Che Daud (2012), the book was completed on Thursday 1138H/ 27th of June 1726AD.

As the oldest fiqh book that was written in Terengganu and amongst one of the oldest in the Malay Peninsula after Kitab *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (Zurita, 2014), the researchers opine that Kitab *al-Kifāyah* was written to disseminate basic knowledge of the religion to the masses of that time, inclusive of the tawḥīd and fiqh aspects. Since the knowledge of the Muslims at that time was rather limited and Tok Pulau Manis was one of the pioneering students at Mecca (Mohammad, 1998), indirectly contributes Kitab *al-Kifāyah*’s importance as a teaching tool in the proselytising Islam.

During late 17th and early 18th century, religious books that discuss on fiqh was rather limited (Shafie, 1985). The only book that was widely used at that time was written by scholars from Aceh and one of the most revered books was Kitab *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* that was written by Syeikh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī (1054H/1664M) (Abdul Kadir, 1996). The researchers also believe that there were no other scholars in Terengganu or other states for that matter, which has managed to write fiqh books except for Tok Pulau Manis.

The second most important book in this part of the world after *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* is *Mir’āt al-Ṭullāb li Ma’rifah al-Sharī’ah al-Malik al-Wahhāb* which was written by Syeikh Abdul Ra’ūf al-Fanṣurī (1024H/1615M-1105H/1693M). Then, came Kitab *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* by which was written by Syeikh Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari in 1195H/1779M (Kadir, 1996). Between these two books, Tok Pulau Manis produced Kitab *al-Kifāyah*. The book was seen to fill the void caused by the lack of reference materials especially on fiqh.

Besides that, Kitab *al-Kifāyah* was used as the textbook or part of the syllabus by the students of Tok Pulau Manis’ pondok system. Shafie Abu Bakar mentions the following in his research:

“This book was written for the teaching purposes in the learning centre founded by the scholar (Tok Pulau Manis) as well as for reference purposes by the locals.” (Shafie, 1985)

Kitab *al-Kifāyah* discusses aqidah and fiqh aspect of the religion. However, discussion on aqidah covers only 30% out of the total content while the rest of the book is dominated by the discussion on fiqh. This book can be divided into 12 chapters (also known as kitab). It includes Pillars of Faith Book, Pillars of Islam Book, Fiqh Rulings on Human Practices, Things that Invalidate One’s Religion, Ablution, Ṣalāt, Burial Management, Tithe Payment, Fasting, Qurbān, ‘Aqīqah, Dhabīḥah, and Dietary Book.

From the above chapters, it is evident that Tok Pulau Manis started his debate by stressing on the ‘aqidah of a Muslim. He values its importance by explicating the issue of *aṣ-ṣahādatān* (the two testimonials) and things that

nullify them. Once the discussion finishes, the author then proceeds with discussions on fiqh. It was preceded with the discussion on Fiqh Rulings on Human Practices.

Kitab al-Kifāyah was written with extensive reference to the highly referenced books in the Shafie Maḍhab. Its main reference was Kitab Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj Bisyarḥ al-Minhāj by Syeikh al-Islām Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin ‘Alī bin Ḥajar al-Haytamī, a faqīh from Egypt. Kitab *Tuḥfat* is considered as a masterpiece in fiqh and is revered among Shāfi‘iyyah scholars. Besides that, Tok Pulau Manis also used Kitab *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn Wa ‘Umdah al-Muftīn* by Muḥyi al-Dīn Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā bin Sharf bin Murri al-Hazami al-Shāfi‘ī or popularly known as Imam al-Nawawī.

Another scholar that was mentioned by the author in Kitab *al-Kifāyah* is Imam al-Ruyānī. Upon further scrutiny on books authored by Imam al-Ruyānī, there is a celebrated book that discusses various topics on fiqh, *Baḥr al-Madḥhab fi Furū’ Madḥhab al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī*.

Apart from these three books, there are other books that were used as references but were not recorded in the text. Among the books that share the same facts with *al-Kifāyah* text are *Fatḥ al-Wahhāb Bi Syarḥ Manhaj al-Ṭullāb* by Imam Abū Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, *Sharḥ al-Waraqāt Li Imām al-Haramain al-Juwainī* by Imam Tāj al-Dīn al-Farāzī, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj Ilā Ma rifah Ma ‘ānī Alfāz al-Minhāj* by Imam Shams al-Dīn al-Khāṭib al-Sharbinī and *Al-Mustaṣfā Min ‘Ilm al-Uṣūl* by Imam al-Ghazali.

6.2 *Risālah al-Naql*

Al-Naql literally means collection or copies. This is attributed to the fact that this book was the author’s opinion on the issue of minimum congregators for Juma’ah prayer. It was a culmination of several opinions of scholars on the matter (Shafie, 1985). The book was written as a guideline on issue of the lack of congregators during Friday prayer. The problem was more evident in remote places with small population.

Among the fatwas issues by Tok Pulau Manis in *Risalah al-Naql* is:

The first qawl (opinion) is that Friday prayer is valid with two males with one being the imam and the other is the congregator, according to Nakhai and Hasan son of Salih and Dawud. The second qawl is that Friday prayer is valid with three men, one being the imam and the other two are its congregators according to Awzai and Abu Thawri of madhab Abu Yusuf.”

