Reformist Ulama and Remembered Father: Haji Rasul in Early Twentieth-Century Minangkabau and in Buya Hamka's Memoir *Ayahku*

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Abstract

Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, known as Haji Rasul, was a prominent figure in early twentieth-century Minangkabau Islamic reform. His son Hamka's *Ayahku* provides a substantial account of that career while also recording how reformist authority was remembered within a family. This article examines both Haji Rasul's public role and Hamka's construction of his *fath*er as a historical subject. It applies the historical method through heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, reading the 2019 edition of *Ayahku* alongside Hamka's *au*tobiographical and *historical writings and scholarship by* Murni Djamal, Taufik Abdullah, and James L. Peacock. The analysis connects doctrinal disputes, the Belasting crisis, religious education, print activity, and opposition to the Guru Ordonansi without reducing these episodes to a single political trajectory. It identifies a recurring narrative emphasis on principled religious judgment, educational responsibility, and collective deliberation. Comparison with Kenang-kenangan Hidup reveals a different emphasis on childhood discipline and emotional distance, followed by accounts of intellectual companionship and affection. Erikson's concept of identification helps interpret this relationship as represented in the texts, rather than establish a psychological diagnosis of Hamka. The article argues that Ayahku's biographical subjectivity offers evidence about the remembrance of reformist authority, while its factual claims still require contextual verification. Its contribution lies in relating *Haji Rasu*l's institutional history to the narrative practices through which his son preserved, questioned, and reinterpreted his legacy.

Keywords: Haji Rasul, Kaum Muda, Islamic reform, Minangkabau, Hamka, biography, historiography

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Introduction

Throughout Indonesian history, the ulama have occupied a position far more consequential than that of religious functionaries, serving as educators, moral leaders, and agents of social change from the thirteenth century onward, as Islam took root in the archipelago. In the pre-colonial period, the closeness between ulama and ruler was itself a defining feature of Islamic polities in the region, as Ibn Battuta observed of Sultan Malik al-Zahir of Samudera Pasai, whose fondness for scholarly discussion signaled the ulama's centrality to courtly intellectual and spiritual life.[1] Under colonial rule, these relations also included resistance to political authority: ulama returning from Mecca frequently supplied religious justification for anti-colonial uprisings, from the Java War to the Padri War and the Banten rebellion.[2] That structural importance persisted after independence, as ulama continued to shape the Muslim community's social and intellectual life through educational institutions, religious organizations, and public discourse.[3]

The documentation of such figures' lives has itself become an enduring intellectual tradition, producing biographies such as Ajip Rosidi's *M. Natsir: Sebuah Biografi*, Abu Hamid's study of Syekh Yusuf, and various accounts of Haji Agus Salim.[4] Among these works, Buya Hamka's *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera*—first published in 1950 and reissued several times since, including the Gema Insani edition of 2019 used here—occupies a distinctive place.[5] Its subject, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, better known as Haji Rasul, was a pioneering figure of Islamic reform in early twentieth-century West Sumatra, whose Sumatera Thawalib schools instilled a spirit of rationality and independent thought that later informed the broader emergence of the modern Islamic madrasah in Indonesia.[6] He is accordingly counted among the principal figures of the Kaum Muda reform movement in Minangkabau and Indonesia at large.[7]

What distinguishes *Ayahku* from other reformist biographies is that its author was also the subject's son. Hamka wrote not merely as a chronicler but as a witness and, in the book's own events, occasionally as a participant.[8] This proximity produces an evident tension: on one hand, the possibility of subjectivity and hagiographic

[1] Jajat Burhanudin, ULAMA & KEKUASAAN: Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012), 15-16.

[2] Jajat Burhanudin, ULAMA & KEKUASAAN: Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012), 139-147.

[3] Jajat Burhanudin, ULAMA & KEKUASAAN: Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012), 2-3.

[4] Desman, Robi Aroka, Martin Kustati, and Nana Sepriyanti, "Penelitian Tokoh," INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research 3 (2023).

[5] M. Misbahul Amri, "Auto/Biografi Indonesia: Sejarah dan Telaah Singkat" (Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Negeri Malang, 2008), 54.

[6] Novita Siswayanti, "Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah Ulama Pembaharu Islam di Minangkabau," DIALOG: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Keagamaan 39 (2016), 34.

[7] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 6-10.

[8] Sahidin Wahyudi and Ahmad Fatoni, "The Relevance of Islamic Education Concept Abdul Karim Amrullah's Perspective in the Contemporary Era," Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature 4 (2024), 62-65.

embellishment that attends any child's portrait of a parent; on the other, a documentary value that only such closeness could produce—accounts of domestic encounters and personal exchanges that are less visible in institutional records.[9] It is this tension that makes *Ayahku* worth interrogating both as a historical source about Haji Rasul and as a historiographical object in its own right—asking how Hamka constructed his father's historical image, through what narrative choices, and to what extent the resulting portrait can serve as evidence for the history of Islamic reform in Minangkabau.

The scholarship discussed here approaches Ayahku largely through literary and da'wah-oriented lenses, emphasizing its moral instruction and its account of the relationship between Haji Rasul's reformism and the subsequent rise of Muhammadiyah. Muhamad Ikbal's study of Muhammadiyah's introduction to Minangkabau identifies Haji Rasul as a pioneer who laid the movement's earliest foundations in the region, although he never formally joined the organization. Ahmad Nabil Amir and Tasnim Abdul Rahman subsequently examine Ayahku through the transmission of reformist thought from Muhammad Abduh to Hamka, presenting Haji Rasul as an intermediary rather than the central subject of analysis.[10] A more direct examination appears in Murni Djamal's 1975 McGill thesis, published in 2002 as Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: *Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20*. This work situates Haji Rasul within the broader Kaum Tua–Kaum Muda conflict and the dissemination of Islamic reformist ideas from the Hijaz to Southeast Asia.[11] Djamal's study, however, draws on *Ayahku* as one source among several rather than reading the memoir as a historiographical text in itself; studies centered on *Ayahku* have tended to subordinate Haji Rasul's personal biography to institutional questions about Muhammadiyah's spread.

The distinction between reconstructing Haji Rasul's career and *examining* its representation provides the article's starting *point. Stu*dies of institutions and reformist ideas establish an essential context, but leave room for a closer comparison of the public biography in Ayahku with the family recollections in Kenang-kenangan Hidup. This article asks how those different narrative emphases shape the image of Haji Rasul as reformer and father. It first examines his activity within Minangkabau's religious and institutional history, then considers Hamka's selection of episodes, attribution of testimony, and portrayal of the father–son relationship. Erikson's concept of identification serves as an interpretive aid for that comparison. The contribution is a source-critical reading of biography as both an account of historical action and a record of how authority was remembered and transmitted, rather than a claim that previous scholarship has never considered Hamka's relationship with his father.

