

Muhammad Abdul Wahhab and the Influence of *Salafiyah*: A Study of the Movement's Influence in Terengganu, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The debate on *Salafiyah* has been ongoing since the early 20th century during the reform (*Islah*) movement in Egypt and its neighbouring countries. The movement affected local Muslim scholars who had been studying abroad, especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, who brought its influence back to their homeland. The objective of this study is to describe the background of the *Salafiyah* that spread to Malaysia, especially Terengganu. It also aims to examine the views of several Muslim scholars in Terengganu on the matter. This descriptive study combines both literature review and field study. For the literature review, references such as books, theses, journal articles and paper work were consulted. Interview sessions with the selected scholars were conducted using a structured questionnaire. The findings show that this movement spread in Malaysia from the *Islah* movement in the Middle East countries and the influence of Malaysian students who studied in Makkah, Egypt and India and brought back these new ideas to Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

Salafiyah is an *Islah* movement founded by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1702-1787), descendant of Bani Sinan, one of the Bani Tamim tribes who lived in the central region of the Arabian Peninsula in East Hijaz (al-Nawawi, 1989). The spread of this movement was aided by Muhammad bin Sa'ud, ruler of the Arabian Peninsula. The *Salafiyah* group has been labelled by its

opponents as Wahhabiyyah because of the doctrine and approach that they subscribe to, which resemble the teachings of the missionary, Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (al-Azmeh, 1986), while its followers called themselves *al-Muwahhidun*, that is, oneness with Allah, or *al-Salafiyyah*, those who follow the methodology of the Salafs. It later became the main adherent of Muslims in Saudi Arabia and a few other places in Muslim countries in the dynasty of King Sa'ud, as a lasting and visible result of establishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This movement continued the reformation based on the principles of Ibnu Taimiyyah. The reformation was based on two main points (Zahrah, 1999):

- i. A pure *aqidah* (creed), free from the elements that lead to *shirk* such as tomb visitation, *tabarruk*, *tawassul* and *istighathah*.
- ii. Following in the acts and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and against acts of *bid'ah*.

According to Awang, the *Salafiyyah* movement received full support from the government of Saudi Arabia and spread to other Islamic countries such as Egypt, Afghanistan, India (1999, p. 6) and Malaysia in addition to several other countries. This resulted in very strong *Salafiyyah* influence among the alumni of the foreign institutions in their respective countries and also started a prolonged controversy among Muslim scholars. Debates opened up not only in mosques, but also in schools, colleges and universities.

Background and Development of *Salafiyyah*

Salafiyyah is practised in Muslim countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Indonesia and among Muslim communities in India. In Egypt, a number of Muslim scholars such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1834-1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Rashid Redha (1865-1935) imported the idea of *Islah* to their country. They were seen as reformists "influenced by modernism" (Abdullah, 1998, p. 163). The three scholars shared similar ideas of *Islah* that they had received from Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab. For example, Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (Jum'ah, 1990 both refuted *bid'ah* and *shirk* towards tombs and *wali* (saint) and encouraged *ijtihad* (independent reasoning).

For this reason, Muhammad Abduh was assumed to be partially influenced by the thoughts of Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (Jum'ah, 1990). Rosdi (2003) stated that Jamaluddin al-Afghani went to India, and subsequently Makkah for performing the *hajj* (pilgrimage). In Makkah, he met with many scholars of the *Salafiyyah* movement pioneered by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab in *al-Hejaz*. From then on, Jamaluddin al-Afghani initiated his *tajdid* movement in Egypt, which spread to the whole Muslim world. Said Ramadhan al-Buti in his book discussing the term *Salafiyyah* confirmed that the *Salafiyyah* started in Egypt as the result of the *Islah* movement that was supported by Jamaluddin al-Afghani and his successor, Muhammad Abduh. Their idea was to bring Muslims back to genuine

Islam, free from innovation (*bid'ah*) and doubt (al-Buti, 1990).

al-Latif (2006, p. 19), a scholar from Jordan claimed that Rashid Redha, a scholar, was also influenced by *Islah* "although he denied that allegation." al-Latif also outlined the statements of Rashid Redha in *al-Manar* magazine, pointing out that he was indeed influenced by the idea of *Islah*, highlighting the disagreements between him and Syeikh al-Azhar, Syeikh Yusuf al-Dajuri and Syeikh al-Kauthari on *Islah*; the similarities in his preaching (*da'wah*) with that of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, which revolved around the issue of *khurafat*, tomb worship, *shirk* and *bid'ah*; his acknowledgement of the reign of the Sa'ud family in Saudi Arabia; and the fact that his follower, Syeikh Abduh, was among the people who urged him not to adhere to the view of *al-Asya'irah* and *al-Mathuridiyyah*.

