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ISLAM IN THE MALAY HISTORY AND CULTURE: ITS IMPACTS ON THE MALAY CULTURE, LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

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Abstract:

The origin of Malay language, culture and literature often being debated due to different reasons and interests. Some argued there are similarities between the Malay's practices, words and literature influences to the Hindus as well as Buddhists while some strongly refuted, saying that all aspect are solely influenced by Islamic traits. This research was carried out to prove that Islamization serves as the key factor in the Malay society's transformation particularly in terms of language, literature and culture. It is in accordance with a Western Philosopher's ideology, "a revolution from within" which stated that the Malay's strength was not attributed to its race, culture and literature, but it is because of Islam. The research methodology used encompasses the literature review and analysis of information obtained from previous studies. The data findings revealed that there were indeed Hinduism and Buddhism in the Malay Peninsula particularly and the Malay Archipelago however the arrival of Islam has resulted in numerous changes in the traditional Malay society. The religion introduced a new system of law and values, thus resulting in a significant transformation in the Malay worldview. Perhaps the most noticeable change it caused was the emergence and development of the Malay language and literature. Islam's arrival has also led to other cultural shifts in the Malay Archipelago from various aspects, for instance the learning development that was mostly driven by the introduction of the religion's holy scripture known as Quran which was written in the Arabic language. Following Islamization, the Malay society learned recitation of the Quran to enable them to perform prayers

and other religious rituals. Conversion to Islam involving all Malays in the Malay peninsula occurred without disrupting the harmony among the societies. In the political aspect, Islamization has brought about a new system of law and government.

Keywords:

Islam, History, Culture, Malays, Language

Introduction

Let us begin our discussion with the Malay origin and their culture. As generally known, the Malays are members of the Indonesian group of Mongoloid people who migrated Southwards from South-west China about 3000 years ago (Amran Kasimin,1991:21). They were the Deutero-Malays (Winstedt,1958:16) also known as the coastal Malays who may have spread out to the Malay Archipelago and formed the Malay Population in Malaysia and Borneo from the islands of Java and Sumatra. The first settlements of the Malays in the Malay Peninsula were Kedah, Kelantan, and Johor. The actual process of migration of the Malay ancestors from Sumatra to the Malay Archipelago, however, were being debated by several writers. (Amran Kasimin,1991; Baharuddin Ahmad,1995) In this regard, it must be made clear that the Malays are not the only indigenous race in the Malay Peninsula. Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that the Malays were the first group of people to migrate to the peninsula before the arrival of the Chinese and the Indians, aside from the Orang Asli, where the Chinese were mainly from the Southern provinces of China while majority of the Indians were from South India (Winstedt, 1958).

Regarding the culture of the first Malays, Wilkinson indicates that their knowledge on metal was excellent, judging from the use of iron weapons and tools, which also signified their high standard of material culture. Apart from that, they were animists who believed in spirits of various kinds that perceived to dwell in unusual objects such as big trees, strange caves, and natural forces like lightning and thunder. They believed in two types of spirits the good and the evil ones. Their superstitions caused them to be respectful to the nature as they feared the wrath of the spirits. (Amran Kasimin 1991:26) They also utilized their knowledge of farming and cultivation in their work. The early Malays lived in wooden houses raised above the ground by wooden piles to protect themselves from possible floods of prowling beasts. They lived in permanent settlements known as villages near the river or at the coast, guarded and controlled by a headman renowned for his personality, wisdom, bravery, and at the same time self-sufficient in food as well as other necessities (Duraler,1995).

Literature Review

To obtain the objective of the study this paper takes a qualitative approach through a literature review covering books, articles and journals. The data obtained from these sources were analyzed, screened, interpreted and categorized according to two themes which are the position of Islam in the Malay history and culture and its impacts on Malay language, literature and culture. This study also applies the content analysis method to analyses the sources that have been obtained According to Siddiq Fadzil (1989), there is a study by a western historian who

has divided the process of chapterization of Islam in the Malay history into four divisions; firstly, age of superstitions, age of Hindu-Buddha, age of Islam and finally age of West. Therefore, the new era is not beginning with the West but it showed that Islam has brought the new transformation from dark to enlightenment. Sometimes another term is used by Muhammad Abu Bakar (1987), that is the “Islamization”, “Awakening”, “Reforms”, compared to the term “Resurrection” by Muzaffar, (1977) and many others indicated the same process or concept. Actually, the concept of aforementioned refers to at least three situations (Kassim Ahmad, 1984). Firstly, it refers to during the existence of the prophet Adam who was sent as a messenger or prophet in this universe. Secondly the emergence of the prophet Muhammad Saw to us human kind and lastly the emergence of Islam in the Malay world. We found that a lot of scholars for the coming of Islam in Malaysia are said from various theories namely some of them saying from Arab or Persia, India, and China. (Fatimi, 1963).