Risalah al-Naql is a mere 23-pages book. The other available print contains 14-pages. The discrepancies might be due to redundancies and additional comments by Tok Pulau Manis himself (Shafie, 1985). This book was authored by Tok Pulau Manis three years after his return from Mecca and it made substantive reference a book named *Daw’u al-Samaah* by Syeikh Jalāluddn as-Suyuṭī (849-911H/ 1445-1505AD) (Ibrahim, 1999). His opinion was substantiated by attestation from the imams of four Madhabs in Islam or the early fuqahā’. It also used arguments derived from qiyās, narratives from the Prophet’s companions and ḥādīth from the Prophet itself. Further, while explicating the issue of small congregators in Friday prayer, Tok Pulau Manis also cited Kitab *Munyatū Ahli al-Wara’* by Syeikh Ahmad al-Qushashi (d. 1661M) (Shafie, 1985).

6.3 *Risalah Kayfiyyah Niyyah*

Just like *Risalah al-Naql*, the third fiqh write up by Tok Pulau Manis is also a brief chapter of 17-pages. It was named *Risalah Kayfiyyah al-Niyyah*. It focuses on the way of niyyat (evoking one’s intention) while performing ibadat (worship). According to ‘Dutch Catalogue of Malay Manuscripts’ by published by Het Museum van het Bataviaasch Genootschapvan Kunst en Wetenschappen in Batavia, Java, a copy of *Risalah Kayfiyyah al-Niyyah* was found at the end of Hikam Melayu book. This discovery proves that this risalah was utilised outside Terengganu (Shafie, 1984).

Tok Pulau Manis wrote *Risalah Kayfiyyah Niyyah* based on his teacher’s book ‘*A’māl al-Fikri wa Rawiyyatu’* and ‘*Miftāḥ al-‘Ulā’*’ by Syeikh Aḥmad Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh. *Miftāḥ al-‘Ulā’* was an excerpt from *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* by al-Imām al-Ghazālī. This book contains the discussion on niyyah as a central theme in any ibadat (Ismail, 2012 & Shafie, 1984).

7. Fiqh Writings of Tok Pulau Manis: A Legacy that Lives on

After the demise of Tok Pulau Manis in 1736AD, fiqh writings mainly centre on reproduction of the currently available books. For example, Kitab *al-Kifāyah* was reproduced by Ali bin Qadhi Haji Muhammad Salih Fatani which hailed from Pattani but was later relocated to Terengganu. In a copy of Kitab *al-Kifāyah*, it was recorded that he had finished his reproduction of the book in 1282H (Shafie, 1977). Reproduction work has started earlier but there was no official record of the copier. After the demise of Tok Pulau Manis, classical scholars from Terengganu have managed to continue his work. In 1891AD, a fiqh book entitled *Risālah Fī Bayān Ḥukm al-Bay’*

wa al-Ribā was written by Syeikh Abdul Qadir bin Abdul Rahim Bukit Bayas. He was born in Pattani circa 1790s (Omar, 1991) but resided in Bukit Bayas, Kuala Terengganu for almost 32 years (Hasanuddin, 2014). This book discusses on the issue of fiqh muamalat with specific reference to ribā (usury). He no longer discusses on the issues that was extensively covered by Tok Pulau Manis. Then, fiqh writings was continued by Sayyid Muhammad bin Zayn al-^cAbidin or more popularly known as Tokku Tuan Besar (1795-1878AD). According to Abdul Razak (2012), Tokku Tuan Besar has managed to write two fiqh writings, i.e. *Sullam al-Taufiq* and *Tuhfat al-Wildān*. *Sullam al-Taufiq* comprises of 6-pages and explicates on the questions of muafiq and masbuq in congregational prayers. *Tuhfat al-Wildān* however, was written in poetry-style on the same subject. Another fiqh writing by Tokku Tuan Besar is called *Kitab al-Mukhtasar*. The book was introduced by Wan Mohd Saghir Bin Abdullah (2000). Apart from reproduction works, writings on fiqh subject were on the rise. Another scholar that was contemporaneous with Tokku Tuan Besar is Tok Ku Melaka. He was also a fellow statesman of Tok Pulau Manis. He wrote two books on fiqh, i.e. *Hidāyah al-‘Awām fī Bayān Ḥukm Syarb al-Dukhān* and *Targhib al-Rijāl fī Kasb al-Ḥalāl* (Saghir, 2000).

8. Conclusion

Findings from this study show that Tok Pulau Manis is a classical scholar that has brought about change to the lives of Muslims in the Malay Peninsula, especially in Terengganu. He institutionalised pondok system in Terengganu has not only provides a place to study the religion for the locals but people outside Terengganu too. His deep understanding of the religion has attracted the attention of the ruler at that time, Sultan Zainal Abidin I to appoint him as the Royal Advisor on matters pertaining to Islam. The Sultan was able to solve various issues with the advice of Tok Pulau Manis. His contribution by means of his writings especially through *Kitab al-Kifayah*, *Risalah al-Naql* and *Risalah Kayfiyyah al-Niyyah* has clarified the rulings that affected the people of that time. His writings have put him as a pioneer of fiqh writings in the Malay Peninsula.

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Notes

Note 1. The literal translation of 'Serambi' in Malay is 'gateway'. 'Serambi Mekah' therefore means 'gateway of Mecca'

Note 2. 'Ṭarīqah' is a term for a school of Sufism. It involves mystical teachings and spiritual practices with the aim of seeking the 'ultimate truth'.

Note 3. Pondok literally means 'cottage'. The common practice is for the students to build small huts known as "pondok" around the vicinity of the mosque or the teacher's home during the entire study. The main objective of the pondok school is 'to instruct and emphasise the foundations of Islam and its religion practices' (Yong Zhao, Jing Lei, Guofang Li, Ming Fang He, Kaori Okano, Nagwa Megahed, David Gamage, Hema Ramanathan, 2010).

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