



*AHL AL-BAYT* IN THE SUNNITE AND SHIITE LITERATURE  
IN MALAYSIA

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the  
degree of Master of Arts (Islamic Thought and Civilisation)

Kuliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia

DECEMBER 2016

## ABSTRACT

This research reviews the criteria of *ahl al-bayt* in the Qur'an and Hadith using a framework composed of four terms: definition, identification, attributes and merits. It also comparatively examines the Sunnite and Shiite criteria of *ahl al-bayt* in the Malaysian literature following the same terms. Data collection included those from books, articles, journals, newspapers and websites. From the Qur'an and Hadith, it is found that biological indicator and marital bonds are not the main criteria to be an *ahl al-bayt*. The other possible criterion promotes piety as tantamount to a pre-requisite. However, it is generally undermined by a more popular consanguine type of *ahl al-bayt* adopted by the majority of Sunnite and Shiite factions alike. While the understanding of the Sunnite following this line of arguments is relatively diverse, the Shiite is coherent. Among the Malay Sunnite *ahl al-bayt* whose strong view is based on genetic definition of popular understanding, there exists a tendency to resurrect the elevated statuses of the long-lost celebrated "royal Malay-*ahl al-bayt*" dignity. This trend includes acknowledgment of the most rightful model of born *ahl al-bayt* scholars for the Muslims to follow. As far as the banned Malaysian Shiite minority is concerned, they follow the faction's universal obligatory agenda of restoring allegiance to the caliphate of *ahl al-bayt*. Since *ahl al-bayt* is revered in both Sunnite and Shiite traditions, opening minds to yet another possible appreciation of the theme is hoped to prevent it from falling prey to severe manipulations.

## ملخص البحث

يستعرض هذا البحث معايير أهل البيت في القرآن الكريم والأحاديث النبوية الشريفة باستخدام الإطار الفكري المكون من أربع مواد، وهي: التعريف، والإثبات، والخصائص، والمزايا. ويقارن أيضاً بين آراء أهل السنة والشيعة لمعايير أهل البيت من خلال المصادر والمراجع المتوفرة في ماليزيا باستخدام المواد نفسها. لذلك، فإن عملية جمع المعلومات تتركز في الكتب، والمقالات، والمجلات والصحف، ومواقع الإنترنت المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع. فمن خلال هذا البحث، تبين للباحثة أن المؤشر البيولوجي، والعقد الزوجي ليسا معيارين رئيسيين في إثبات شخصاً معيناً أنه من أهل البيت، استناداً إلى العديد من النصوص القرآنية، والأحاديث النبوية. والمعيار الآخر الذي يمكن أن يعتمد في إثبات أهل البيت، مدعوماً بالتقوى كشرط معادل له. ولكن، هذا المعيار يتم تقويضه بالمعيار المشهور المتفق عليه بين غالبية الفصائل السنية والشيعة على حد سواء، ألا وهي قرابة الدم. وغير ذلك، فإن مفهوم أهل السنة لهذه القضية ما زال مختلفاً ومتعددًا. وهو بخلاف مفهوم أهل البيت عند الشيعة، لاتفاقهم على مفهوم واحد. بالرجوع إلى آراء أهل البيت الملايوين السنيين الذين يعتمدون على معيار القرابة المشهور، فإنه الرغبة ملحة في إحياء عظمة أهل البيت الملايو الملكي وجلاله والتي فقدت منذ أمد بعيد. ويحاول هذا الإتجاه أيضاً الاعتراف بأن علماء أهل البيت بالقرابة أولى بالاتباع من غيرهم. وأما بالنسبة للأقليات الشيعة المحظورة في ماليزيا، فإنهم يتبعون المشروع العالمي لهم في استعادة الولاء والبيعة لخلافة أهل البيت. ونظراً لمكانة أهل البيت وشرفه في تقاليد أهل السنة والشيعة، فإن من المأمول، عند تفتح الأذهان الى تقدير معيار آخر، فإنه يمتنع استغلال المتشدد لهذا الموضوع لمصلحة أي فريق ما.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts (Islamic Thought and Civilisation)