The Impact of Buddhism and Hinduism Tradition in The Malay Archipelago

The early Buddhist influences in the north of the Malay Peninsula in particular, and the Malay Archipelago in general, was proven by the discovery of Theravada and Mahayana inscriptions in Sanskrit dating from the 4th century. A Buddhist shrine built from bricks, was discovered in Kedah in the same period. Another discovery involved the inscription in the Pallava alphabet used for Sanskrit language, dated around 400 A.D. besides the two Hinayana Buddhist bronzes of the Gupta style were found at Fengkalan and Tanjung Rambutan in Perak's tin district in the 5th century. On this basis, the influences of Buddhism were proven to be greater than the Hinduism during the period of time. By the middle of the 8th century, several Indianized states emerged in many parts of Southeast Asia. On the Indian influence, reports regarding the previous excavation indicates that the Indian-influenced regions in the Malay Peninsula included Selingsing in Pahang, Malacca, Kedah, and Perak, of which served as a proof of the long and continuous Indian influence. Hinduism and Buddhism provided the local ruler with a convenient metaphysical foundation much needed for the maintenances of the pyramidal socio-political structure already in existence. According to the Indians, the local kingdom was viewed as a mini cosmos, while its kings was seen as an avatar of Shiva, Vishnu or as a Boddhisattva. In other words, the microcosmic was related to the cosmic and the temporal to the spiritual, thus enhancing the authority of the ruler (Yaapar,1995:20-21) There was not much of either Hindu or Buddhist theology and philosophy being passed down to the people, except for the new motion concerning the relationship between the King and the subjects as well as the practices or ceremonies that came along with such conception. It is within this socio-religious framework the so-called "Indianized States" was founded and maintained within the archipelago for several centuries. The first of the "Indianized States" was Srivajaya, an empire based in the ethnic Malay area of Melayu-Palembang in South Sumatra which flourished from the 7th century to the 12th century, adhered to Mahayana Buddhism and was for a long time a center for Buddhist scholars together with Pilgrims in Southeast Asia. However, it did not produce any Buddhist-Malay thinkers or writers (Al-Attas,1969:4). Subsequently, after the rise of Srivijaya, a Hindu Shaivite Kingdom called Mataram was founded in Central Java. Then a Mahayana Buddhist state was established by a dynasty from Palembang towards the eastern border of Mataram. Mataram was revived in the 10th century which in turn had bring about the reassertion of ancient Javanese beliefs and the syncretic practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Javanism. In the later part of the 14th century, the last Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom in the archipelago began to decline and lost all of its power except for the island of Bali, which continue to exist until this day as the bastion of Hinduism in the archipelago (Yaapar,1995:22).

Indian Influence in The Malay World

The Malay peninsula comes into civilization by the 4th century, having absorbed much from the Indian influence. Winstedt (1961) stated with no greater exaggeration that the Malayan races owed to India in various aspects such as religion, political systems, medieval astrology, medicine, literature, arts and crafts till the 19th century. Two rulers in the Malay Peninsula claimed to be the descendants of Bichitram (Vicitram), a reputed kingsman of the Sri Maharaja of Srivijaya, a Buddhist empire (FL. A.D. 750-1350) that extended over Sumatra and the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. The name 'Bichitram' from whom the Sultans believed to be descendants are the Sultan of Perak and Negeri Sembilan. (Amran Kasimin, 1991) Citing the example of Sultan of Perak's installation, once the state bond (nobat) has finished playing, the new Sultan and his state will receive God's blessing which then called for the masse while those present would pay homage. As for courtiers, they paid homages by stepping two or three paces, with his hands raised similar to the act of supplication during each step, then dropped to the ground and shuffled forward with hands lifted until he reached the Sultan. Such act of paying homage was performed by some of the Hindus when saluting a superior. Apart from that, upon the trumpet sounds, all presents would cry out "Daulat Tuanku" (O'King lives forever). Before the Malays embraced Islam, the Sanskrit word "Dirgahayu" (long life) was being used in place of the word daulat. There are also few other examples of the commonly used terms when addressing the royalties such as 'titah' (speech), patik (pronoun I for the commoners when talking to the royalties), kurnia (grant), santap (eat), beradu (sleep), and gering (ill) which are still in use until this day. Not only certain traditional words, but the modern Malay music too was influenced by Indian cultures such as Ronggeng, Boria, and Wayang Kulit (Shadow-Play). In addition, some states in the Malay Peninsula contain Sanskrit names such as the capital of Pahang named Indaputra back when the Hindu has great influence in the region. At the same time, the names of the Johor and Selangor states are originally from Hindustani. (Amran Kasimin,1991: 28) The Indian influence could also be seen in matters related to pregnancy and birth. (Amran Kasimin,1991:129-132) Similar to Orang Ulu, a Malay woman observed taboos and restrictions as soon as she is aware of her pregnancy. Apart from the women, their husbands were also subjected to various taboos and needed to be more cautious in his actions as any untoward act on his part would result in 'kenan' or a prejudicial effect on the child such as formation of a birth-mark or other type of deformity. After delivery, the mother is required to observe many taboos for 44 days. The same practices were applied by Muslims in India before and after delivery to ensure the safety of the mother and baby, especially from the evil eye. Some of the precaution measures need to be observed by the pregnant woman are as follows:

- a) In order to protect the pregnant woman from malicious spirits, the mother would bring along ferrous objects, usually a knife, wherever she goes. The Hindus believed that iron items could ward off witchcraft and malevolent ghosts for example, bhutpret. Similarly, the Muslims in India would bring the knife used to cut his umbilical cord when bathing the baby, for its protection. Once the baby has been bathed, the knife would be kept beside the mother.
- b) Some pregnant women wear tangkal (amulet) or talisman provided by the midwife or medicine man to avoid being attacked by ghosts. Among the Hindus of Chattisgarhi, certain amulets protect the pregnant ones from harm, particularly from the evil eye (the glance).

- c) Sometimes, Malays use air penawar beranak; a type of water given by the midwife or medicine man to facilitate delivery, apart from many other charms to aid in childbirth. This method is common among Hindus and Muslims in India.
- d) Like the Orang Ulu, Malays have kempunan (a dilemma; the difficulty caused when every course open to one has disastrous features resulting from the cravings of certain people remaining unsatisfied). Hence, it is a must to fulfill a pregnant women crave for food. The Muslims in India have the same idea of kempunan.
- e) Malays, mainly rural people, practice the custom of 'adat melenggang perut' in the 7th month of the first pregnancy. This tradition comprises two ceremonies performed together in the 7th or 9th month as purificatory rites to cleanse a Brahman from the taint of sin.
- f) After delivery, a black string that has been charmed by the midwife is tied around the baby's wrist and ankles of which such act was adopted from the Hindus. Apart from that, a ceremony called upacara membelah mulut (mouth splitter) to wish the child's long life and prosperity was held. Among the Hindus, this ceremony is one of the purificatory rites (sanskaras), called the jata-karman, where honey and ghee (clarified butter) used to touch the baby's lips, signifying a welcoming gesture to the baby. Another type ceremony involves the king's child in his 4th month, where he would be brought out within three steps from the house, followed by a solemn ceremony called istiadat pijak tanah (to treat the earth). As for the Brahmin children, similar ceremony was called niskhramana, where the child was carried outside to look at the rising sun, followed by prayers. According to Winstedt (1961), the usual practices in Perak and Selangor in the past saw the boys resembling their father getting one of their ears pierced (tindik); of which the failure to do so could lead to sudden death of either the father or son. However, the resemblance of a daughter to her father or any gender of children to their mother has no significance. On the seventh day after delivery, a head shaving (cukur jambul) ceremony of would be held and at the same event, the name of the baby would be revealed to the guests. To the Hindus, such ceremony known as tonsure, caula, cudakarma, kesanta or khsaura that usually takes place during the third year and is still being carried out at present by Muslims in India. To conclude, it could be seen that that many ceremonies and taboos are believed to have been adopted by Hindus. Although these ceremonies are different from those practiced by the Hindus but the basic principles are the same that is to protect the mother and her baby.

