

NETWORK OF SHEIKH AHMAD KHATIB AL MINANGKABAWI IN THE MALAY WORLD

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Abstract: *This research examines Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi who became one of the most influential Nusantara scholars in the city of Mecca Al- Mukarramah in the 19th to early 20th centuries. Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi was an imam at the Masjid Al- Haram, who became an important figure in the transmission of Islamic knowledge to students from the Malay world, especially from Indonesia and Malaysia. His influence was not only in his written works, but also through his network of students who later became scholars and reformers in the Malay World. This paper aims to examine the intellectual role of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi in building a network of scholars in the Malay World and how the network contributed. The data collected from primary sources are the writings of Sheikh Ahmad Kahtib and the biographies of his students and for Secondary sources are from previous studies and literature related to Sheikh Khatib al-Minangkabawi and his network of students in the Malay World. The results of this study show that Sheikh Ahmad Khatib had a significant influence in shaping Islamic discourse in the Malay World. He became the teacher of great figures such as Hasyim Asy'ari, Ahmad Dahlan who became the pioneer of modern Islamic organisations in Indonesia, and many also became reformers in Minangkabau and Malaysia. Through his students, his thoughts and knowledge spread widely, contributing greatly to the formation of Islamic identity in the Malay World*

Keywords: *Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, Malay World, Transmission of knowledge Ulama Network,*

Introduction

The Melayu world has a long history of contributing to the development of Islam. This is inseparable from the central role played by the ulama in spreading Islam. Several ulama are recorded in history as being instrumental in introducing and spreading Islam in the Melayu world. Melayu ulama began to become involved in the Haramain-centred ulama network in the second half of the 17th century. The pioneers of this involvement were primarily Nuruddin al-Raniri (d. 1068 AH/1658 CE), Abdurrauf al-Singkili (1024 AH–1105 AH/1615–1693 CE), and Muhammad Yusuf al-Makassari (1030 AH–1111 AH/1629–1699 CE). Together, they formed a 'Southeast Asian Connection', a branch of the network in the region. The process of spreading Islam in the Malay world continues. Each era of this movement was continued and updated by ulama, particularly those who had studied Islam directly in the Middle East, in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. One figure who made a significant contribution to the development of Islam in the 19th century was Syekh Khatib Al-Minangkabawi. He was an ulama from Minangkabau who was renowned for his work as a preacher, spiritual teacher and Islamic intellectual. His influence spread beyond his home village in West Sumatra to other regions of the Malay world, including the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, and parts of Southeast Asia. Syekh Ahmad Khatib's ideas spread to Indonesia and the Malay world directly through his books, and also through his disciples who came to Mecca to perform the Hajj and study with him. Upon returning to their home villages, most of his disciples became central figures in the renewal of religion and education. (Indrawati, 2016)

The Ulama Network is fundamentally rooted in the Islamic tradition of learning, often referred to as 'rihlah ilmiyyah' (the journey of learning) or simply 'rihlah' (the journey). This aligns with Islamic teachings that encourage followers to seek knowledge wherever it may be found (thalab al-ilmi). The relationships that form the ulama network are very complex indeed. However, these relationships can essentially be categorised into two forms: The first are formal relationships, such as the intellectual relationship between an ulama acting as a teacher and their student (intellectual genealogy), or the relationship between an ulama acting as a sheikh or tarekat leader and their khalifah or representative (mystical genealogy). The guru-student network spreads through educational institutions such as madrasahs and pesantrens. Meanwhile, the mursyid-khalifah network develops through the Sufi order, centred on the surau. This process is ongoing, although its intensity varies and it has adapted to the times. (Azra, 2003) There are two types of informal relationship: the relationship between two ulama, and the relationship between an ulama acting as a teacher and students who either meet him for a relatively short time or never meet him, but who he grants authority in a certain field of study. (Oman Fathurahman, 2004).