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declared that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*O you who have such a noble pedigree! Be sensible, that which Allah has would not fall into your hand only by virtue of your ancestral pedigree, but rather until you deserve pedigree by the fear of Allah*

*(Shaykh Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Jila' al-Khaṭir, 2011:51)*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In The Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful

Deeply, I am grateful to Allah, the al-Mighty whose grace sustains my patience and perseverance in completing this paper. May Allah's peace and blessing too be upon our Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), his Companions and all those who follow him till the end time arrives.

I cannot express enough thanks to Distinguished Professor Tan Sri Professor Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan, Professor Dr. Sayyid Mohamed Ajmal Abdul Razak al-Aidrus, Professor Dr. Abdullah al-Ahsan, Professor Dr. Majdi Ibrahim, Professor Dr. Hassan Abdelraziq El-Nagar, Professor Dr. Ahmad F. Yousif, Professor Dr. Abdul Hamid Barra and my supervisor, Professor Dr. Abdul Rashid Moten for their support, guidance and understanding.

A special thank to Brother Mohd Hafiz bin Jamaludin for translating some classical Arabic books for this paper.

I am also grateful to my colleagues, administrators (Sister Majdiah Othman and Azrina Md. Amin) and other individuals who, in one way or another have provided necessary assistance for me to research and write.

Last but not least, this work is made possible because of tremendous love, empathy and support of especially my husband and prayers from my parents and close relatives near and far. To my five children, I dedicate this work to you.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.H.	<i>Anno Hegirae</i> (in the year of the Hijrah)
ABPAS	<i>Ahlul Bait Menurut Pandangan Sunah dan Syiah</i> ( <i>Ahl al-Bayt</i> from the Perspective of the Sunnite and Shiite)
ABRASUM	<i>Ahlul-Bait (Keluarga) Rasulullah (S.A.W.) dan Kesultanan Melayu</i> ( <i>Ahlul-bait</i> (Family) <i>Rasulullah</i> (S.A.W.) & Malay Sultanates)
A.S.	<i>‘alaihi al-salam</i> (upon him (be) the peace)
C.E.	Common/Current/Christian Era
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (in the same place)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , (that is)
MTK	<i>Meniti Titian Kebenaran</i> ( <i>Meniti Titian Kebenaran: menyingkap Kebenaran Mazhab Rasul dan Ahlul Bait</i> (Traversing the Bridge of Truth: unveiling truth of the Messenger and <i>ahl al-bayt</i> 's school of legal thought)
n.d.	no date
para.	paragraph
R.A.	<i>radiya Allahu ‘anhu</i> (may Allah be pleased with him)
SDN. BHD.	<i>Sendirian Berhad</i> (Sole Proprietorship)
S.A.W.	<i>ṣallā Allāhu ‘alaihi wa al-sallam</i> (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)

## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ء	‘	خ	kh	ش	Sh	غ	gh	ن	n
ب	B	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ه	h
ت	T	ذ	dh	ض	d	ق	q	و	w
ث	Th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	ي	y
ج	J	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l		
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘	م	m		

Short Vowels		Long Vowels	
َ	a	ا + َ	ā
ِ	i	ي + ِ	ī
ُ	u	و + ُ	ū

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

As far as the Muslims in Malaysia are concerned, the very idea of *ahl al-bayt* is quite vague to many. However, recently, there have been attempts to introduce the concept of *ahl al-bayt* in terms of what it implies and how it should be applied to the Malaysian audience. Remarkably enough, literature on *ahl al-bayt* by some Sunnite and Shiite contributors alike has sparked interest from royals and the general public to either examine deeply into their supposedly noble origin of *ahl al-bayt* or to doubt their pre-conceived idea of what *ahl al-bayt* is all about. Interestingly, the quest of the *ahl al-bayt* claimants has never been conclusive. It still leaves behind a void of intermingling qualms and conviction to many. This includes both the Sunnites and the Shiites in Malaysia.