Influence In Betrothal and Marriage Ceremony

Apart from the King's installation ceremony, the Malay wedding ceremony also consist of Brahmanical rituals (Amran Kasimin, 1991:133-139). The purpose of these rituals was to neutralize dangers, making the union safe, prosperous, and happy. It referred to the permanent joint life of man and woman, where the essence of the union was the joining of the married couple. One of the customs in Malay wedding adopted from the Hindus is the consultation with the astrologers or medicine man in selecting a wife for predicting their destiny, good or bad. Today there are some Malays whom the parents would choose a bride with the approval of their son. After selecting the ideal girl, they would check the girl's background to identify under what constellation their son's match lies. In principle, marriage is an occasion for great

festivity. In such forms, the Malays have adopted many rites and customs that appears to be a mixture of Hindu and Islamic rituals. Aside from that ceremony, the adat bersanding (sitting side by side on dais) is the most significant event, although it does not constitute one of the conditions to make the marriage contract valid. It could be said that a wedding was considered as incomplete and imperfect without 'bersanding'. Adat bersanding was believed to have been adopted by the Hindus of Chattigarhi known as mandap or mandva which was held in the house of the bride and groom. As a precaution, a medicine man or a religious man who are well verse in magic incantation accompanied them and took great care during the journey to attend either to the bride's or the groom's house. It is possible that such idea originated from the Hindu beliefs. Likewise, it is common among Malays to perform a henna-staining ceremony (istiadat berinai) as part of the marriage ceremony. There are two kinds of henna-staining ceremonies, where the first is called inai curi (stolen henna-staining), second is called inai besar (Public henna-staining). The rationale of doing this ceremony is to measure the purity of the couple because due to the beliefs that henna itself possesses sacred properties as a means of cleansing and protection. All of these is likely impact of the Hindu influence. Apart from that, term raja sehari (King and Queen for a day) used to refer to the wedding couple is slightly similar to the Hindus who consider the married couple as the god and goddess. Following this, they need to be protected against malevolent beings apart from shielding their bodies from being exposed to the gaze of an unknown person who might be a witch. Other similar practices have influenced the Malay customs such as the sprinkling beras kunyit and bertih by elderly woman in welcoming the bridegroom and his company besides the tepung tawar ceremony. The sitting position of the bride, which is on the left side of the groom during bersanding ceremony is also similar to the sitting arrangement of the Hindus during such occasions. It is recorded in Malay literature and folklore; the King's bridal procession circulates the capital of the country seven times and ends up at the palace. This ceremony is called malam berjaga-jaga (the night of vigil), which is also probably of Hindu origin. Yet, the use of the number seven in the Malay marriage ceremony compared to what is observed by Hindus in their marriage ceremony shows beyond a doubt the possible influence of the Hindus on the Malays. Other instances include the Malay peasant referring his wife as the person in the house or known locally as orang rumah and the concept of melangkah bendul (stepping across the thresh-old beam) all of which are probably taken or originated from the Hindus practices.

The Advent of Islam in The Malay Archipelago

According to Prof al-Attas, Islam came to the Archipelago couched in Sufi metaphysics. Through tasawwuf, the highly intellectual and rationalistic religious spirit entered the receptive minds of the people, affecting a rise of rationalism and intellectualism not manifested in pre-Islamic times. He believes that this new spirit led to the revolutionization of the Malays-Indonesian worldview, turning it away from the world of mythology, for instance, the ancient Greece, to the world of intelligence and reason. Prof. al-Attas has rejected the views of those scholars who considered Islam had been merely a veneer over the Malay culture but instead, he emphasizes that Islam has played an important role in transforming both the body and the soul (Al-Attas,1969:7; Ismail,1983:23) After completion of elementary education, students could further pursue religious knowledge from a teacher who conducted classes at the mosque, surau, and madrasah (Ismail,1983:27; El-Muhammady 1987:141-164). As for the advanced learning, there were Islamic institutions established in the Malay society known as Pondok. In this context, Werthein has stated that the Islamic faith had, in many respects, a revolutionizing and modernizing effect on the Malay Archipelago. As widely known, traditional Islamic education comprising Islamic religious subjects and Arabic language, is introduced after the

spread of Islam among the Malays. The religion was accepted by the Malays living in Malacca in the early 15th century. Traditional Islamic education was introduced to the Malays in the Malay Archipelago together with the initial spread of Islam in the region with the help of Muslim missionaries and scholars, including the Sufi scholars from West Asia as well as those from South India. Islam first reached the Malay Archipelago in the middle of the 14th century, establishing itself in Sumatra (Baharudin Ahmad, 1992).