In the development of Islam in the Malay world, three categories of networking can be identified: vertical and horizontal networks; octopus-like networks; and spiral networks. (Firdaus, 2013) According to Azra, the vertical network can be understood as a relationship between teacher and student. For instance, Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi was a professor and a key figure of scholarly authority for numerous Indonesian scholars. His disciples included K.H. Asyim Asy'ari, founder of Indonesia's largest organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); Ahmad Dahlan, founder of the organisation Muhammadiyah; Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, his nephew and pupil who exerted great influence upon returning to Malaysia (where he founded the magazine *Al-Imam*); and Mahmud Yunus, who disseminated his teacher's knowledge across various regions of Indonesia. Meanwhile, horizontal networks are relationships between teachers or students. This can be seen in the relationships between Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, Syekh Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, Syekh Muhammad Thaib Umar, and

Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek. The octopus network model illustrates a network that spreads widely in various directions, like the tentacles of an octopus. In this case, Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi was the centre of influence, spreading ideas, fatwas, and thoughts to various regions of Nusantara. A spiral network emerged when the disciples of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi returned to their hometowns, establishing their own schools and madrasas and teaching there. Then, the disciples of these disciples opened their own boarding schools, thus expanding the network further.

Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi was an erudite scholar of fiqh and tasawuf, as well as a key figure in establishing a robust and extensive network of ulama. Through his relationships with students and other intellectuals, he established a system of knowledge transmission that played a significant role in shaping local Islamic practices. It is significant that his disciples later became important figures in the religious revival in their respective regions. Some of Syekh Ahmad Khatib's disciples are organised by their place of origin below: North Sumatra: Syekh Muhammad Zein Tasak (Batu Bara), Syekh Muhammad Nur (Mufti of the Langkat Kingdom), Syekh Muhammad Nur Ismail (Qadi of the Langkat Kingdom), Syekh Hasan Maksum (Mufti of the Deli Sultanate), Syekh Musthafa Husein (founder of the Purba Baru pesantren) and Syekh Abdul Hamid Mahmud (founder of the Ulumil Arabiyah madrasah in Asahan). From West Sumatra: Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek in Bukittinggi; Syekh Muhammad Thayib in Tanjung Sungayang; and Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, founder of the Adabiyah school in 1912 and Al Munir magazine in 1911, in Padang. Other disciples were Syekh Abdulkarim Amrullah in Padang Panjang, Syekh Khatib Muhammad Ali, Syekh Sulaiman Rasuli, Syekh Bayang Muhammad Dalil, Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jaho and Syekh Taher Jalaluddin. From Java: KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (founder of NU), KH. Ahmad Dahlan (founder of the Muhammadiyah movement) and KH. Wahab Hasbullah (one of the founders of NU) and KH. Bisri Syansuri. From Malaysia, Syekh Muhammad Saleh (Mufti of Selangor), Syekh Muhammad Zein Simabur (Mufti of Perak), and Syekh Muhammad Mukhtar bin Atharid (from Bogor) were present. (Ilyas, 2017). Haji Mohd Noor (father of Malaysian reformist leader Burhanuddin Helmi); Haji Abdul Latif Tambi; and Haji Muhammad Said bin Jamaluddin (leader of the Ahmadiyah Tariqah in Negeri Sembilan). (Othman, 1998).

This study aims to examine how the ulama network formed by Syekh Ahmad Khaib Al Minangkabawi developed and influenced the Islamic dynamics of the Malay world. It will examine the relationships, historical background and contributions of his disciples, who spread throughout the Malay world. The study will highlight the important role played by Syekh Khatib in shaping the intellectual and spiritual landscape of the Malay world. Adopting a social, historical, and network analysis approach, the paper will attempt to reveal the connections between the mobility of ulama, the dissemination of knowledge, and the formation of Islamic identity within the Malay world.