[9] Muhamad Ikbal, "Sejarah Keberadaan Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau Perspektif Hamka dalam Karya '*Ayahku*'" (Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2017), 5-6.

[10] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 6-10.

[11] Novita Siswayanti, "Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah Ulama Pembaharu Islam di Minangkabau," DIALOG: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Keagamaan 39 (2016), 34.

Method

This article applies the historical method, understood in Kuntowijoyo's four-step formulation as heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.[12]

Heuristics. The Greek root *heuriskein*, "to find," designates the sustained work of searching, tracing, and assembling material relevant to the research problem.[13] Sources were divided into primary and secondary categories: primary sources are original records produced by participants in or witnesses to the events under study,[14] while secondary sources are accounts produced without direct contemporaneous access to those events.[15] The primary sources are Hamka's *Ayahku* (2019 edition), read together with his *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* (volumes I and II), *Islam dan Adat Minangkabau*, and *Sedjarah Islam di Sumatera*—the latter three used to compare narrative emphases and supplement topics not fully developed in *Ayahku*. Secondary sources include the scholarship of Murni Djamal, Taufik Abdullah, James L. Peacock, Moeflich Hasbullah, Deliar Noer, Burhanuddin Daya, and other historians of Minangkabau's reform movement and of Hamka's intellectual biography, together with journal literature on Haji Rasul and *Ayahku*..

Source criticism.[16] External criticism distinguishes the composition of[17] *Ayahku*, first published in 1950, from the later edition consulted. The account includes testimony attributed to encounters with Tuanku Syekh Abbas in 1961 and 1962. Such passages cannot have formed part of the 1950 text and prevent an assumption that subsequent editions changed only spelling. The extent and sequence of revision require comparison across editions; this study therefore attributes passages to the 2019 edition without treating them as unchanged evidence from the first publication.[18] Internal criticism examines Hamka's position as[19] son, pupil, narrator, and collector of testimony. He could recall parts of his father's later life directly, but events before his own childhood necessarily depend on other accounts. Family proximity provides access to particular experiences without guaranteeing their accuracy or eliminating affection and retrospective selection. Comparisons with other histories are accordingly assessed for source dependence: an account that itself relies on Ayahku cannot automatically serve as independent corroboration. English renderings of reported speech are read as translations of Hamka's narrative, not contemporaneous transcripts of the original exchanges.

Interpretation. Interpretation relates critically assessed sources to the research questions.[20] Kuntowijoyo cautions that interpretation is often mistaken for mere subjectivity, when a historian working methodically instead discloses sources and

[12] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 71.
[13] Sulasman, Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah (Bandung: CV Pustaka Setia, 2014), 93.
[14] Nina Herlina, *Metode Sejarah* (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 24.
[15] Nina Herlina, Metode Sejarah (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 26-27.
[16] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 77-78.
[17] Nina Herlina, *Metode Sejarah* (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 46-51.
[18] Sulasman, Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah (Bandung: CV Pustaka Setia, 2014), 104.
[19] Nina Herlina, *Metode Sejarah* (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 52-55.
[20] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 78.

reasoning at every step, allowing readers to retrace or contest the argument.[21] It proceeds through analysis, the unpacking of individual facts, and synthesis, their integration into a coherent account.[22] For the dimension of this study concerned with *Ayahku* as a historiographical and biographical text—the emotional and ideological relationship between Hamka and his father as represented in the memoir—this article draws on Erik H. Erikson's concept of identification, the process by which a child progressively internalizes the values, expectations, and role images of a significant figure, typically a parent, synthesizing them into a distinct identity.[23] This provides a way to interpret the relationship depicted in the texts, including distance, discipline, and periodic conflict; it does not establish a clinical account of Hamka's development. Interpretation therefore moves along two axes: a historical axis concerned with Haji Rasul's representation as a reformist ulama within early twentieth-century Minangkabau Islam, and a personal axis concerned with how Hamka's memory shaped his portrayal of his father.

Historiography. The final stage arranges critically assessed evidence and interpretation into a coherent historical narrative.[24] This article's historiography proceeds in two movements: the first reconstructs Haji Rasul's biography and reformist activity chronologically and thematically, from his education through Mecca to his final years in Jakarta; the second reads *Ayahku* itself as a historiographical artifact—Hamka's own act of historical writing—examining how a text combining personal memory with historical reconstruction can be positioned within, rather than apart from, the broader tradition of biography and historiography of Islam in Indonesia.

Results

Minangkabau and the Kaum Tua–Kaum Muda Divide

Minangkabau, part of colonial Sumatra's West Coast Residency, was a region of pronounced geographical and social distinctiveness, its fertile highlands clustered around Mounts Merapi, Singgalang, and Sago.[25] Social life was organized around the *Luhak Nan Tigo*—Agam, Tanah Datar, and Lima Puluh Kota—as ancestral heartland, with the *Rantau* forming the outward zone of migration.[2627] The Minangkabau tradition of *merantau*, undertaken as much for social and intellectual maturation as for

[21] Kuntowijoyo, Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018), 78-80.
[22] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton & Company, 1968), 158-159.
[23] Sulasman, Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah (Bandung: CV Pustaka Setia, 2014), 147.
[24] Nina Herlina, *Metode Sejarah* (Bandung: Satya Historika, 2020), 78-83.
[25] *Ensiklopedi Islam*, Jilid III (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 1994), 233.
[26] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 29.
[27] A.M. Datuk Maruhun Batuah and D.H. Bagindo Tanameh, *Hukum Adat dan Adat Minangkabau: Luhak Nan Tiga, Laras Nan Dua* (Djakarta: N.V Poesaka Aseli, n.d.), 37-40.

economic gain,[28] connected the region to wider centers of learning and produced successive generations of prominent figures.[29]

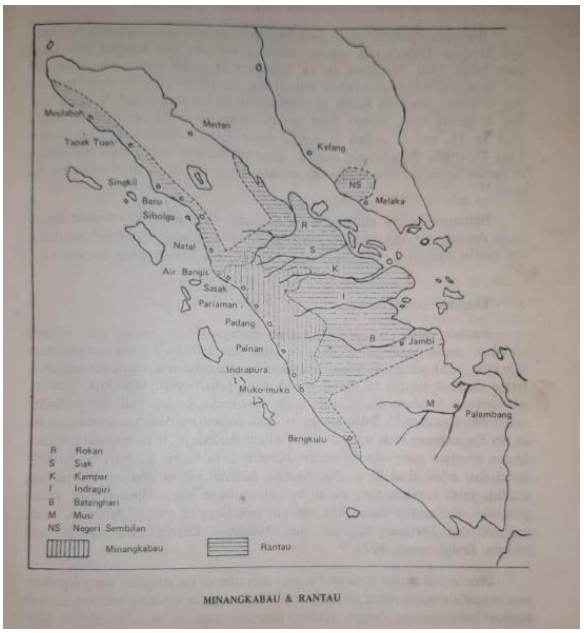


Figure 1 Map of Minangkabau and its *rantau* zones[30]