According to Prof Johns (1957), a noted scholar of Southeast Asian Islam and Sufism, the Sufi mystical movement associated with the organization of religious orders had advanced Muslim civilization in the Malay Peninsula, adding that no Islamic community appeared until the 13th century when the Sufi orders played their role and became an accepted and established element in orthodox Islam. While in Indonesia, the Sufi teachers were wandering preachers who came from all over the Islamic world. Sufism spread in India before arriving in Southeast Asia. As such, it indicated that Sufism constituted the chief proselytizing element in Islam (Amran Kasimin, 1991; Baharuddin Ahmad, 1992). Consequently, he concludes that the Sufi movement was almost identical to the Islamic world during a period of 500 years from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Sultan Mansur Shah (145-1477) the ruler of Malacca (Md. Salleh Yaapar, 1995) was very interested in the mystical teaching spread by Maulana Abu Bakar who was the student of Maulana Abu Ishak a very knowledgeable Muslim mystic. In 1511, Sultan Ahmad, the ruler of Malacca learned about mystical teachings from Makhdum Sadr Johan. Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah, who ruled Aceh from 1588 to 1604 was called a Sufi saint, a perfect Sufi, and a leader of all Sufi saints. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Malay rulers of Aceh were the patrons of some great Muslim mystics like Sultan Alaudin Riayat Shah (1588-1604), Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636) and Sultan Iskandar Thani (1637-1641). During their reigns, there were four great Muslim mystics in Aceh. They were Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1600), Shamsuddin (d. 1630) Raniri (d.1657) and Abd Rauf (d.1690). Hamzah Fansuri was the teacher of Shamsuddin and they belonged to the same school of mysticism. (Al-Attas,1970) Both of them are traditionally con-sidered 'heterodox' while the other two are regarded as representatives of the orthodox school of Sufi thought. From the late 18th century to the first decade of the 20th century. Riau (Ibrahim Bakar,1994) became the center of Islamic learning. It was dominated by Islamic mysticism. The fourth Bugis ruler of Riau Yamtuan Muda Raja Haji (d.1784) was involved in Islamic mysticism. During his lifetime he had been considered a "keramat hidup (a living saint). Raja Ali Haji bin Raja Ahmad (1809-1870) was Riau's great religious scholar, historian, politician, writer, and mystic. His main source for Islamic mysticism was the teachings of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505A.H/1111 A.D). The mystical order of the Naqsyabandiyah dominated the Riau Kingdom from the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century. Another center of Muslim learning and education in the 19th century dominated by Islamic mysticism was Pattani (Ibrahim Bakar, 1994). Many of Patani's Muslim religious scholars such as Daud b. Abdullah bin Idris known as Syakh Daud Patani (1769-1847), received their Islamic education in Mecca. Apart from him, there are scholars and authors such as Abd Kadir Patani, Zainal Abidin b. Muhammad Patani, Wan Ahmad bin Zain Patani and Muhammad bin Ismail Daud Patani. From the Middle of the 19th century, Kelantan (Bakar,1994) and especially its capital Kota Bharu developed as the center of Muslim education in Islamic mysticism, Arabic, Islamic law, and theology. Among the well-known, eminent, and prominent ulama of Kelantan was Haji Abd Samad bin Muhammad Salleh (Tuan Tabal 1840-1891). Haji Wan Ali bin Abdul Rahman Khutan (1837-1912), Haji Yaacob bin Haji Abd Halim (Tuan Padang) Haji Muhammad Yusuf bin Muhammad (1868-1933) (Tok Kenali), Haji Wan Musa bin Haji Abd Samad (1874-1939), and Haji Ahmad

Manam (1834-1938) As has been mentioned repeatedly, Islamic mysticism was one of the main subjects in pondok education (Bakar,1994). The works on Islamic mysticism commonly used in the pondok educational system were Bidayah al-Hidayah, Minhaj al-'Abidin, Taj al-Arus, Tanwir al-Qulub, al-Hikam, al-Ihya, and Fusus al-Hikam and many more. The pondok teachers taught Islamic mysticism, and many of them were also Muslim mystics. Therefore, the relationship between the pondok teachers and their students was based on the relationship between a Muslim mystic and his novices. As a result, we may summarize here that the Pondok was also the main center of mystical learning in the Malay Archipelago. Besides the pondok, the surau also became an important center for mystical education. Concerning the mystical orders in the Malay Archipelago, Prof. Al-Attas (1963) has concluded that there are nine orders existing in Malaya. They were the Qadiriah, Naqsyabandiah, Rifaiah, Syazaliah, Chistiah, Syattariah, Ahmadiyah, Tijaniah and Alawiyyah. Such scholars were not only found in Kelantan but also in Terengganu (Bakar, 1994) like Saiyyid Abd Rahman bin Muhammad al-Idris popularly known as Tuk Ku Paloh (1817-1917) who was a great Muslim religious scholar and mystics. He belonged to the Naqsyabandiah order. In Penang, a Muslim mystic named Hamid Bahanan taught mystical education at Bayan Lepas in 1806. In Negeri Sembilan (Bakar,1994) there was a great Muslim religious scholar and mystic, Muhammad Said bin Jamaluddin (1875-1926). He was born in Mecca and received into the Ahmadiyah order before being appointed the Caliph of the Ahmadiyah order for the Malay Archipelago while he was still there. He was also regarded as one of the perfect Muslim saints.