The official *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM) or Department of Islamic Development in Malaysia dictates that Malaysian Muslims are *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah* (henceforth, Sunnite). They are divided into eight groups as stated in a booklet called *Prinsip-Prinsip Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (The Principles of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jama'ah*) by *Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah* (JAWI) or Territory Department of Islam (n.d.: 6). Other than the Sufis who are clearly mentioned in the booklet, the other prominent group is the Wahabbis. In Malaysia, the group is considered non-deviant and legally following the Sunnite doctrines by *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM) though there exists elements of aggressions, rigidity and strictness as potential invitations to alarm religious harmony in the region (Bernama, November 28, 2005).

In general, JAKIM confines *ahl al-bayt* to those to-be-revered among Prophet Muḥammad's family who is barred from receiving *zakāh* or alms-giving but entitled to one fifth of *al-ghanimah* or booties (Wan Zahidi, 2012: 31). This is also shared by the Wahabbis. However, in 2013, as a response to question on JAKIM's opinion on the Wahabbis, an e-fatwa responded that the group does not represent the Sunnites (*e-fatwa Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, December 23, 2013). It continues that moreover, for more than a thousand years, *Asha'irah* and *Maturidiyyah* have dominated mainstream society in creedal authority whereas the Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali have remained supreme in Islamic juristic rulings (ibid.).

Nevertheless, our point of concern here is the Wahabbis standpoint on *ahl al-bayt*. Indeed, they follow the majority of other Muslim scholars but limit it to moderation. This is purported in *fatwā* (juristic decision) by the previous Saudi Mufti, Shaykh<sup>c</sup> Abd al-<sup>l</sup>Azīz bin Bāz (d. 1999) published in The General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Ibn Baz, n.d.: 405). Thus, always in their judgment, Muslims who portray deeper love towards the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt* as fairly understood) are likely to be accused as Shiite proponents or worst, polytheists. Hodgson (1975a:190) points out that the hatred was so deep and the outburst was seen on their attempted act of demolishing graves and tombs of Companions and even of the Prophet (S.A.W.).

Among Sufis in Malaysia, it is their custom to show venerated manner towards the *ahl al-bayt*. In this regard, the Malaysian government's standpoint of the Sufis is clearly presented in the booklet by JAWI (n.d.: 6). The Sufis are the sixth group from among those recognized as the Sunnite. This stand actually concurs with al-Baghdādī (d. 1037 C.E.) in *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*:

Know that *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* are divided into eight groups of people... the sixth group being the *al-zuhhad al-ṣufiyya* (Sufi Ascetics), who have seen things for what they are and therefore have abstained,

who have known by experience and therefore have taken heed truly, who have accepted Allah's allotment and contented themselves with what is within reach” (1990: 313-317).

In this paper, Sufis are persons who seek *tazkiyah al-nafs* or purification of the soul under the patronage of authentic Sufi masters to reach the station of *ihsān* (perfection or beatification). It is different from a do-it-yourself (DIY) modern Sufism. The term ‘DIY’ is used by Howell (2007: 6) to denote practice of *taṣawwuf* without initiation into any Sufi orders or brotherhoods.