Literature Review

There has been a great deal of academic interest in studies of Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, particularly with regard to his contributions to and reforms in Islamic thought in Melayu lands. In his 2004 book *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII* (The Network of Ulama from the Middle East and the Nusantara Islands in the 17th and 18th Centuries), Azyumardi Azra discusses Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi as an important figure in the Haramain ulama network, which connected centres of Islamic classical learning in the Middle East and the Malay world. Azra demonstrates that students from Nusantara who studied in Mecca returned not only with textual knowledge, but

also with the reformist spirit developing in the Islamic world at that time. In his book *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia*, Deliar Noer emphasises Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi's influence on his disciples' thinking, including that of Haji Abdul Karim Amarullah. Amarullah then spread the spirit of reform in Minangkabau, which had a strong resonance in the Malay world.

In 2017, Eka Putra Wirman wrote a journal titled 'Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi'. Icon of Tholabul Ilmi Minangkabau in the Past for Reflection on Sumatra Barat Today and in the Future'. This provides a biography and intellectual profile of Syekh Ahmad Khatib, a renowned Minangkabau scholar who served as imam and khatib for the Shafi'i school of thought at the Grand Mosque in Mecca. He was a critic of local religious practices that contradicted Islamic law. According to Wirman (2017), Syekh Ahmad Khatib represents Tholabul Ilmi Minangkabau, which produced influential students and scholars in Tanah Melayu, including Ahmad Dahlan, founder of the Indonesian Islamic organisation Muhammadiyah, and KH Hasyim Asy'ari, founder of the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama.

However, most existing literature tends to examine Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi's disciples either individually or in relation to their biographies and works. There is scope, however, to examine the intellectual and ideological relations between these disciples as a network with a shared vision of disseminating pure Islamic teachings, free from superstition and sorcery. This study therefore attempts to address this gap by mapping Syekh Ahmad Khatib's disciples' network in the Malay world and examining how they adapted their teacher's ideas to fit the local context.

Biography of Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi

Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (whose full name was Ahmad Khatib bin Abdul Latif bin Abdurrahman bin Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Khatib Al Jawi Al Makki Asy Syafi'i Al Minangkabawi) was born on Monday 6th Dhu al-Hijjah 1276 AH/1860 CE in Kota Tuo, Balai Gurah, IV Angkek, Canduang, Bukittinggi. He was born on Monday, 6th Dzul al-Hijjah 1276 AH/1860 CE in Kota Tuo, Balai Gurah, IV Angkek, Canduang, Bukittinggi. (Imawan & Faiz, 2021) His father was Buya Abdul Latif, a prominent Islamic scholar in his time who was acquainted with H. Agus Salim, a notable Indonesian Islamic scholar and politician during the early days of independence. His mother, Limbak Urai, was from Koto Tuo Balai Gurah in the Ampek Angkek Canduang district of Bukittinggi. Through his mother, Syekh Ahmad Khatib was the brother of Syekh Taher Jalaluddin, an Islamic astronomer who lived and died in Malaysia. Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al Minangkabawi was also related to Tuanku Nan Tuo, a teacher of the Paderi ulama. (Radinal Mukhtar Harahap, 2020)

He married Khadijah, the daughter of Muhammad Saleh Kurdi, a bookstore owner in Mecca. Muhammad Saleh Kurdi was very interested in Ahmad Khatib, and so he married his daughter Khadijah. Unfortunately, Khadijah passed away shortly afterwards, leaving behind a son named Abdul Karim. Saleh al Kurdi was so impressed by Ahmad Khatib's dedication, diligence, intelligence and mastery of religious knowledge, as well as his piety, that he could not bear to part with him. He therefore married his second daughter, Fatimah, to Ahmad Khatib, and they had three children: Abdul Malik, Abdul Hamid and Khadijah. (Eka Putra Wirman, 2017)