Hasan al-Banna, the founder of al-Ikhwanul Muslimun, was also reputed to continue the thought of *Salafiyyah* in his *tajdid* movement throughout the Islamic world (Rosdi, 2003). In India, *Salafiyyah* was introduced in 1804 in Bengal by Syariatullah, a scholar who used to study in Makkah. Upon returning to India, he formed a movement against the British. Meanwhile in Punjab, *Salafiyyah* was pioneered by al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Bazili (born 1787), who used to study with the *Salafiyyah* scholars in Makkah (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987).

In the Middle East, it was believed that Muhammad al-Alusi (died 1835), the author of *Tafsir al-Alusi*, brought the influence to Iraq. This was proven based on

his writings, which rejected the narration of *al-isra'iliyyat*, the explanation of faith based on *Salafiyyah* and his protest against *Wahdah al-Wujud* by Ibn 'Arabi. The same goes for his brothers, Nukman al-Alusi (died 1899), who defended Ibnu Taimiyyah, and Shukri al-Alusi (died 1924), a Najd scholar who wrote a book to refute Syi'ah's view (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987) and reviewed and praised the method by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab.

In Nigeria and West Africa, the *Salafiyyah* was brought by Shehu Uthman bin Fodio (1754-1817) via his mentor Jibril ibn Umar. Shehu Uthman observed and scrutinised the movement and its effects on the Arabs. During that period, the movement, called *al-Muwahhidun*, was in its peak, establishing an Islamic nation based on the al-Quran and the *Sunnah*. Upon returning to Nigeria, with the assistance of his disciple, Shehu Uthman started to spread the thought of *Salafiyyah*. Among others, the action taken was to combat *bid'ah* and *khurafat* in Hausaland (Jameelah, 1997).

In Libya, it was introduced by the al-Sanusiyyah movement, which was led by Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi (1787-1859) in 1837 in Mecca (Azmi, 1984, p. 20). It resembled the Salafi movement in its pledge to only the al-Quran and the *Hadith*, returning Muslims to "genuine Islam and rejecting any form of *bid'ah* and *khurafat*" (Ansari, 1978, p. 51). One of the main focus points of this movement was to transform the Islamic community into one based on the al-Quran and the *Hadith*. For that reason, Maryam Jameelah thought that

his movement took its impetus from Ahmad bin Hanbal, al-Ghazali, Ibnu Taimiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1997, p. 12). This was due to the fact that he was in al-Hejaz for 20 years pursuing his studies, while al-Hejaz was the centre of the *Wahhabi* movement during that period, suggesting that the scenario was shaped by the interplay of both movements (Pritchard, 1974).

The influence of the *tajdid* movement in the Middle East further spread to the Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia and Malaysia. It started in Sumatera, followed by Java Island and subsequently reached Kalimantan, Sulawesi and several neighbouring islands. In Sumatera, the person responsible for this movement was Haji Miskin and his companions who had subscribed to *al-Muwahhidun* teachings during their study in Makkah. It resulted in the establishment of local people to fight the Dutch for 15 years (1822-1837) during the Padri War. Although they ended up on the losing side, *Salafiyah* continued to spread throughout the island. In Java Island, *Salafiyah* spread through the Muhammadiyah movement founded by Haji Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in Yogyakarta. His movement later was merged with the al-Irsyadiyah movement that was founded by Syeikh Ahmad Sukarti. In Makkah, he mostly socialised with the *Salafiyah* scholars (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987).