The Shiite faction, on the other hand, is illegal and banned in Malaysia. This takes effect following the decision made by *Kementerian Dalam Negeri* (KDN) or Ministry of Home Affairs on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013 (Diputuskan haram, 2013, July 25, *Sinarharian*). Since *ahl al-bayt* is quite synonymous with their principle school of thought, the retrospective indulgence in *ahl al-bayt* issues is, at first glance, seems to be an advantage in promoting Shiite basic doctrines. However, such is not the purpose of this paper. Needless to say, the term *ahl al-bayt* is so glorified and has spurred the interest of some learned Muslims namely with the aim to validate authorities and leadership both in spiritual acquisition and political dignities in which the latter remains the more longed for.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Forum Santri Sunniah Salafiyah Pasuruan (2012: 44) has studied the word from texts such as *Misbah al-Munir* and *al-Muḥkam wa al-Muḥiṭ al-Aḍḍham* by Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī (d. 1066 C.E) quoting Sibawayh (d. 796 C.E.) who summarizes that *ahl al-bayt* for one person means *penghuni rumah* or *kerabat* (people of one’s house or one’s relatives). The Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic defines *ahl al-bayt* as “members (of the house) i.e. of the family; the Prophet’s family” (Wehr, 1976: 33). In the case of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), the widely accepted terminology of his *ahl al-bayt* in this region

refers to his Hashemite relatives, wives and children, especially Sayyidatīnā Fāṭimah (R.A.), the Prophet’s youngest daughter and her husband, Sayyidinā ʿAlī (R.A.), the Prophet’s cousin. Their sons, Sayyidinā Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (R.A.) together with their later descendants champion the monopoly of the exclusive title until this day.

The word *ahl al-bayt* appears twice in the Qur’an, in *Surah al-Ahzāb*, 33:33 and *Surah Hūd*, 11:73. It appears in numerous Hadith but mostly is Hadith *al-thaqalayn* (two weighty things). It was narrated by Yāzid bin Hayyān from Zayd ibn al-Arqām:

I went along with Husayn bin Sabrah and ʿUmar bin Muslim to Zayd ibn al-Arqām (R.A.) and, as we sat by his side, Husayn said to him, “Zayd, you have been able to acquire great merits by seeing the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), listening to his conversation, fighting by his side in (different) battles, and performing prayers behind him. O Zaid, you have in fact earned great merits. O Zayd, tell us what you heard from the Messenger of Allāh (S.A.W.)?” He said: “O son of my brother, I have grown old, I have almost reached the end of my life span, and I have forgotten some of the things which I remembered in connection with the Messenger of Allāh (S.A.W.). So, accept whatever I say to you, and those I do not, do not compel me to narrate them.” He then said, “One day, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) stood up to deliver a sermon at a watering-place known as Khumm, situated between Makkah and Al-Madinah. He praised Allāh, extolled Him, delivered a speech, exhorted (us) and said, Now as to what follows, O people: I am a human being. Perhaps, I am about to receive a messenger of my *Rubb* (the angel of death), and I will respond. I am leaving behind two weighty things: one is the Book of Allāh in which there is guidance and light, adhere to it.” He exhorted (us to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and then said: “The second are the members of my household (*ahlu baytī*). He repeated it three times: ‘I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family (*ahli baytī*)’”. Husayn said to Zayd: “Who are the members of his household? Are not his wives his family?” He said, “His wives are the members of his family. (But here) the members of his family are those for whom acceptance of Zakat is forbidden”. He asked, “Who are they?” Zayd said, “The offspring of ʿAlī, the offspring of ʿAqīl, the offspring of Jaʿfar and the offspring of ʿAbbās.” Husayn asked, “Are these for whom the acceptance of Zakat is forbidden?” Zaid said: “Yes”. (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, ed. 2000: 880-881, The Book of the Merits of the Companions (54), Hadith Number 1657; as cited in al-Nawawī’s, *Riyādh al-Ṣāliḥīn*, vol. 1, ed. 1999: 318, Chapter of Showing Reverence to the Family of the Prophet (43), Hadith Number 346)

The other notable Hadith is the one on Salmān al-Fārisī. It is narrated from ʿAmr bin ʿAuf that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said: “*Salmānu minnā ahlu al-bayt* or Salmān is one

of (us) *ahl al-bayt*” (al-Şuyūṭi, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Şaghīr*, vol. 3, ed. 1995: 209, Hadith Number 4696; al-Ṭabrānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 5, ed. 2010: 1527, Hadith Number 6040). Nonetheless, this version does not attract wide attention.