Adherence to *adat* alongside Islam produced recurring friction, a tension that peaked in the Padri War (1803–1838).[31] "Padri" most plausibly derives either from the Acehnese port of Pidie, where early reformers had studied, or from the Portuguese *padre*.[32] The movement's roots lay in Wahhabi ideas brought home around 1803 by three hajis—Haji Miskin, Haji Sumanik, and Haji Piabang—who returned determined to eliminate gambling, cockfighting, opium use, and *adat* practices they judged un-Islamic.[33][34] What began as religious reform became entangled with contests for local power and, decisively, with Dutch colonial intervention.[35] The war's end in the 1830s consolidated Dutch control, yet the reformist impulse migrated into calmer, more durable channels centered on education rather than force.[36] These later developments should not be treated as an immediate or exclusive consequence of military defeat;

[28] Tsuyoshi Kato, *Matriliny and Migration: Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 11-14.

[29] Mochtar Naim, *Merantau: Pola Migrasi Suku Minangkabau* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1979), 12-13.

[30] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981).

[31] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 3-4.

[32] *Ensiklopedi Islam*, Jilid IV (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 1994).

[33] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 4-5.

[34] *Ensiklopedi Islam*, Jilid IV (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 1994), 66.

[35] Audrey Kahin, *Dari Pemberontakan ke Integrasi: Sumatera Barat dan Politik Indonesia 1926-1998* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), 6-11.

[36] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 6.

changes in education and religious networks also shaped the setting of subsequent reform.[37]

By the turn of the twentieth century, ulama returning from Mecca grew dissatisfied with an educational system they considered stagnant. Among the transitional figures was Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (1855–1916), imam of the Shafi'i school at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, who—though he never returned to Minangkabau—shaped a generation of students, Haji Rasul among them.[3839] Syekh Ahmad Khatib was notably critical of Minangkabau's matrilineal inheritance system as incompatible with Islamic *faraidh* law. His students returned to a religious landscape increasingly polarized between Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda—contrasting tendencies in religious interpretation, whose boundaries were not uniform.[40] Kaum Tua adhered to Shafi'i jurisprudence, accepted tarekat practice as legitimate religious life, remained closely bound to *adat* authority, and regarded *taklid*—following past scholars' rulings without independent verification—as humility rather than intellectual weakness.[41] Kaum Muda, by contrast, insisted on the Qur'an and Hadith as sole ultimate authorities, rejected *taklid* for *ijtihad*, criticized practices they considered *bid'ah*, and called for educational reform.[4243] Haji Rasul stood among Kaum Muda's most consistent representatives; the contest unfolded not only in academic debate but across mosque pulpits, periodicals, and within families.

Formation of an Ulama: Education in Minangkabau and Mecca

Muhammad Rasul—as Haji Rasul was known before his pilgrimage—was born on 17 Safar 1296 AH, corresponding to 10 February 1879, in Kampung Kepala Kabun, Nagari Sungai Batang, Maninjau.[4445] His father, Syekh Muhammad Amrullah, was himself an established figure in local religious scholarship, providing both social legitimacy and an intellectually formative household.

[37] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 9-17.

[38] Hamka, *Sedjarah Islam di Sumatera* (Medan: Pustaka Nasional, 1950), 38.

[39] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 45-47.

[40] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 6-8.

[41] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 74-75.

[42] B.J.O. Schrieke, *Pergolakan Agama di Sumatera Barat: Sebuah Sumbangan Bibliografi* (Jakarta: BHRATARA, 1973), 57.

[43] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 1-2.

[44] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 47.

[45] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 60.

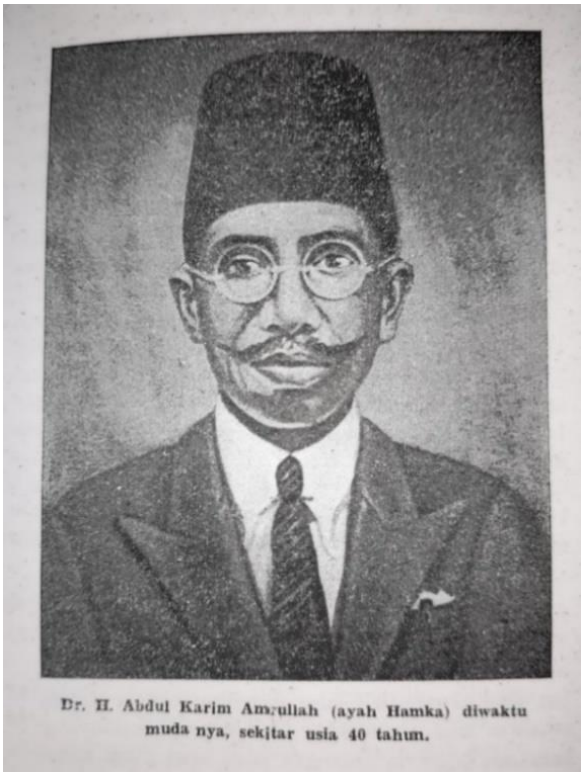


Figure 2 Portrait of Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah (Haji Rasul), father of Hamka, at approximately forty years of age[46]

Directed by his father toward religious scholarship,[47] Muhammad Rasul began formal instruction at age ten under his uncle Haji Abdussamad in Sibalantai, Painan, studying Qur'anic recitation with Tuanku Haji Hud and Tuanku Fakih Samnun.[48] From age thirteen he studied *nahwu* and *sharaf* under his own father[49] and *fiqh* and *tafsir* under Sutan Muhammad Yusuf,[50] a pattern of network-based learning typical of the period. In 1894, he was sent to Mecca, then the principal international center of Islamic learning.[51] There he studied for roughly seven years under Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi,[52] alongside future reformers including Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek and Syekh Abdullah Ahmad,[53] and several other Meccan teachers.[54] Hamka records that his father was an unusually assertive student, unwilling merely to listen in silence and prepared to question or even challenge his teachers—a trait

[46] Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974).

[47] Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1980), 45.

[48] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 62.

[49] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 123.

[50] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 21.

[51] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 58.

[52] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 63-64.

[53] Hamka, *Sedjarah Islam di Sumatera* (Medan: Pustaka Nasional, 1950), 39.

[54] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019).