Ahmad Khatib's status can be examined from several angles based on his lineage, including religious, Minangkabau cultural, economic and educational aspects. From an Islamic

perspective, Syekh Ahmad Khatib was a descendant of scholars, and he was given the title of 'Tuanku', which is a title given to influential Islamic scholars who spread the teachings of Islam across several regions. His father was a religious leader who was known as Khatib Nagari because he was a khatib/preacher. If we look at the Minangkabau tradition, he is a descendant of the nobility from both his mother's and father's side. Ahmad Khatib's uncle on his father's side, Datuk Rangkayo Mangkuto, was not only a local leader, but also headed the entire Koto Gadang village government. His grandfather Engku Abdurrahman was a prominent figure in the community with the title Datuk Rangkayo Basa, and his uncle Muhammad Saleh, who was also a datu, was a village chief in Ampek Angkek, the village of his mother. In economic terms, Ahmad Khatib was a wealthy man. (Zulhimma, 2013)

In terms of education, Syekh Ahmad Khatib came from a large, well-educated and socially prominent family. His grandfather, Engku Abdurrahman, was a prosecutor in Padang, while his uncle, Sutan Muhammad Salim, held the same position in Riau. His cousin, Agus Salim, was a prominent Islamic scholar and politician who was fluent in several Western and Eastern languages (Zulhimma, 2013). Syekh Ahmad Khatib received his formal education from primary school through to teacher training at the Kweekschool in Bukittinggi, which was founded by the Dutch East Indies government in 1871. (Deliar Noer, 1980) He obtained his religious knowledge and memorised the Qur'an under the guidance of his father, Syekh Abdul Latif. In 1287, he, his father, his grandfather and his uncle left for Mecca to perform the Hajj. However, after completing the Hajj, Ahmad Khatib did not return to West Sumatra with his family. Instead, he remained in Mecca to study religion with the ulama at the Grand Mosque and memorise the Qur'an. (Eka Putra Wirman, 2017)

While in Mecca, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib studied under several prominent scholars, including Sayyid Zayn al-Dakhlan, Sheikh Bakr al-Syatta, and Sheikh Yahya al-Qabli. He also began teaching at home, initially only teaching family members. Over time, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib's reputation grew and he gained more and more students. With the help of his father-in-law, Sheikh Shalih, he was able to teach at the Grand Mosque, where only the most renowned teachers were permitted to instruct. After teaching there, his fame as a great scholar spread to his homeland, attracting the interest of Minangkabau youths who wanted to study with him. His students came not only from Minangkabau, but also from other regions. At the beginning of the 20th century, Syarif 'Awn al-Rafiq, the ruler of Mecca at the time, honoured Sheikh Ahmad Khatib by appointing him Imam of the Mazhab Syafii at the Al-Haram. This was in recognition of his fluency in the Quran and his courage in correcting Syarif 'Awn al-Rafiq's recitation during the Magrib prayer at the palace. Syarif 'Awn al-Rafiq also appointed Ahmad Khatib as Khatib, a title that has remained with him ever since. . (Akhria Nazwar, 1983)

The scientific Halaqah, taught by Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, was particularly popular among Malay students of knowledge. Prior to studying with an Arab sheikh, Malay students would typically reinforce their Arabic language proficiency and comprehension with Sheikh Ahmad Khatib or his student, Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin. In his teaching, he relied on understanding and discussion. He spent more time discussing with his students, making them more active. According to Umar Abdul Jabbar, the daily routine began with congregational Salat al-Fajr at the Masjid al-Haram, followed by teaching activities. He then returned home for breakfast. He then possibly slept for a short time before continuing to study until Zuhr. At noon, he prayed in the mosque and then returned home to teach two lessons to his students. After lunch, he rested for a while until Asr, when he went to the mosque to pray with the congregation. Afterwards, he opened his books and studied until Maghrib, when he returned to the mosque to pray with

the congregation. After teaching until the Isha prayer time, he prays with the congregation and then returns home for dinner with his family. He goes to sleep early and wakes up at the third part of the night, using the time until dawn to write. (Ilyas, 2017)

Syekh Ahmad Khatib's fame in the Islamic world is not limited to the Haramain but extends to other countries. In Turkey, for example, he was awarded the title of "Bey Tunnis" by the Turkish authorities. This title is now equivalent to a "Doctor honoris causa", a title given to people who have made a significant contribution to science. (Tamar Djaja, 1966) In his capacity as a prominent Islamic scholar and teacher of many of the region's religious leaders and reformers, Ahmad Khatib was undoubtedly not viewed with narrow-mindedness. Alwi Shihab refers to Ahmad Khatib as the "mentor" of the reformers in Minangkabau, both traditionalists and modernists.