Malaysia started to experience the influence of the *Salafiyah tajdid* movement with the emergence of *Islah* figures who were against the practice of *khurafat* and

bid'ah. Though it is not certain if the influence originated from Egypt or al-Hejaz, one obvious element was that the similar approach taken by the *Salafiyah* in al-Hejaz was also seen in Malaysia, although not comprehensively (Rosdi, 2003). Generally, *Islah* and *tajdid* started in Malaysia in the early 20th century through the influence of the *Islah* scholars in Egypt such as Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Rashid Reda dan Syeikh Muhammad Abduh. This was based purely on the relationship between the former Malaya and al-Hejaz and the the political and sosiocultural situation of the Malay community in Malaysia at the time.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

This study was generally carried out to investigate and analyse the spread of the ideology of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab and his revivalist movement in Malaysia and describe the role of local Terengganu scholars who contributed significantly to the spread of the ideology in the state. It is a descriptive study that combines both literature review and field study. For the literature review, extensive reference was made to books, theses, journal articles and paper work. Field work involved interview sessions with the selected scholars using a semi-structured questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Spread and Development of *Salafiyah* in Malaysia

The influence of *Salafiyah* was spread in Malaysia by local students who had studied

in Makkah and Madinah. It was presumably started during the reign of Amir Muhammad bin Sa'ud in Saudi Arabia. According to Daud and Ibrahim, these students tried to introduce and establish the influence of the movement in Malay communities, which resulted in "the enlightenment of the community" and led them to fight "elements of *shirk* and *bid'ah*" (1987, p. 38).

A similar approach was taken by the *Islah* scholars within the *tajdid* movement in Malaysia such as Syeikh Tahir Jalaluddin (1869-1956), Syeikh al-Hadi (1862-1953) and Abu Bakar al-Asy'ari (1904-1970). This so-called reformation movement was said to have been influenced by Muhammad Abdul Wahhab, who used the motto, "*Tauhid Salafiyah*", introducing the terms "*Tauhid Uluhiyyah*" and "*Tauhid Rububiyah*" (Abdullah, 1998). Meanwhile, in the view of *la mazhabiyah* (not following any *mazhab* or denomination), its champion, Syeikh Abu Bakar, was assumed to be guided by the thought of Muhammad Abduh. There is no proof pointing to a meeting with Muhammad Abduh, but it is possible that Syeikh Abu Bakar might have been influenced by Syeikh Tahir or the three personalities of Perlis known as *Tokoh Tiga Serangkai* or *Tiga Mat*, Haji Ahmad, Wan Ahmad bin Daud and Syeikh Ahmad bin Mohd Hashim. These three personalities were influenced by al-Hasan Bandung, while al-Hasan Bandung was influenced by well-known *Salafiyah* scholars through the magazines he read. He was also influenced by well-known personalities of the Middle

East, their equivalent of *Tiga Serangkai* (Rosdi, 2003).

Nonetheless, the *tajdid* movement was undistinguished during that period due to the strong influence of the orthodox scholars who adhered to *Asya'irah*. These scholars identified the *tajdid* movement as a deviant sect. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab's connection to the *tajdid* movement was through the relationship between Abu Bakar al-Asy'ari and *Tiga Mat* that was influenced by al-Hassan and Ahmad Surkati. These two *Islah* scholars, who originated from Indonesia, were apparently the advocates of Salafi Wahabi in Java. Abu Bakar Acheh and Van Der Kroef as Bisri (1999) stated that the *Wahabi* movement spread from the Arabian Peninsula, represented by Ahmad Surkati al-Ansari, a famous scholar. Ahmad Surkati al-Ansari, the founder of the Wahabi movement and the reformist front in Egypt, specialised in the works of Ibnu Taimiyyah and Ibnu Qayyim.

Views of *Salafiyah*

***Salafiyah* supporters among scholars.**

Among the earliest scholars who supported the *Wahhabi* movement were Sheikh al-Amir Muhammad bin Ismail al-San'ani. He was a contemporary of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab. Much of his poetry is concerned with *Wahhabi* views. Sheikh al-Amir recognised Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab as a revivalist who had shaped Sharia law in his time. He also insisted that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab had been on the right track by calling on the community to enforce Sharia law (Ibn, 1975).