Syekh Ahmad Khatib is said to have specifically valued.[55] Following the custom of adopting a new name upon completing study in Mecca, Muhammad Rasul returned home as Abdul Karim Amrullah.[56]

His homecoming was met with ceremonial honor: his father received the title Tuanku Syekh Nan Tuo, while he received Tuanku Syekh Nan Mudo, formalizing their recognized religious authority.[57] He married Raihanah binti Haji Zakaria shortly thereafter, but in 1903 returned to Mecca to accompany younger siblings pursuing their own studies, bringing his wife while leaving an infant daughter in Minangkabau. There he began teaching independently and briefly taught within the Grand Mosque itself before being barred by the Shafi'i mufti Sheikh Muhammad Sa'id Babsil, who questioned his authority to teach there.[58] Haji Rasul defended himself by pointing to a structural problem in cross-cultural religious transmission: Arab ulama, he argued, could not adequately convey Islamic teaching to a Malay-speaking populace they did not understand linguistically, whereas he and his fellow Jawi students commanded both languages.[59] "I acknowledge the Mufti's high standing and vast learning," he told the objecting official, "but the Mufti is an Arab and cannot understand our Malay tongue—how then can it reach our ignorant people, when we understand both languages? If the Mufti forbids us to teach religion, then the Mufti obstructs God's path, and does not care for my unfortunate people."[60] He ultimately deferred to his teacher's counsel and ceased teaching at the mosque, an episode illustrating the contested position of Jawi scholars within Mecca's religious authority structure.

This second Mecca sojourn also brought personal loss: his son with Raihanah died a day after birth, and Raihanah herself died five months later.[61] His father's letter urging his return—prompted both by these losses and by his own advancing age and need for a successor—brought Haji Rasul back to Minangkabau after performing the hajj in 1906.[62] He remarried, to Raihanah's sister Syafiah, and began teaching at the Muara Pauh surau, which rapidly became a regional center of instruction.[63] His father

[55] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 64.

[56] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 124.

[57] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 67.

[58] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 125.

[59] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 68.

[60] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 69.

[61] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 70.

[62] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 71.

[63] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 72.

died in 1907; nine months and ten days later, Syafiah bore a son named Abdul Malik, after a son of Syekh Ahmad Khatib—the child who would become known as Hamka.[64]

Return, Marriage, and the First Confrontations with Kaum Tua

Haji Rasul's homecoming had long been anticipated by friends and former fellow students who had returned earlier.[65] It also carried an inherent tension: his father was a respected Naqsyabandiyah *tarekat* shaykh, while his own teacher in Mecca had been notably critical of tarekat practices he judged lacking scriptural basis, articulated in Syekh Ahmad Khatib's treatise *Izhharu Zughalil Kazhibin*.[66] Out of filial respect, Haji Rasul initially avoided raising these objections within his own family.[67] The conflict became public at a gathering at Haji Jamil's house in Kampung Pondok, Padang, to discuss Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah practice, where Haji Rasul argued forcefully against the legitimacy of *rabithah*, provoking a protracted debate in which he reportedly declared, with characteristic bluntness, that "even a child just learning its letters could understand what I have explained"—a remark that visibly offended several senior ulama present.[68] Even so, Hamka's narrative insists Haji Rasul never allowed this doctrinal confrontation to harden into estrangement from his father, who for his part maintained relations with his own tarekat-following students while avoiding open conflict with his son.[69]

The tension resurfaced, more consequentially, at Syekh Muhammad Amrullah's death in 1907. Adat custom prescribed a hundred-day cycle of commemorative feasts (*kenduri*); Haji Rasul, while participating fully in his father's funeral rites, publicly objected to the *kenduri* itself as an unwarranted innovation resembling prohibited lamentation (*wahsyah*), arguing that Islamic teaching called instead for visiting and material support to the bereaved family.[70][71] The dispute, joined chiefly by his uncle Haji Muhammad Nur, was resolved in favor of continuing the customary *kenduri*, and for the hundred-day observance Haji Rasul's own surau at Muara Pauh stood conspicuously empty, effectively boycotted by a community that

[64] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 72-73.
[65] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 85-86.
[66] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 86.
[67] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 86-87.
[68] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 89.
[69] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 90.
[70] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 93.
[71] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 93.

had rallied to the traditional practice; some accused him outright of filial impiety.[72][73] The episode shows reform beginning at the most intimate scale—within Haji Rasul's own household—before it extended outward.

Confronting Crisis: The Belasting Unrest and the Limits of Reconciliation

Family friction over the funeral did not end with the *kenduri*. A further disagreement arose when family elders planned to erect an elaborate gravestone for Syekh Muhammad Amrullah; Haji Rasul urged a modest marker instead, fearing the site would become an object of veneration—a concern Hamka associates with later reports of pilgrims leaving offerings and burning incense there.[74] Muara Pauh's attendance dipped for a time, though Haji Rasul continued teaching at surau elsewhere in the region.[75]

Late in 1907, news spread of the Dutch colonial government's plan to impose the land tax known as *belasting*—experienced by Minangkabau as a denial of their customary right to the land itself.[76] Reactions varied: many migrated to Malaya via established *merantau* circuits, while elsewhere open revolt broke out in 1908 at Kamang, Manggopoh, Ulakan, and elsewhere, suppressed by superior colonial firepower.[77][78] In Maninjau, the *ninik mamak* of Nagari IV Koto convened secretly at Bukit Batas Kuda; Haji Rasul, present as a *ninik mamak* of the Piliang clan, judged that open rebellion would bring ruin with little prospect of success.[79] Afterward, part of the community turned toward invulnerability magic, sorcery, and *martabat tujuh* mysticism—practices Haji Rasul held to have no basis in Islamic teaching. When one adherent came to Muara Pauh to ask about these teachings, Haji Rasul explained that such practices relied on entities other than God, a form of *shirk*, criticizing the popular belief that a person "united" with God could become impervious to the laws of nature.[80] He invited the visitor to study *tawhid* at his surau instead, and over time growing numbers—including former sorcery practitioners—abandoned the old practices for religious study.[81] The episode culminated in a public burning of amulets

[72] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 94-96.

[73] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 96.

[74] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 97.

[75] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 96.

[76] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 98-99.

[77] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 100.

[78] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 100.

[79] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 101.

[80] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 102.

[81] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 103-104.

and manuscripts, which Hamka presents as a symbolic break with practices Haji Rasul opposed, without establishing that they disappeared throughout the district.[82] Colonial recognition for preserving order nonetheless went not to Haji Rasul but to the compliant *adat* official Tuanku Laras, who received the Bintang Tanjung medal—prompting the wry local saying: "Haji Abdul Karim opened the study circle; Tuanku Laras received the medal."[83]

Institutionalizing Reform: Al-Munir and Sumatera Thawalib

By the early 1910s, Kaum Muda reformers recognized that surau-based teaching alone could not carry reform to a wide enough public, and turned to print. *Al-Munir*, founded in Padang, drew directly on the model of Singapore's *Al-Imam*,[84] whose most consequential figure, Syekh Muhammad Thaher bin Muhammad Jalaluddin al-Azhari, was himself Minangkabau-born and Al-Azhar-educated.[85] Haji Rasul and Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, *Al-Munir*'s eventual founder, had both earlier served as *Al-Imam*'s representatives for the Danau Maninjau and Padang Panjang districts.[86] *Al-Munir* began publication on 1 April 1911 (1 Rabiul Akhir 1329 AH), in Jawi script.[87]

[82] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 104.