Syekh Ahmad Khatib was a highly knowledgeable scholar who specialised in various fields of study, including fiqh, history, algebra, astronomy, mathematics and geometry. His body of work spanned various fields of study. He wrote over 49 books on religious and social issues. (Azra, Azyumardi, 2003) Some of Ahmad Khatib's works written in Arabic and Malay include al-Jauhar al-Naqiyah fi al-A'Mali al-Jaibiyah and Hasyiyatun Nafahat Ala Syah al-Waraqat on Ushul Fiqh. His works on mathematics and al-Jabr include Raudatul Hussab fi A'mali Ilmi Hisab. His other books include Dhau al-Siraj and Shulh al-Jama'atain bi Jawazi Ta'addud al-Jum'atain. Other books by the author include works on the Naqsabandiyya Sufi order, such as Izhar Zaghlil al-Kadzibin fi Tasyabuhihim bi as-Shadiqin, Al-Ayat al-Bayyinah li al-Munsifin fi Ialah Khurafat ba'da al-Muta'assibin and As-Saif al-Battar fi Mahq Kalimah Ba'da Ahli-Ightirar. Sheikh Ahmad Khatib also wrote books in response to issues regarding the division of Minangkabau inheritance, such as ad-Da'i al-Masmu' fi ar-Rad' Ala Man Yurisu al-Ikhwan wa Aulad al-Akhyat al-Wujud al-Usul wa al-Furu. This book was also translated into Malay in 1893 under the title al-Manhaj al-Masyuru. (Rasi'in, Umi Kultsum, 2024)

He was a great scholar who was renowned for his knowledge in various fields of study. Undoubtedly, we cannot deny the achievements of his students, many of whom have become prominent ulama and spread throughout the Malay world. However, not all of Syekh Ahmad Khatib's disciples can be discussed in this article; only a few of the most prominent and influential figures in the Malay world will be mentioned. Among his disciples in Minangkabau who are well-known are Abdul Karim Amarullah (Haji Rasul), Syekh Muhammad Jami Jambek, Syekh Sulaiman al-Rasuli and Syekh Muhammad Jami Jaho. Syekh Abbas Qadhi Ladang Lawas. There are also ulama outside Minangkabau, such as Syekh Hasan Maksum (in the Deli Kingdom), Syekh Muhammad Nur (in the Langkat Kingdom), and H. Ahmad Dahlan (founder and president of Muhammadiyah), and Kiyai Hasyim Asy'ari (founder of Nahdlatul Ulama). (ICSB, 1981) Syekh Khatib's disciples were famous not only in Indonesia, but also throughout the Malay world. This is evident from figures such as Syekh Muhammad Saleh, the Mufti of Selangor, and Syekh Muhammad Zaen, the Mufti of Perak.

The network of disciples of Syekh Ahmad Khatib in the Malay world.

Abdul Karim Amarullah (Haji Rasul)

Abdul Karim Amarullah (also known as Haji Rasul) was born on 17 Safar 1296 H (10 February 1879) in Kapalo Koto, Jorong Betung Panjang, Nagari Sungai Batang, Maninjau, Luhak Agam, West Sumatra. He was given the name Muhammad Rasul at birth. His father was Syekh Muhammad Amarullah, also known as Tuanku Kissai, a prominent Minangkabau scholar at the

time, and his mother was Tarwasa. (Ramayulis, Samsus Nizar, 2005) As the son of an ulama, he was expected by his parents to follow in his father's footsteps. Syekh Muhammad Amarullah's determination to make his son an alim or a great ulama never wavered. At the age of 16, he returned from studying in Sungai Rotan. His father wanted to send Muhammad Rasul to Mecca to study religion. From the age of 16 to 23, he studied in Mecca, where one of his teachers was Syekh Muhammad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, a teacher he greatly admired and respected. As well as Syekh Ahmad Khatib, Abdul Karim also studied under other great teachers such as Abdullah Jamidin, Syekh Usman Syarawak, Syekh Umar Bajened, Syekh Saleh Fadal, Syekh Hamid Jeddah and Syekh Sai'id Yaman. (Hamka, 1982)