Later, some scholars emerged who spread the same doctrine. One of them was Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi al-Baghdadi in Iraq. He had been influenced by his brother, Muhammad al-Alusi, a supporter of *Salafiyah* in Iraq (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987, p. 38). In his review of the book written by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab entitled *Masailu al-Jahiliyyah Allati Khalafa fih Rasulullah Ahla al-Jahiliyyah*, Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi al-Baghdadi had praised the contents of the book and recognised Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab's approach in spreading *da'wah*.

Among other scholars who supported this ideology was al-Zirkali. In his book *al-'Ilam*, he considered Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab as a Muslim reformist similar to later figures like Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Sheikh Mahmud al-Alusi and Jamaluddin al-Qasimi. He described Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab as a leader of the Islamic awakening in the Arab Peninsula and a reformer of the Muslim world.

The *Salafiyah* movement had an impact on later *Islah* leaders like Rashid Reda and Jamaluddin al-Afghani in Egypt. Rosdi believed that the relationship between the Egyptian reformist and Hijaz scholars might have influenced the spread of the thought in Egypt (2003, p.40). Rashid Reda described Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab as an *Islah* leader and a Mujaddid in the 12th century Hijri and connectors to fight Ibn Taymiyyah in the 8th century. Al-Sahsawani (1975, p. 6) describes Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab as a "reformist who taught men to purify the beliefs of faith, the sincerity of worshipping

one God in accordance with the Quran and *Sunnah*, [and] urged the public to leave the matter of heresy and immorality and to turn to Islam wholeheartedly. Therefore, many enemies rose up against him".

Makkah, which was central to the spread of *Salafiyah* ideology, has witnessed the rise of several prominent figures who were strong supporters of this ideology. Among them were Sheikh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani and Ibn Baz (Zin, 2001). Both were strong supporters of the *Salafiyah* as influenced by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyyah.

Other scholars who supported the *Salafi Wahabi* ideology and recognised the doctrine were Uthman bin Bishr, Abu Bakr al-Hussein bin Ghinam Ihsa'i, Zuhair Syawisy and Salim al-Hilali, Ahmad Amin, Prof. Dr. Umar Sulaiman al-Asyqar, Diya 'al-Din Dr. Taha Hussein, Abbas and Dr. Mahmud Aqqad Ahmad al-SarbasiI (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987).

Scholars who opposed *Salafi Wahhabi*. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab's movement and his ideology was opposed in his lifetime. Among those who opposed him were Muhammad Ibn Abd Rahman al-Afaliq and his brother, Sulaiman Ibn Abdul Wahhab. Al-Faliq had sent a letter to Amir Muammar saying that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab had insulted the Prophet's family (Daud & Ibrahim, 1987).

Among others who opposed *Wahhabi Salafi* ideology was the mufti of Makkah, Zaini Dahlan. In his book, *al-Duraru al-Saniyyah fi al-Raddi ala al-Wahhabiyyah*,

Zaini Dahlan raised a number of arguments and evidence in opposition to the ideology of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, especially in issues of *tawassul* and visiting graves. He also described the statement of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, who equated Muslims who visited graves and doing *tawasul* with the polytheists at the time of the Prophet, as being extremely outrageous (Dahlan, 1949).

Jordanian scholar, Hasan Ali al-Saqqaf, who opposed the *Wahabi Salafi* movement, strongly disagreed with Shyeikh al-Albani's opinions. Hasan al-Al-Saqqaf wrote a number of works refuting the opinions of al-Albani, including *Qamus Syataim al-Albani*, *Tanaqudat al-Albani*, *al-Wadihat and al-Basyarah wa al-Ithafima Bayna Ibn Taimiyyah wa al-Albani fi al-Aqidah mina al-Ikhtilaf*.

The opposition was not confined only to the Arab countries, but also spread to Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia. Among the most vocal scholars in Indonesia was K. H. Sirajuddin Abbas. He wrote a number of books on the differences, or *khilaf*, between these two movements such as *Isra' Mikraj*, reciting *basmalah* in *al-Fatihah*, *tawassul* and *Qunut* in *Fajr* prayer, triple *talaq*, *bid'ah*, *istiwa'* and *ijtihad*. He also claimed the *Salafiyah* as fanatical and radical, as well as proclaiming weird and controversial *fatwas* compared to other Muslim scholars.