The Influence of Islam on The Malays in The Malay Peninsula

The arrival of Islam in Malay peninsula has brought upon various notable changes, for instance in terms of the written language or Jawi writing in particular. The Islamic teachings on the other hands introduce a new concept of life to the Malays since a Muslim is required to act accordingly in line with the five pillars of the religion. Belief in one God, which is Allah, and His Messenger constitutes the first pillar of Islam, followed by followed by four others involving practical obligations namely prayer, fasting, zakat, and perform pilgrimage (hajj). In addition, Islam also observes the celebration of several festivals and significant events such as Maal Hijrah (new year in Islamic calendar), the 'Ashura day (which is celebrated on the 10th of Muharram), the prophet's day, the night of Isra' and Mi'raj, the night of Nisf Sha'ban, the festival of the Idul Fitri, and 'Idul Adha and the night of power (Laylatul Qadar).Concerning Malay Customs, there are many traditions that are becoming scarce due to the rapid development in the area and among them was 'melenggang perut' (swinging the tummy ceremony) which is a rite of passage in the Malay community that takes place during the 7th month of pregnancy to estimate the baby's gender, and to bless the mother and the unborn baby. However, the tradition continues to be practiced in rural or isolated area where the role of midwives and medicine men were deemed as influential and significant. After delivery, in Malay practice, the placenta would be buried underground where they deemed as fit regardless where the delivery takes place. The burial should be done solely because placenta is part of human body instead of reasons such as superstitious beliefs or taboos. Another significant changes in the Malay society after embracing Islam is their ways of welcoming the arrival of babies into this world, which is by expressing their gratitude God for blessing them with the offspring. As soon as the baby was born, the father would recite Azan in the right ear of the newborn boy and iqamah in the left ear of the newborn girl. Many would then proceed with tahniq (giving honey or any sweet drink after pressing it to the lip of the child). During the forty fourth days after delivery, 'cukur jambul' (head shaving) ceremony would be held, accompanied by Berzanji and Marhaban a prayer, praise and narration of the Prophet