[83] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 105.

[84] Jajat Burhanudin, *ULAMA & KEKUASAAN: Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012), 284-288.

[85] Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Jaringan Global dan Lokal* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 187-188.

[86] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 110-111.

[87] Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara: Jaringan Global dan Lokal* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 197.



Figure 3 Front page of the journal Al-Munir, the reformist periodical to which Haji Rasul was among the most active contributing writers.[88]

Syekh Abdullah Ahmad served as founder and editor-in-chief, with Haji Rasul, Moh. Dahlan St. Lembak Tuah, H.A. Thaib Umar, and St. Muhammad Salim as principal writers and Syekh Ibrahim Musa Parabek and Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek among the contributing editors.[89] The journal followed the pattern *Al-Imam* had set, becoming, after *Al-Imam*'s 1909 closure, an important vehicle of Islamic reform publishing in the region.[90] Its opening editorial declared its purpose as leading the nation's youth toward correct religious belief, useful knowledge, honest livelihood, and peaceable relations among people, while defending Islam against misrepresentation.[91] Content ranged across *aqidah*, *fiqh*, and Qur'anic exegesis to the Prophet's biography and news of the wider Islamic world, with a reader-question

[88] Fachri Syamsuddin, "Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Awal Abad XX: Studi terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, dan Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah" (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2004).

[89] Fachri Syamsuddin, "Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Awal Abad XX: Studi terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, dan Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah" (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2004).

[90] Jajat Burhanudin, *ULAMA & KEKUASAAN: Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012), 287-291.

[91] Fachri Syamsuddin, "Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Awal Abad XX: Studi terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, dan Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah" (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2004), 177.

column fielding roughly ninety inquiries in its first year.[9293] Haji Rasul, though not the journal's formal founder, was among its most active and influential writers, spanning theology, jurisprudence, exegesis, and direct rebuttal of Kaum Tua positions.[94] Syekh Abdullah Ahmad's editorial workload eventually left his own teaching commitments unstable, prompting him to bring Haji Rasul to Padang to help with instruction and the journal's writing; there Haji Rasul also began regular teaching at Abdullah Ahmad's Surau Jembatan Besi in Padang Panjang, commuting between the two cities.[9596]

The more durable institutional legacy proved educational, as reform shifted from open polemic toward cultivating a younger generation to carry it forward.[97] The Kaum Muda program rested on three pillars—eliminating perceived *bid'ah*, privileging reason alongside faith, and making Islam the ideological foundation for social change—pursued through graded classes replacing the traditional *halaqah* system, added general subjects, and hybrid madrasah such as Syekh Abdullah Ahmad's HIS Adabiyah in Padang.[9899100] Surau Jembatan Besi in Padang Panjang, under instruction traceable to before 1900, passed through several hands before Haji Rasul, invited by Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, began commuting between the two surau to teach, later extending his activity to Padang once Abdullah Ahmad founded the Adabiyah School.[101102103] On Syekh Abdullatief's death its congregation asked Haji Rasul to lead the institution, and in 1912 he became its sole head.[104] In 1916, inspired partly by a lecture on European educational progress and partly by organizational models Haji Rasul had observed in Java through Tjokroaminoto and Ahmad Dahlan,

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[92] Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1980), 47-48.

[93] Fachri Syamsuddin, "Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Awal Abad XX: Studi terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, dan Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah" (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2004), 177.

[94] Fachri Syamsuddin, "Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Awal Abad XX: Studi terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syekh Abdullah Ahmad, dan Syekh Abdul Karim Amrullah" (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2004), 176-177.

[95] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 115-118.

[96] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 127.

[97] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 27.

[98] Murni Djamal, Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20 (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 28.

[99] *Sejarah Sosial di Daerah Sumatera Barat* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1983), 95.

[100] *Sejarah Sosial di Daerah Sumatera Barat* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1983), 96.

[101] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 79-82.

[102] Burhanuddin Daya, Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 85.

[103] Burhanuddin Daya, Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 85-86.

[104] Dedy Pradesa, Siti Umayatun, and M. Abdul Aziz, "Gerakan Dakwah Pembaharuan: Dari Surau Jembatan Besi sampai Sumatra Thawalib Padang Panjang," Jurnal Kajian & Pengembangan Manajemen Dakwah 08 (2018), 39.

students founded a cooperative society, initially *Persaiyoan* or *Sabun*, later renamed Thuwailib.[105][106][107] Parallel organizations at Surau Parabek evolved similarly, and after the 1917 founding of the Jong Sumatranen Bond in Batavia, the Padang Panjang and Parabek bodies renamed themselves Sumatera Thuwailib before federating as Sumatera Thawalib, with 15 February 1918 reported in one chronology and 1919 in others.[108][109][110][111] The curriculum was reorganized into graded classes—eventually seven—with Haji Rasul teaching the highest level while also teaching at the government teacher-training normal school.[112][113] By 1928 the network comprised some thirty-nine Thawalib madrasah with roughly seventeen thousand students; in 1920 Haji Rasul, with Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, advised the newly founded PGAI (Persatuan Guru-Guru Agama Islam).[114][115]

Muhammadiyah, the Guru Ordonansi Confrontation, and Exile

By the early 1920s, Sumatera Thawalib's internal politics had shifted in ways that troubled Haji Rasul: communist and Marxist ideas, which he regarded as incompatible with a religiously grounded social order, had gained currency among some students. Around 1923 he resigned to concentrate his teaching at his own home in Padang Panjang.[116] His firm stance cost him part of his following, though it did not halt his activity.[117] A 1925 journey to Java, to visit his eldest daughter Fathimah, brought him into sustained contact with Muhammadiyah through his son-in-law Sutan Mansur.[118] On returning to Minangkabau he introduced Muhammadiyah locally, and Sendi Aman Tiang Selamat was reconstituted as the movement's first

[105] Afifi Fauzi Abbas and Abdullah A Afifi, "Sumatera Thawalib dan Ide Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau (1918-1930)," AL-IMAM: Journal on Islamic Studies, Civilisation and Learning Societies 3 (2022), 39.

[106] Dedy Pradesa, Siti Umayatun, and M. Abdul Aziz, "Gerakan Dakwah Pembaharuan: Dari Surau Jembatan Besi sampai Sumatra Thawalib Padang Panjang," Jurnal Kajian & Pengembangan Manajemen Dakwah 08 (2018), 39.

[107] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 136.

[108] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 88.

[109] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 35.

[110] Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), 89.

[111] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 35.

[112] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 137-138.

[113] Hamka, *Islam dan Adat Minangkabau* (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), 185.