***Salafiyah* and Their Scholars in Terengganu**

Although Perlis was noted as one of the earlier states to receive the influence of

Salafiyah, Terengganu was also similarly influenced by local scholars, and the influence subsequently spread within the community. According to Yusof (2008), the reasons for the spread in Terengganu were firstly, the influence brought in by students returning from the Middle East cities such as Makkah and Madinah and Islamic countries such as Egypt and India; and efforts by the Saudi government to propagate the new ideology such as the holding of *da'wah* courses and *tarbiyah* among the religious teachers in Terengganu.

The spread was focussed on the religious lectures in mosques, specifically in the area of *Tauhid* and *Hadis*. The books used were *al-Jawab al-Fasil Yatamayyazu al-Haq wa al-Batil* by Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Syarah al-Tahawiyah* by Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili, *Syarah Sahih al-Bukhari* and the *Kitab al-Tauhid* by Syeikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab.

The most popular Salafi scholars were identified as Haji Muhammad bin Abdul Majid al-Fatani (70 years old) in Kampung Gong Pak Maseh, Ustaz Awang Nasiruddin bin Abu Bakar in Kampung Batu 6, Ustaz Razali Tahir and Ustaz Yahya Tahir in Kampung Gemuruh, Batu Rakit (Yusof, 2008).

Ustaz Haji Muhammad bin Abdul Majid al-Fatani. Ustaz Haji Muhammad bin Abdul Majid al-Fatani (Personal communication, 2012, October 12), better known as Ustaz Mat Majid, lives in Kampung Tok Maseh, Kuala Terengganu. He was originally from Na Prodo Kupu, Pattani. He received his

early education via the traditional system in Makkah, from the Madrasah Indonesia and Madrasah Makiyyah, and obtained his *Aliah* degree in 1964. He then returned to Pattani and furthered his study in Egypt several years after that. He obtained his degree in *Sharia wa al-Qanun* in 1970. He came to Terengganu in 1983 before settling down in Kelantan for a year. In 1985, he worked as a teacher in Sekolah Agama Durian Guling and Sekolah Menengah Atas Sultan Zainal Abidin (SMASZA) from 1987 to 1993.

He was active in *da'wah* as a *mubaligh* (preacher) for the Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu (MAIDAM). Apart from his home religious classes, he also taught in Masjid al-Muktafi Billahi Shah Ladang, Masjid Hiliran Kuala Terengganu and Surau Haji Wan Endut in Kampung Gong Tok Maseh. He translated a few books and among them was a book written by Ibnu Taimiyyah entitled *al-Jawab al-Fasil Yatamayyazu al-Haq wa al-Batil*, which he used in his teaching.

Based on his educational background, he was believed to have received *Salafiyah* influence during his study in Makkah. He expressed that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab was the supporter of *Salafussoleh*, a group of pious predecessors, during the period of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) until the 4th century. He adhered himself to the Quran and authentic *hadis* while preaching. He was against the practices of *talkin*, *tahlil* and Islamic events, which he acknowledged as *bid'ah*. He rejected the idea that some scholars categorise those practices as *furu'*

(branches), while it actually revolved around the matter of *aqidah* and categorised as *usul* (roots).

He also stated that the term *Wahhabi* was given by the Syi'ah and British to the opposition group toward Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab. It was mainly because there were no specific denomination other than the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

Ustaz Awang Nasiruddin bin Abu Bakar.

According to his wife, Hajjah Rokiah bt Haji Abbas, (Personal communication, 2014, December 10) Ustaz Awang Nasiruddin bin Abu Bakar came from Kampung Bukit Tok Beng, Kuala Terengganu and settled down in Kampung Batu 6, Kuala Terengganu. He was an alumnus of Pondok Tuan Guru Haji Abbas, Kampung Tok Jiring, before he pursued his studies in *hadis* in Jamiah Darul 'Ulum, India. He successfully finished the study of *Sunan Sittah* using the *talaqqi* method and was awarded a degree. He continued his studies in *Syariah wa al-Quran* in Egypt in 1972, and came back to Malaysia in 1974. Upon his return, he was nominated as the PAS representative for DUN Teluk Pasu, and won that position. His excellent command of religious knowledge led to his appointment as Leader of the Dewan Ulama PAS Terengganu until 2003.