While in Mecca, Abdulkari was appointed by Ahmad Khatib to teach at the mosque, but he faced opposition from Syekhul Islam Muhammad Sa'id Babsila, the Mufti of the Mazhab Syafi'i, who banned him from teaching at the Grand Mosque. In 1906, he left Mecca and returned to his hometown. Upon hearing the news that Abdul Karim had returned from Mecca, people came to learn from him. Among his students were Abdul Hamid Hakim, Zainuddin Labai, Yusuf Amarullah, Ahmad Rasyid, Sutan Mansyur, Datuak Batuah, Jalaluddin Thaib, Mukhtar Lutfi and Hayim El Husni. There were actually many more students of his, but only the most famous ones are mentioned here.

Syekh Muhammad Jami Jambek

Muhammad Djamil was born on 2 February 1862, which was also the 13th of Sya'ban in the year 1279. He was of noble birth on both his mother's and father's side. His father, Muhammad Saleh Datuk Maleka, was the head of the Kurai village and a respected leader of the Guci tribe. Muhammad Djamil is a mixture of Minangkabau and Betawi because his mother was a transmigrant from Betawi from a family of nobles known as Cik Inyiaik Djambek. In 1896, Muhammad Jami was invited by his father to perform the Hajj to Mecca. However, his father died en route, and he was subsequently raised by Syekh Salim, a scholar in Mecca. He spent nine years in Mecca, during which time he was very diligent in studying religious sciences. After a year in Mecca, he met Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, who convinced him to abandon the magic he had learned from a Moroccan. Muhammad Jami was a contemporary of Abdul Karim Amarullah; they both studied under Syekh Ahmad Khatib, Syekh Taher Jalaluddin and Syekh Serawak. It was with Syekh Taher Jalaluddin that he studied astronomy; Syekh Taher was very impressed and acknowledged Muhammad Jami's expertise and superiority in the accuracy of his astronomical calculations. (ICSB, 1981)

Muhammad Jami was one of the ulama who became a figurehead for reform in Minangkabau. With his expertise in falak, he determined the direction of the prayer, found out the time of the solar and lunar eclipses, determined the first day of Ramadan, and compiled the imsakiyah schedule, which is published every year and distributed in the Al-Munir magazine, founded by H. Abdullah Ahmad. He also compiled a calendar for one hundred years, which is still on display at the Syekh Muhammad Jami Jambek mosque in the middle of the rice fields in Bukittinggi. (Novita Siswayanti, 2014)

Syekh Sulaiman al-Rasuli

This great Ulama was born in 1871 M, to the east of Bukittinggi. (Mestika Zed, dkk 2021). His father was named Muhammad Rasul, who was also a cleric, and his mother was Siti Buliah, a devout woman. Both his mother and father wanted Sulaiman ar-Rasuli to become an ulama. Therefore, they directed his education towards religious studies from an early age. He studied at the Batu Hampar Payakumbuh school, then at the Tuanku Sami Ilmiah boarding school in

Baso, and finally at the Sugayang Batusangkar school, where he studied under the renowned scholar Syekh Muhammad Taib Umar. Finally, he attended a pesantren in Halaban, Payakumbuh, led by Syekh Abdullah Halaban. He stayed there for a long time and was eventually entrusted with the role of assistant teacher. In 1903, he finally embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca to perform the Hajj and further his religious studies. (Sarwan, 2012)