Muhammad saw.). Some parents would hold aqiqah (a confirmed sunnah not an obligation in Islam) ceremony on the 7th day after the birth of a child, a celebration where the meat from the sacrificed animal such as cow, goat or sheep is cooked and shared with others including family members, friends, neighbors as well as those in needs. When a child reached the age of six, he or she will be sent to learn reciting Quran according to tajwid (set of rules which include pronunciation and manner of reading) from a Quranic teacher. Before learning Quranic recitation, the student would begin with muqaddam (introduction to the Quran) to familiarize themselves with the Arabic letters, wordings and pronunciation. Because of that, the Malays are more familiar with Arabic words and sentences to the extent of fluent recital of Quran and able to memories at least the short chapters of the Quran. Another custom observed among the Malays up to this day that was influenced by knowledge brought by Islam was circumcision performed onto boys between the ages of seven and twelve years old. In the past, there were many traditions or rituals accompanying circumcision ceremony for example procession where the boys to be circumcised by 'tok mudim' (local circumciser) were carried around their town or village before taken to the circumcision venue apart from holding feast at large scale. Today, many prefer to keep the ceremony simple by holding small feast of du'a Selamat (Prayer for safety) attended by neighbors and family members while some would only send their sons to be circumcised at hospitals or clinics, instead of tok mudim, and brought back home to recuperate. In regard to the Malay marriage, it is regarded as one of the major events in a person's life and the wedding ceremony is still the most significant part although it is not included as the prerequisites of marriage validation. The big day would usually begin with cooking preparation carried out in gotong royong manner back then, but most couple opted to catering services these days as it more convenient and less time consuming. Doa selamat (prayer for safety) would then be recited followed by the 'khatam Quran' (upon recital completion of the whole holy book) ceremony. Some practices remained till present, such as henna drawings on fingers, hands and feet on their toes, 'bersanding' (bridegroom sitting next to each other on decorated dais) and so on. Although these two traditions, among others, were influenced by Hinduism, it was hard to abolish such practices as they were deeply rooted in the society. However, unlike the Indians, the traditions are conducted without religious intentions or significance and purely out of habits. Concerning death and funeral rites, when a person is in a state of nazak (death struggle), someone will approach him and utters the sentence 'la ilaha illallah' (there is no God but Allah), in his ear while guiding and encouraging him to repeat after it. The family members, neighbors and friends would sometimes stay beside them while reading chapter of Yasin, praying to God that either the person has an easy death or speedy recovery. The burial would usually done as soon as possible for the Malays because it is required to do so by Islam. The body is placed upon a platform or bed with the head pointing towards the Qiblat. In order to prevent the mouth from hanging opened, a clean cloth is tied under his chin while the arms are put on the chest with the right arm on top as in the state of praying. The legs are set straight and close together. Quran would then be recited throughout the night near the body in preparation for burial the next day. After the body is washed thoroughly and wrapped in its winding sheet, the body would then be placed inside the coffin and covered with a lid as inscribed with verses from the Quran. When everything is ready the coffin is carried to the nearest mosque for prayers. The coffin is carried on the shoulders to the grave as a mark of respect. In this procession, it is customary among Malays not to walk in front of the bier. In reality, one is recommended not to walk in front of the bier as this imparts admonition, and observance of this custom is one of the last ways to pay homage to the dead before burial. After the tombstones are put in position, a small mat is spread near the middle of the grave for the Imam to address the deceased and recite du'a talqin. Before leaving the

graveyard, water in bottles initiated by the Imam is poured over the grave. With this, the funeral ceremony is over. It is customary to hold a special feast called kenduri arwah on the third, seventh, fourteenth, fortieth, and hundredth day after the death. A funeral like other occasions among the Malays especially in villages is based on the cooperation of the whole community. News of the death spreads quickly among the villagers. Everybody receives the news by saying 'We belong to God and to Him we shall return!'

The Influence of Islam on The Malay Language and Literature

Many Muslim scholars in the Islamic world were well versed in both Arabic and their native language. Besides that, the spread of Islam to Persia led to the rise of Persian Islamic literature such as Shahnameh by Firdausi (d.1020), the Rubaiyat by Umar Khayyam (1048-1131), Layla and Majnun and many more. Aside from Persia, Arabic literature affected other Muslim literature works including Turkis, Urdu, Hindi Malay, and others. According to Mustafa al-Sak'ah, Arabic literature also influenced the development of the folk literature of many nations. Therefore, when the Malays embraced Islam, Islamic literature from Persia, Arabia and India was introduced into classical Malay literature. (Hamid,1983). Albeit it was widely used in the kingdom of Srivijaya. Teeuw (1967) has stated that there is evidence from Chinese literature records that Old Malay was also used as a cultural medium since the 7th century. Mees (1969) has also claimed that the old Malays and Sanskrit were used as the official language in the administration of this state, apart from being the lingua franca in some parts of Java. However, according to Winstedt (1961) all Malay literature with Hindu influence has remained in the form of manuscripts written in Arabic script while Malay literature began to be produced after 1500 in Arabic script that is after the advent of Islam in this region. It means that it existed only in the form of folk literature. Therefore, Malay literature that was used by Malay society in the pre-Islamic times were mythology (Winstedt,1961) riddles, proverbs, fables, folk tales, romances and so on. As mentioned previously, with the arrival of Islam, the Malay language underwent a radical change. According to al-Attas, the Malay language may be considered the second largest language in the Muslim world. However, the Muslim world was not aware of this reality because there was no study related to the religion of Islam being conducted until the end of the 15th century and by then its vocabulary had increased tremendously due to the influx of Islamic concepts and ideas. At the same time, the writing system was also stabilized and solidified for the first time, in the form of Jawi script (Al-Attas,1972) Following the stabilization of the writing system, written Malay literature flourished very rapidly alongside oral tales and poetry of various kinds. Epics and romances of Indian origin which have been preserved up to the present, such as the famous Hikayat Sri Rama were documented in Jawi during this period.