Hence, as far as the Sunnite is concerned, al-Mahsyur (2012: 16-19) writes that scholars such as al-Shawkānī (d. 1834 C.E.) in *Fath al-Qādir al-Jami‘ bayna Fāni al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah min ‘ilm al-Tafsīr* and especially Ibn al-Qayyīm, (d. 1350 C.E.) in *Jilā’ al-Afhām fī Faḍli al-Şalāh wa al-Salām ‘alā Muḥammad Khayr al-Anām* group views on *ahl al-bayt* into six different categories namely:

1. The wives of the prophets which is based on the views of Ikrimah and al-Zujaj who took support from narrations by Muqatil bin Sulaiman, Atha’, Kalbi and Ibn ‘Abbas Said bin Jubair.
2. The wives of the prophets and *ahl al-kisā’* (people of the clock) notably Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.), Sayyidinā ‘Alī (R.A.), Sayyidatinā Fāṭimah (R.A.) and their two sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (R.A.). Such are the opinions of al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Atiyah.
3. Those who are not entitled to *ṣadāqah* (charity) and *zakāh* (alms-giving). This opinion is further elaborated by interpretations among the schools of jurisprudence: The Shafi‘is and Aḥmad (The Hanbalis) choose the clan of Hashim and the clan of ‘Abd al-Muṭalib. The Hanafis and some of the Hanbalis and Malikis (al-Qasim) resort to only the clan of Hashim which includes the family of ‘Alī, ‘Abbās, ‘Āqil and Ja‘afar. Asyhab from Malikis prefer the clan of Hashim and descendants from the upper line of the clans of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Umayyah, Naufal and Galib.
4. The descendants of Prophet (S.A.W.) including his wives. It finds evidence in a Hadith narrated by Abū Humayd: “O Allāh, may *salawāt* (prayer) be there for Muḥammad, his wives, children and grandchildren”.

5. The followers of the Prophet until the Day of Judgement. It is supported by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Jabir ibn Abdillah, al-Baihāqī, Sufyan al-Tsawrī and part of the Shafīʿis.
6. The *muttaqūn* (the pious ones possessing God consciousness or mindfulness) among his *ummah* (community). It is based on a Hadith reported by al-Ṭabrānī from Anas bin Malik “*ahl Muḥammad kullu muʾmin taqiyy*. The family of the Prophet is every pious believer.”

All these categories are also concurred by al-Husaini (1998) and Shihabuddin (2007) as foundation for arguments in their books. While their contributions in this regard are *sui generis*, they have yet to be conclusive. However, the widely recognized view by those involved in the issue is from the descendants of Sayyidatīnā Fatīmah combined with principles from the third opinion (those who are not entitled to *ṣadāqah* and *zakāh*). These criteria are studied and proposed by the jurists. This is quite rationale since opinions that involve the wives of the Prophet (S.A.W.) seem far from being practical in our time. As a matter of concern, in this millennium of Islamic resurgence, there are attempts to introduce *ahl al-bayt* to Malaysian public emphasizing their rights to be recognized, respected and revered.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The majority of Islamic educated Malaysians are used to the meaning of the Arabic word *ahl al-bayt* by its confined concept of belonging to biological descendants of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Most of them are the *ʿAlawīyyūn* or *ʿAlawīyyah* (Shihabuddin, 2007: 442; Ibrahim, 2001: 4; al-Baqir, 1986: 50; Mahayudin, 1984: 7). The appendage originated from ʿAlwī, the great-grandson of ʿĪsā *al-Muhajir* (the migratory), the first among them to settle in Hadramawt. The details surrounding the origin of the title will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4. In Malaysia, they are people who