[114] Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Jakarta: KENCANA, 2017), 99.

[115] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 154.

[116] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 168-170.

[117] Hamka, *Islam dan Adat Minangkabau* (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), 186.

[118] Hamka, Islam dan Adat Minangkabau (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), 188-189.

Minangkabau branch, centered at Nagari Sungai Batang.[119] Although he never formally joined, Haji Rasul is credited with accelerating the movement's regional acceptance. In 1926 he traveled to Cairo with Syekh Abdullah Ahmad as a PGAI delegate to the caliphate conference—originally planned for 1924 but delayed by regional instability—receiving an honorary doctorate in religious studies.[120][121][122] The return journey from Egypt coincided with a severe earthquake in Padang Panjang, damaging Haji Rasul's residence and Surau Jembatan Besi and marking the end of his active presence there before he returned to Sungai Batang.[123]

The most consequential confrontation with colonial authority came over the *guru ordonantie*, colonial regulation of religious teachers first applied in Java and Madura from 1905, under which "every non-Christian religious teacher was required to obtain a teaching license from the native leadership," whose proposed extension to Minangkabau became a focus of opposition in the 1920s.[124][125] Ulama understood the policy as an instrument of political control targeting independent religious teachers as potential centers of resistance. When news of its planned extension reached Haji Rasul through Sutan Mansur, fresh from a Muhammadiyah congress in Yogyakarta that had condemned the policy, Sutan Mansur floated the idea of leaving Minangkabau altogether should the policy take effect; Haji Rasul rejected it outright: "No, we must not abandon this land. We are obliged to fight it by every lawful means, even if only our ribs remain. Where else is there a time to strive in God's way, if not now."[126],[127] On 14 June 1928 he convened some twenty Kaum Muda ulama and their students at Syekh Muhammad Jamil Jambek's surau in Bukittinggi to plan a response,[128] and later rebuffed a personal approach from the colonial official Dr. De Vries, insisting any decision required collective deliberation among Minangkabau's ulama.[129]

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[119] Muhamad Ikbal, "Sejarah Keberadaan Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau Perspektif Hamka dalam Karya '*Ayahku*'" (Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2017), 52-53.

[120] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 129.

[121] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 177-182.

[122] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 81.

[123] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 188-190.

[124] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 111.

[125] Taufik Abdullah, Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933) (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 111.

[126] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 107.

[127] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 197.

[128] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 113.

[129] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 131.

The resulting mass conference on 18 August 1928 drew more than two thousand ulama and organizational representatives, together with colonial officials including De Vries, in an atmosphere of open tension.[130] When his turn came to speak, Haji Rasul delivered an address combining emotional intensity with sharp self-criticism of Minangkabau's ulama:

"Since I heard of the government's intention to enforce this ordinance in Minangkabau, my joints have trembled and my very bones have gone weak. I am convinced the government does not truly intend this heavy regulation for our land, and does not intend to wound our feelings. But this regulation will be enforced because of our own fault. We ulama have always been divided, always at odds with one another. This is the danger that threatens us, and many more dangers will follow so long as we remain divided."[131]

Hamka presents the appeal as a means of restoring unity within the assembly, which resolved to send a delegation—including, notably, figures who had previously opposed Haji Rasul—to Governor-General De Graeff rejecting the ordinance's application to Minangkabau;[132] the colonial government subsequently declined to enforce it there.

Haji Rasul's final years in Minangkabau ended in state custody. In January 1941 he was summoned to Bukittinggi for interrogation and, after repeated summonses—more than ten in total—was arrested on 18 January 1941 and detained in Bukittinggi prison.[133] Hamka, then in Jakarta, appealed to colonial officials including Dr. Peyper and Dr. De Vries, asking that his father's health be considered should exile prove unavoidable.[134] The government's shifting justifications for the arrest, including a claimed complaint from local *ninik mamak* publicly repudiated by the very *ninik mamak* named, were eventually abandoned; ulama including Syekh M. Jamil Jaho organized a petition against the exile, which prompted a further expression of opposition, and Hamka describes the eventual justification as political.[135][136] In mid-August 1941 he was exiled to Sukabumi, West Java, accompanied by his wife Dariah and youngest son Abdul Wadud.[137] There his residence again became a center of religious activity,

[130] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 111.

[131] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 199-200.

[132] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 200-201.

[133] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 240.

[134] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 246.

[135] *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981), 133-134.

[136] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 248.

[137] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 249.

drawing Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah members and the wider community.[138] During the Japanese occupation he relocated to Jakarta.[139] In 1943, at a gathering of ulama in Bandung, Hamka portrays him as refusing to perform the *Sei Keirei* bow when the other participants complied toward the Japanese imperial palace—an act of defiance Mohammad Hatta later cited as marking Haji Rasul among the first to voice, in Hatta's words, "a revolution of the soul" against Japan in Indonesia.[140][141] Haji Rasul died on 2 June 1945.[142]

Haji Rasul in *Ayahku*: Selection, Silence, and the Domestic Register

The consulted edition of Ayahku combines recollection, collected testimony, and selective narration. Hamka states that his account draws not only on personal memory but on testimony he actively gathered from those close to his father, including students and fellow strugglers—among them Tuanku Syekh Abbas, whom Hamka visited in Metro in 1961 and who visited him in Jakarta the following year.[143] Across the reformist episodes recounted, Hamka consistently foregrounds firmness of principle, intellectual courage, and moral integrity rather than comprehensive biographical coverage.

Notably, the domestic dimension of Haji Rasul's fatherhood is less extensively narrated from *Ayahku* itself, which offers little of Hamka's own childhood experience and favors instead his father's public role as ulama, reformer, and community leader; the personal, domestic register belongs chiefly to Hamka's separate autobiographical work, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, read here as a necessary companion source because it develops experiences that *Ayahku* treats less fully.[144] There Haji Rasul appears as a stern father, often emotionally distant, whose severity Hamka recalls vividly.[145] Hamka's earliest sustained account of direct instruction places him, from around age six, learning Arabic script, correct articulation of Qur'anic letters, and prayer recitation under his father's guidance, in a manner that produced apprehension more than warmth.[146] Hamka locates an important period of intellectual companionship in 1934, when Hamka, having returned from teaching posts in Padang Panjang and Makassar, spent nearly a year in Sungai Batang and asked his father directly what he should

[138] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 250-251.

[139] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 256.

[140] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 258.

[141] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 259.

[142] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 397-398.

[143] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), vii-xv.

[144] Ahmad Khoirul Fata, *Buya Hamka: Pemikiran & Perannya di Pentas Politik Nasional* (Semarang: RaSAIL Media Group, 2020), 44.

[145] Ahmad Khoirul Fata, Buya Hamka: Pemikiran & Perannya di Pentas Politik Nasional (Semarang: RaSAIL Media Group, 2020), 45.