Significantly, traditional Islamic literary works of many genres ranging from Hikayat, history, and theological treatises were voluminously produced. Within a short period, many literary and cultural centres such as Pasai and Malacca emerged in various parts of the archipelago. This phenomenal development in the Malay language reached its zenith in the 17th century when the sultanate of Aceh declared the Malay language as its official language. During this time works, Kitabs on theology and state craft as well as poetry and prose of metaphysical nature were produced by brilliant writers; most of whom were patronized by the Sultans themselves. Most outstanding among these writers are Hamzah al-Fansuri and Nur al-Din al-Raniri. Speaking about his mystical poems, Hamzah incorporated elements of Malay, Arabic, and Persian Poetry and introduced the syair genre into Malay literature, of which its source derived from the Islamic culture. It originated from Shi'r, (Al-Attas,1968) a form of Arabic Poetry that

emerged from pre-Islamic literature. C. Hooykas, Winstedt, Teeuw, L.F. Brackel, Za'aba, Al-Attas, and several others, however, held varying views on the origin of the Malay Sha'ir. According to Al-Attas, Malay Sha'ir is considered the first genre, which has been created by Hamzah Fansuri (1550-1600) who was also the earliest Malay writer of prose and poetic working Sufi literature. (Al-Attas, 1972). He further proposes that the four-line Shi'r of ibn Arabi in his works of Sufi Poetry may have been the origin of the Malay Sha'ir. This form of Poetry came down to the Malay Archipelago through his works of Sufi literature. In terms of classical Malay literature, other forms of poetry originated from a Muslim source, for instance, ghazal, masnawi, nazam, rubai, and Qit'ah. According to S.T. Alisyahbana, all these forms of poetry originated in Arabia and Persia. In conclusion, Sha'ir is the most popular form of poetry in classical Malay literature as well as pantun, seloka, and gurindam when compared to the ghazal, masnawi, nazam, rubai, and Qit'ah. In addition, many works of Indianized literature were Islamized and translated or adapted into the Malay language, in example, the words Dewata Mulia Raya and Brahma replaced with the Islamic God Allah swt; Hindu heroes and heroines given Muslim names as well as other essential characters in the Hindu epics and romances. Nevertheless, these epic traditions were disapproved by several Muslim theologians since it contradicts the Islamic teaching of tawhid. This religious view was one of the factors that encouraged Muslim writers to introduce to the people Islamic narratives and Muslim romances. Accordingly, it portrayed the concept of tawhid which is devotion to Allah, while rejecting polytheism and anthropomorphism that were common in the Hindu epic tradition. When Islamic culture penetrated the Archipelago, it brings along Muslim romances from Arabia, Persia, and India comprising stories about Muslim kings and queens with their princes and princesses. Mostly, the themes revolved around adventures of love, war, and struggle for justice like Hikayat Raja Damsyik, Hikayat Jawhar Manikam, Hikayat Siti Abasah, etc. Forcical tales in classical literature were also adapted from Muslim sources, for instance Hikayat Abu Nawas and Hikayat Umar Umaiyah. In classical Malay Literature, two famous works were written as instructions to the Malay Sultans namely Taj al-Salatin and Bustan al-Salatin. Taj al-Salatin (Hamid, 1983), written or translated by Bukhari al-Jauhari in 1603 contains Islamic instructions and injunctions from Allah to his servants. According to Winstedt, Taj al-Salatin originated from Persia, while on the other hand, the Bustan al-Salatin (Hamid, 1983) was written by Nur al-Din al-Raniri. This work divided into seven chapters dealing with creation, prophets and kings, just kings and clever ministers, and various field of sciences. In regard to the Malay Historiography, almost all of the works contain some Islamic elements either in style or in the subject matter such as Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai, Tuhfat al-Nafis (Hamid, 1983) by Raja Ali Haji and Hikayat Hang Tuah, which have the trace of Islamic influences in them.

Conclusion

To conclude, the advent of Islam to the Malay Archipelago contributed to the development of intellectualism among the Malays. Islam has introduced various disciplines of study, namely theology, philosophy, mysticism, logic, law, and many more. The teachings of Islamic sciences through the medium of the Malay language resulted in the Malays borrowing vocabulary and terminology from Arabic so that their language might be an efficient medium of instruction for these sciences. Therefore, Islam here played an almost similar role as it did in Arabia. During the Islamic period, Malay literature and language saw remarkable development where literature works by Muslim writers increased, and classical Malay literature developed significantly with various genres produced.

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