carry the initial of Syed or Sayyid and Habib for males and Sharifah for females. There are some *peranakan* (offsprings of local males and *‘Alawiyyun* females) who go further to include “Nik, Long, Wan and Megat” (al-Masyhur, 2012: 205; Muzaffar, 2003: 20). As a matter of fact, the titles remain exclusively and rigidly tied to Prophetic biological origin. The reason most probably lies in the limited exploration of alternative explanations from existing primary literature that deals with the topic. Thus, this thesis will examine and present criteria of reviewed *ahl al-bayt* which will in a sense, broaden the scope within set limitations. This will actually delve into contributions by unsung Sunnite scholars that acknowledge superiority of those pious Muslims who were not biologically related to the Prophet (S.A.W). They will serve as yardstick to the review. Hence, this study will therefore attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the criteria of *ahl al-bayt* in the Qur’an and Hadith?
- ii. How is the term portrayed in selected Malay Sunnite and Shiite literature in the light of the Qur’an and Hadith?
- iii. What are the similarities and differences in the literature produced by Sunnites and Shiites and with what consequences?

### **1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

This study does not question the honour and respect demanded by Muslims upon the *ahl al-bayt*. The purpose of this study is to shed light into another possible yet plausible view of the term based on the proposed reviewed studies. It will also deal with the status of the Prophet’s Companion and *ahl al-bayt*, especially Salmān al-Fārisī and others who share similar pious attributes. This will include a discussion on *ahl al-bayt*’s characteristics and attributes apart from their rights to be revered as laid down in Qur’anic verses and Prophet’s traditions. The purpose is to find ways to complement the Salmānic *ahl al-bayt* and the biological Hashemite, Fatimic or *‘Alawiyyun* (all but

the same) kind of *ahl al-bayt* to enable Muslims in Malaysia to publicly accept bearers of the term and be far from being confined to its genetics realm. It also serves to find another dimension of looking at the term against significant others whose arguments legitimately rest unchallenged but cynically doubted. It is also interesting to note that depriving the rights to *zakāh* (alms-giving) for the family of the Prophet (S.A.W.) is subject to different opinions by scholars of leading schools of jurisprudence (al-Masyhur, 2011: 114-5). Thus, it is quite possible that the idea of *ahl al-bayt* based on the status of *zakāh* (alms-giving) will be disputed over time.

The exclusiveness of *ahl al-bayt* based on microscopic view of the ‘holy’ blood cell is recorded in many classical books especially concerning matters of jurisprudence. There are voices aired for Muslim scholars to exert efforts to present new perspective towards the classical books to suits the demand of the dynamic worldly life. According to the Secretary of Fatwa Committee (Egypt) and Director of the Daral-Ifta [sic] Training Centre, Dr Amr al-Wirdāni, the writings of the previous classical scholars were not the “definite knowledge in itself but rather the exercise of their thoughts on certain issues at that particular time and resulted in a paradigm of knowledge” (as cited in Muhammad Mujahid Mohammad Fadzil, November 18, 2009). Thus, there is no reason to excuse *ahl al-bayt* from being studied and researched.

Again, it is ironic that endorsing solely the biological traits upon *ahl al-bayt* invites conflict of interests and almost in all cases, victory rests in the hands of personal interests such as power, wealth and self immunity. Historical fact from Malaysian neighbouring country found in a study by Nurfadzilah Yahya (2006) shows that British images of the Arab elite are “represented by the *Syeds* with their clan names such as Aljunied, Alsagoff, Alkaff, Alatas, Bamadhaj [sic]” (53) in colonial Singapore ranging from that of “a dangerous enemy in the form of the shrewd, unscrupulous, exploitive Arab merchant under the cloak of piety in 1819 to that of being useful British allies in

governing Singapore and Hadhramaut [sic] by the 1930s, though such amity was still sometimes perceived as a cloak to other designs” (105).