Being a politician did not deter him from serving actively in *da'wah*. He used to deliver weekly lectures in several mosques in Kuala Terengganu, especially Masjid Batu 6. He emphasised on the *Salaf tauhid* and asked the community to only practise what was outlined by the Quran and *sunnah*.

He was greatly influenced by *Salafi* during his *hadis* studies and in India. He adhered to Islamic law and rejected *bid'ah* practices such as Quranic recitation for the deceased, *talkin* and *tahlil*. In Masjid al-Taqwa, Kampung Batu 6, Kuala Terengganu, there was only a single *azan* during Friday prayer as it was the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Ustaz Haji Razali bin Tahir and his brother Ustaz Yahya bin Tahir. Ustaz Haji Razali (Personal communication, 2015, November 30) was originally from Kampung Gemuruh. He settled down in Kampung Bukit Besi, Dungun, Terengganu. His secondary school was Sekolah Menengah Agama Tok Jiring (1982-1988). He then pursued his studies in Ma'had al-Haram in Makkah (1989-1991). In 1993 and 1998, he obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, respectively, from Universiti Darul al-Hadis Faisalabad in the field of *hadis*. He was very active in *da'wah*, and operated a *tahfiz* institute in Bukit Besi, named Institut Tahfiz al-Mizan.

He also delivered lectures to local communities to improve their understanding on Islamic values strictly based on the Quran and *Sunnah*, and also the practices of *Salafussoleh*. Among the books he used in his lectures were *Tafsir Ibnu Kathir* and *Manhaj Aqidah Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* by Ustaz Ismail Omar, *Taudih al-Ahkam min Bulugh al-Maram* by Abdullah bin Abd al-Rahman al-Bassam, *Fiqh al-Sunnah* by al-Sayyid Sabiq and *Syarh al-Bukhari* by Ibnu Hajar al-'Asqalani. He also emphasised

on *Salafi* thought in his lectures. He was attracted to Salafi thought while following the lectures by Ustaz Awang Nasiruddin in Masjid Batu 6, Kuala Terengganu, as well as by his brother, Ustaz Yahya bin Tahir, who was in Makkah during that period.

In his point of view, the term *Wahhabi* was incorrectly used by the community. The term was not founded by Syeikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, or his followers. It was merely a term used by the people who were against his *da'wah* so as to imply that it was deviated from the correct path. For example, those who were against the practices of *tahlil* and *talkin* and who rejected the method of *ta'wil*, would be labelled as *Wahhabi*. As a matter of fact, those were the practices by *Salafussoleh imam* such as Imam Syafi'i and Imam Ahmad, a long time before Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab.

He affirmed that Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab was only an *Islah* individual who continued the teaching of *Salafussoleh* and brought back the Muslim community to the Islamic teaching based on the Quran and the *Sunnah*. He also rejected the claim made by the community that *Wahhabi* was firm, due to the fact that all the prophets were also firm, especially on the issues of *aqidah*. On the matter of *Salafiyah* thought, he suggested the community should read the books, *Manhaj al-Aqidah Imam al-Syafi'i* by Abd al-Rahman al-Qumaisy and *Tabaqat Imam al-Syafi'i* and *Usul al-I'tiqad* by Imam al-Laka'i, in addition to a few other books on the practices of *Salafussoleh imam*. Ustaz Yahya bin Tahir (Personal communication,

2015, November 30) worked with him in spreading *Salafi* thought.

CONCLUSION

Our research findings revealed that adherents to *Salafiyyah* emphasise the principle of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) and eliminate foreign innovation (*bid'ah*). The movement has been notable in Malaysia as being influenced by the *Islah* movement in Middle Eastern countries. It was also spread by Malaysian students who had studied in Makkah, Egypt and India who subscribed to the ideology and later brought it back to Malaysia. *Salafiyyah* scholars also conducted activities such as through their lectures and writings to help spread the thought; however, the impact of their influence is not that obvious. As of now, the influence of members of the *Sunnah* from the sects of *Asyairah* are more significant and dominant within the Muslim community in Terengganu.

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