While in Mecca, he studied under prominent scholars such as Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, Syekh Mukhtar At-Tharid, Syekh Nawawi Al-Batani, Syyyid Umar Bajened, and Syekh Sayid Babas El-Yamani. Some of Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli's friends from Minangkabau, who also lived and studied in Mecca, were Syekh Abdul Karim Amarullah, Syekh Muhammad Djamil Jambek, Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jaho and Syekh Abbas Padang Japang. After three years of studying in Mecca, in 1907 he returned to his home village to begin his struggle, devoting his life to religion, his country and his homeland. He is therefore remembered as one of the great Islamic scholars, educators and patriots. (ICSB, 1981)

Syekh Muhammad Jami Jaho

Syekh Djamil Jaho was born in Jaho, a village in the Tanah Datar district, in 1875. His father was Tuanku Kadhi Tambangan and his mother was Umbuik. Muhammad Jami received religious education from a young age due to his diligence and intelligence, and studied with prominent ulama of the time. In 1888, after completing the Quran, Muhammad Jami entered the Gunning Rajo boarding school, led by Syekh Djafri. After five years, he moved to the Tanjung Bungo Padang pesantren with his teacher, Syekh Ayub, where he first met Syekh Sulaiman ar-Rasuli, who would become his close friend. They became friends and comrades in arms. Together with Syekh Sulaiman ar-Rasuli, he moved to Halaban in 50 Kota. (ICSB, 1981)

After studying in Halaban for 20 years, he continued his education in the holy city of Mecca, where he studied with the renowned Minangkabau scholar, Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi. There, he studied alongside students from across Indonesia, including Syekh Abdul Karim Amarullah, Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli, Ibrahim Musa Parabek and Kiyai Ahmad Dahlan, among other ulama. After ten years of study in Mecca, he returned to Indonesia in 1918 and taught in Jaho and other places in West Sumatra. Syekh Muhammad Jami Jaho is one of the most prominent reformist ulama and educators in West Sumatra. In 1926, he founded the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI) organisation in Padang Panjang. He also established a Halaqoh in Kota Katik Lareh Nan Panjang and a Kualitas Syariah in Padang Panjang. In recognition of his contributions, he was awarded a medal by the Dutch in 1936. On 17 August 1977, he was awarded a certificate of appreciation by the Governor of West Sumatra in recognition of his services to education. (Januar, 2022)

Syekh Hasan Maksum

Syekh Hasan Maksum was a charismatic figure in his time. Born on Saturday, 17th Muharram 1301 H/1882 CE, the ulama, whose full name was Hasanuddin bin Muhammad Maksum Bakar and who was also known as Imam Paduka Tuan, was said by some sources to have been born in 1302 H in Labuhan Deli. Although he was offered a high position in the Deli kingdom, he declined it. However, he accepted it when he realised that the Sumatra

Timur region needed a religious leader to guide its people. (Basri, 2021) In 1894, Syekh Hasan Maksum continued his studies in Mecca and Medina. While there, he studied under prominent scholars such as Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, Syekh Abdul Salam, and Syekh Ahmad Hayat, to name a few. A scholar of extensive knowledge, he was not only a mufti in the

Deli Kingdom, but also prioritised teaching and mentoring his students. Many of his disciples went on to become renowned scholars themselves, including Muhammad Yunus, Abdul Malik, Abdurrahman, M. Baharuddin Thalib in Sibolga and Sahailuddin in Rantau Perapat, to name but a few. (Abdul Gani Jamora Nasutton, dkk, 2023)

Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin

Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin Al-Azhari Al-Falaki is from Minangkabau and comes from a prominent family. His mother was Gandam Urai and his father was Syekh Muhammad, also known as Tuanku Cangking. Gandam Urai, Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin's mother, had a brother named Limbak Urai who was the mother of Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al Mingkabawi. Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin was born on 7 December 1869 in Balai Gurah, Candung, Bukittinggi. He became an orphan at the age of two following the death of his father. His mother died in Koto Tuo Ampat when he was 9 years old. Following the death of both parents, Syekh Tahir was raised by his aunt, Limbak Urai. (Hasbi, n.d.)