Colley (2002) also states that the British regarded them as vital auxiliaries in political and commercial business of British Empire (as cited in Nurfadzilah, 2006: 74). This brings the reminiscence of Sharif Hussein of Hijaz who took British allies and led the Arab Revolt of 1916 against the Ottoman Empire (Murphy, 2008: 9). Mandal (2009) writes that the Arab revolt in 1916 resulted in Sharif Husain bin Ali's, the great grandfather of the late King Hussein, victory over the Ottomans backed with the promise of British patronage. Mandal (2009: 160) further observes that “With Mecca and Medina firmly within his grasp, Sharif Husain laid claim to the caliphate on the basis that the institution should be restored to its rightful heirs, the ashraf [sic]” (sing. Sharif). The implication is as if calling and expecting for indisputable obedience from the Muslim world over the supremacy of “inherited spiritual and historical responsibility” (The Amman Message, 2009: 4) that the royal family has been destined for. Such bold and naive invitation to Muslims, placing solidarity as bait is still subject to easy manipulation or even dubious agenda. The Amman Message (2009) utilizes and validates the popular global claim that *ahl al-bayt* is indeed based on the Prophet's DNA that traces far back into his era. One of its important messages says:

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has embraced the path of promoting the true luminous image of Islam, halting the accusations against it and repelling the attacks upon it. This is in accordance with the inherited spiritual and historical responsibility carried by the Hashemite monarchy, honoured as direct descendants of the Prophet, the Messenger of God – peace and blessings upon him -- who carried the message. For five decades, his late majesty King Hussein Bin Talal – God rests his soul – demonstrated this way with the vigorous effort that he exerted. Since the day he took the flag, His Majesty King Abdullah II has continued this effort, with fortifying the solidarity of 1.2 billion Muslims who comprise one fifth of humanity, preventing their marginalization or extrication from the movement of human society, and affirming their role in building human civilisation and participating in its progress during our present age (4).

In the Malay world, Nurfadzilah Yahya (2006) mentions that “the matrilineal bloodline of the Arab elite through indigenous mothers was only alluded to in details [such as Syed Omar Aljunied as Pengeran Syarif] when it augmented the economic and political status of the Arabs” (49). Hence, to find elaborated criteria of the term is fairly necessary to safeguard the Muslims from becoming victims of such conflicts.

Undoubtedly, the family of *ahl al-bayt* has left religious and spiritual mark on the natives of this region when they play their spiritual scholarly roles in society following the steps of the Prophet (S.A.W). For example, in Terengganu, Malaysia, during the 1920s, a member of al-Aidrus [sic] family of the Hadramawt Arab family had impacted the anti-British campaign through his teachings and influence (Abdul Ghani, 1996; Wan Mohd Syaghir, 2006) in this region. That personality, as Wan Mohd Syaghir (2006) writes is Tokku Paloh whose real name is Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Zainal Abidin al-Aidrus (para. 7). He had studied in Mecca and had probably been granted an *ijazah* or license to practice as a Naqsyabandiyy *shaykh* (spiritual master) there. He authored *Maʿrif al-Lahfan ila Haqāʾiq al-Irfān* (Muhammad Khairi Mahyuddin, Zakaria Stapa & Faudzinaim Badaruddin, 2013: 210) which promotes the order as a way to sanctify one’s soul. During that period, he had established large network of pupils, among them Abdul Rahman Limbong, Haji Drahman, and Sultan Zainal Abidin III (ibid.). The point here is that this family of *ahl al-bayt* seems to function when their dignity was based on true piety. In a global context, we have Imam Jaʿafar Ṣādiq, and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (just to name a few) who were both accepted among the Sunnites and Shiites for their piety and religiosity. Nevertheless, this definitely does not mean that they are the only group of scholars who has “the monopoly on the leadership of the Ummah in religious, spiritual and academic terms” (Sallabi, 2010: 54). In fact, the abovementioned evidence is deemed essential to justify the reason for raising questions in this study.