[146] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 381-382.

study next; Haji Rasul, visibly pleased, judged Hamka's grounding in Arabic grammar sufficient but felt he still needed *usul fiqh* and logic (*mantiq*) under proper guidance.[147] Asked why logic mattered, Haji Rasul explained he admired Hamka's aptitude for history and philosophy but worried that philosophy pursued without firm religious grounding could lead astray—an answer revealing a quietly sustained parental attentiveness Hamka had not previously perceived.[148] For roughly six months father and son studied together, including al-Ghazali's *al-Mustashfa*, an episode he remembers as a closer intellectual encounter.[149]

One of the relationship's most emotionally explicit moments in *Ayahku* comes during Hamka's visit to his father in exile, a scene Peacock likewise identifies as the point where the narrative's emotional register visibly opens.[150] "My child… my child… your father is still alive because he was waiting for your arrival," Haji Rasul says on that occasion.[151] Hamka records that afterward he wished he could remain forever at his father's side.[152]

Kenang-kenangan Hidup supplies a fuller domestic account than *Ayahku* provides. Rush notes that Hamka there describes a childhood shadowed by his parents' difficulties, his father often absent emotionally even when physically present.[153] He also describes an often harsh and unpredictable mother, and found greater comfort with his mother's family, particularly his grandfather, recalling walks along the rice-paddy dikes as among his happiest childhood memories.[154][155] By his own account his childhood feelings toward his father were dominated more by fear than love,[156] and he writes plainly that his father's "anger was feared by everyone."[157] Enrolled at Sumatera Thawalib around age ten despite being younger than most students, and temperamentally drawn to imagination and storytelling, Hamka resented the discipline the system demanded and repeatedly played truant, provoking his father's anger.[158] His parents' divorce, which he attributes partly to the complicating weight of Minangkabau *adat*, deepened this distance.[159] His decision to migrate to Java in his youth can be read as much an escape from family and

[147] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 382-383.

[148] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 383.

[149] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 383-384.

[150] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 262-263.

[151] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 266.

[152] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 268.

[153] James R. Rush, *Adicerita Hamka* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017), 41.

[154] James R. Rush, Adicerita Hamka (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017), 64.

[155] Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 23.

[156] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 19-24.

[157] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 60.

[158] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 54-63.

[159] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 66-70.

educational pressure as a search for new experience; smallpox forced an early return from Bengkulu, but he later resumed the journey with his father's blessing.[160] Criticism of his weak command of Arabic and religious learning eventually crystallized into the resolve that carried him to Mecca—the destination that had long symbolized his father's own aspirations for him.[161]

Discussion

Reform as Narrative Construction

The preceding reconstruction distinguishes reported episodes from corroborated context. This section examines how Hamka organizes those episodes and what that organization contributes to the historical portrait. A broader understanding of ulama authority helps contextualize Hamka's portrait. Ulama, in Horikoshi's formulation, occupy three overlapping functions—custodians of religious institutions, teachers, and jurists empowered to interpret Islamic law—authority that routinely extends into social and cultural life.[162][163] That authority was typically forged through the intellectual pilgrimage to the Haramain, which Moeflich Hasbullah reads as a gateway into Mecca and Medina's scholarly networks, through which the "Jawi" community absorbed and later transmitted reformist currents—al-Afghani, Abduh, Rashid Rida—back into the archipelago.[164][165][166] Haji Rasul's authority in Hamka's telling is thus never self-generated; it is genealogical, positioning him within a transnational lineage before a single Minangkabau episode is narrated.

Djamal's analytical vocabulary distinguishes traditionalism, modernism, and reformism—the last understood, following Hisham Sharabi as cited by Murni Djamal, as a movement of young liberal ulama seeking to revive Islamic teaching against the age's challenges, not by inventing new doctrine but by calling Muslims back to the Qur'an and Hadith.[167][168][169][170] Read in this framework, Hamka's portrayal positions his father as, in Peacock's description, someone who fought "fiery, individualistic, and

[160] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 84-86.
[161] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 103-111.
[162] Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), 114.
[163] Hiroko Horikoshi, Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), 115-147.
[164] Moeflich Hasbullah, *Islam dan Transformasi Masyarakat Nusantara: Kajian Sosiologis Sejarah Indonesia* (Depok: KENCANA, 2017), 118-119.
[165] Moeflich Hasbullah, Islam dan Transformasi Masyarakat Nusantara: Kajian Sosiologis Sejarah Indonesia (Depok: KENCANA, 2017), 90.
[166] Moeflich Hasbullah, Islam dan Transformasi Masyarakat Nusantara: Kajian Sosiologis Sejarah Indonesia (Depok: KENCANA, 2017), 120.
[167] Murni Djamal, *Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 1.
[168] Murni Djamal, Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20 (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 2.
[169] Murni Djamal, Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20 (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 2.
[170] Murni Djamal, Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah: Pengaruhnya dalam Gerakan Pembaruan Islam di Minangkabau pada Awal Abad Ke-20 (Jakarta: INIS, 2002), 2-3.

enmeshed in the web of kinship."[171] Hamka's own formulation—that his father sought to reopen "investigating for oneself" against blind *taklid*—captures the same idea against a religious landscape still saturated, in Hamka's telling, with *wihdatul wujud* mysticism and jurisprudence bound to unquestioned authority.[172] Read against E. H. Carr's reminder that history cannot be written without an effort to understand how people of the period actually thought, these confrontations carry a significance easy to underestimate today but genuinely risky within their own social world.[173]

This is most visible in how Hamka handles the tarekat dispute. Peacock notes that modernist critique across the region tended to target mysticism perceived as blending Islam with magical or locally rooted beliefs incompatible with strict monotheism.[174] Hamka's account of his father's break with *rabithah*—concentrating spiritually on a teacher's remembered image during *suluk*—fits this pattern, presented as lacking clear basis in Qur'an or Sunnah.[175][176] What makes the choice significant is its object: Haji Rasul's own father was a respected tarekat shaykh, so reform touched the authority nearest his own household first. Yet Hamka is careful not to narrate this as rupture—father and son remain affectionate despite disagreement, with resistance concentrated among tarekat followers rather than within the family.[177] The effect is to frame reformism as principled correction beginning at the closest range, a frame repeated, intensified, across the Belasting-era campaign against sorcery at Muara Pauh[178],[179][180][181] and the Guru Ordonansi confrontation, where Hamka emphasizes not simply defiance of colonial policy but Haji Rasul's insistence, against a colonial official's private overture, that no decision could be made without collective deliberation—his ensuing speech remembered chiefly as self-criticism of his own

[171] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in *The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems*, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 245.

[172] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 311.

[173] E.H. Carr, *Apa Itu Sejarah* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2014), 27.

[174] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 258.

[175] H. Rusydi Hamka, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Noura, 2017), 2-3.

[176] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 88.

[177] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 90.

[178] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 99-100.