Syekh Tahir travelled to Mecca at the age of 11, where he stayed with Syekh Ahmad Khatib. He studied with Syekh Ahmad Khatib and other Meccan scholars, including Syekh Abd al-Haq, Syekh Umar Syatha, Syekh Muhammad al-Khayat and Syekh Bakri Syatha. The subjects he studied included Quranic studies, Nahwu, Sarof, Balaghah, A'rud, Usul Fiqh, Handasah, Falak and mathematics. He also assisted Syekh Ahmad Khatib in teaching other students, particularly those from Melayu. As one of the most intelligent and quickest to learn Arabic among his peers, he also helped Syekh Ahmad Khatib teach Malay students the Arabic language. ((Nizam & Osman, 2022)

After studying and working as a teacher in Saudi Arabia, Syekh Tahir wanted to expand his knowledge further, so he continued his journey to Egypt, where he studied at Al-Azhar University. During his time there, he devoted much of his time to studying, and he became known as Al-Falaki because of his expertise in astronomy. During his time in Egypt, Syekh Tahir was influenced by the ideas of Rashid Rida, who was a student of Muhammad Abduh and a proponent of Islamic reform. After studying in Egypt for two and a half years, he returned to Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj and continue his studies, as well as helping his cousin Ahmad Khatib. (Hasbi, n.d.).

After completing his studies in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Syekh Tahir returned to Melayu. He began to reform the education system, including by establishing a madrasah and introducing new subjects such as science, mathematics and English, although he was not the first to establish a madrasah in the Malay world. (Nizam & Osman, 2022) Syekh Tahir also founded the Al-Imam magazine in Singapore in 1906 alongside his fellow fighters. Syekh Ahmad Alhadi (1867–1934) and Haji Abbas bin Muhammad bin Taha. Salim Al-Kalali, Haji Mustafa bin Ismail, Muhammad bin Aqil bin Yahya and Syed Hasan Shahab also helped with the management, publication and distribution of the magazine. (Sarwan et al, 2020) Despite its short lifespan of around two years, it inspired religious and educational reform within the Malay community. Majalah Al-Imam. It was distributed to various regions, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Syekh Tahir Jalaluddin, an eminent Nusantara scholar, produced numerous works on legislation and made significant contributions to the development of various disciplines, including fiqh. Falak, Dakwah dan Pendidikan. He was also a pioneer of the revival movement and is considered the most prominent figure in the idea of a revival of Islam in the Malay Peninsula. (Malik & Hamid, 2021)

Conclusion

The network established by Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi spread throughout the Malay world through his disciples and played a significant role in the intellectual development of Islam in this region. Since Islam entered Nusantara, the close relationship between Malay ulama and Islamic centres of learning in the Middle East, such as Mecca and Medina, has accelerated the transmission of religious knowledge and Islamic reform ideas. Islam's development in the Malay world occurred through three main network structures: 1) Vertical and horizontal networks, i.e. relationships between teachers and students, and between teachers. Spider's web networks, based on the surau and madrasah system with many branches. The spiral network, whereby students return to their home regions and establish new centres of learning.

Ulama who settled in Malaysia, such as Tahir Jalaluddin, played a key role in the development and renewal of religion in Malaysia and Singapore. Key figures who spread Islam and built extensive networks of knowledge in Indonesia include Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, Abdullah Ahmad, KH Hasyim Asy'ari and KH Ahmad Dahlan. The Ulama network of Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi and his disciples brought a knowledge lineage that connected the Malay community with the global Islamic tradition. The relationship between the ulama of Nusantara and those of the Middle East strengthened the Malay world's Islamic identity and formed global Muslim solidarity. Thus, the ulama network functions not only as a transmission route for knowledge, but also as an important instrument in forming Islamic social, political, and cultural systems in the Malay world.

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