[179] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 101-102.

[180] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 102-105.

[181] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 105.

community's disunity, as well as resistance to colonial control.[182][183][184][185][186] The same emphasis governs Hamka's treatment of *Al-Munir* and Sumatera Thawalib: Hamka traces a deliberate genealogy from al-Afghani and Abduh's *Al-Urwatul Wutsqa* through *Al-Manar* and *Al-Imam* to Minangkabau, positioning his father within a global reformist current—down to Kaum Muda's adoption of necktie, trousers, and tarbush as deliberate markers of engagement with modernity.[187][188][189][190][191]

What emerges across these episodes is a selective portrait organized around exemplary conduct. As Asvi Warman Adam observes of Indonesian biographical writing generally, biography often clothes its subject in values a community wishes to affirm, turning the individual into a personification of an ideal.[192] Peacock's independent assessment of how Hamka represents Minangkabau reformers—as figures of strong character, forceful leadership, simple living, and deep dedication—describes precisely the cumulative effect of Hamka's selections, down to Peacock's observation that Hamka emphasizes a proud refusal to be diminished alongside genuine respect for those who merited it, rendered almost symbolically through the image of fire in Haji Rasul's gaze.[193][194] *Ayahku*, in other words, does historiographical work through selection itself: what Hamka chooses to narrate, and how, is itself a historical claim about what reformist Islam in Minangkabau looked like and meant to live.

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[182] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatera (1927-1933)* (New York: Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 112.

[183] Hamka, *Ayahku*: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 198-199.

[184] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 199.

[185] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 199-200.

[186] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 200-201.

[187] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 107-114.

[188] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 114-118.

[189] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 123.

[190] Hamka, Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2019), 136-138.

[191] Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Jakarta: KENCANA, 2017), 99.

[192] Asvi Warman Adam, "Membaca Biografi Tokoh Indonesia," Ruang Baca, 2007.

[193] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 264-265.

[194] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 264-265.

Reading Father and Son through Erikson's Identification

Erikson's concept of identification offers one way to interpret the relationship described across the two works. It directs attention to how a significant parental figure may inform the values and roles through which a developing person understands himself. In Hamka's narratives, fear, disagreement, admiration, and intellectual inheritance coexist.[195] Identification is useful here because continuity need not mean agreement with every paternal judgment or reproduction of the same public persona. The texts nevertheless provide retrospective self-representation, not observations sufficient to establish a developmental mechanism. This reading therefore concerns the meaning of the narrated relationship, rather than a psychological explanation of Hamka's life presented as fact.[196]

Read this way, the documented pattern in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*—fear rather than affection, truancy as resistance, a divorce that widened emotional distance, a youthful flight to Java that reads as much as escape as ambition—does not contradict the claim that Haji Rasul decisively shaped his son's identity; it suggests that inheritance could coexist with resistance and emotional distance. Hamka's eventual decision to travel to Mecca, the destination that had defined his father's own formation and aspiration for him, can be read as renewed engagement with a paternal aspiration, without proving that earlier tensions were resolved.[197] Ikbal's observation that Hamka inherited his father's reformist spirit while developing his own, more moderate orientation toward *tasawuf* suggests a distinction between intellectual inheritance and imitation: not replication of the father's positions but their internalized transformation into something recognizably continuous yet distinct.[198] The tenderness Hamka records after his father's outbursts—that Haji Rasul would often show regret, softening his words or asking after what Hamka enjoyed—suggests that even the disciplinary register carried an undercurrent of care legible, in retrospect, as part of the same identificatory process.[199]

This interpretation has historiographical consequences without requiring certainty about Hamka's private intentions. *Ayahku* gives greater space to public reformist action, while *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* develops childhood experience and family tension. The contrast may reflect differences in genre, audience, and narrative purpose as well as the relationship itself. It does not prove that Hamka deliberately assigned every domestic memory to one work and every public episode to the other. Reading the texts together reveals complementary emphases and occasional tensions, making selection an object of analysis rather than evidence of a fully recoverable authorial design.

[195] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton & Company, 1968), 158-159.
[196] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton & Company, 1968), 208-212.
[197] Hamka, Kenang-Kenangan Hidup, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 103-111.
[198] Muhamad Ikbal, "Sejarah Keberadaan Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau Perspektif Hamka dalam Karya '*Ayahku*'" (Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2017), 24.
[199] Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, Jilid I (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 61.

Ayahku as Biography and Historiography

Whether *Ayahku* can bear this analytical weight depends on how one evaluates Hamka's standing as a historical writer. Kuntowijoyo situates academic historians as bearing the greatest responsibility for historiography precisely because they are most self-conscious about the writing process—a standard against which Hamka, working outside formal academic training, does not straightforwardly qualify.[200] Deliar Noer nonetheless calls Hamka both historian and maker of history, and Fitri, surveying Hamka's insistence that historical writing requires direct observation of one's subject rather than reading alone, interprets Hamka's practice as exhibiting substantive elements of historical inquiry beyond academic credentialing—what Fitri terms a "people's historian" (*sejarawan masyarakat*).[201][202]

Kuntowijoyo's own criteria for a successful biography—personality, sustaining social forces, the era's historical texture, and the opportunities that shaped the subject's path—are each present in *Ayahku*: Haji Rasul's character rendered through episodes of firmness and courage; the social forces of his network of students and Kaum Muda allies; the era of colonialism and the Kaum Tua–Kaum Muda contest; the opportunities of his Mecca education and contact with Java's organizational innovators.[203][204][205] Hamka precedes his father's biography with Islam's arrival in Minangkabau and the family's genealogy, treating individual biography as inseparable from its social environment—a choice consistent with the attention to social context in Kuntowijoyo's framework.

Assessments of *Ayahku* recognize its historical value without making all its statements equally reliable. Taufik Abdullah considers much of Hamka's account defensible while acknowledging errors associated with oral testimony and the influence of diction and emphasis.[206] Alfian values its representation of colonial Minangkabau and recognizes the affection of a son writing about his father.[207][208] Mansur Suryanegara emphasizes Hamka's command of Islamic historical material and his interpretation of Indonesian history from an Islamic perspective. These assessments support taking Hamka seriously as a historical writer; they do not replace verification of individual events or establish that affection cannot affect selection and

[200] Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana, 2003), 2-3.

[201] Rahmi Nur Fitri, "Hamka Sebagai Sejarawan: Kajian *Metodologi Sejarah* Terhadap Karya Hamka," FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan 04 (2020), 52.

[202] Rahmi Nur Fitri, "Hamka Sebagai Sejarawan: Kajian Metodologi Sejarah Terhadap Karya Hamka," FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan 04 (2020), 43.

[203] Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana, 2003), 15.

[204] Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana, 2003), 203.

[205] Kuntowijoyo, Metodologi Sejarah (Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana, 2003), 206.

[206] Taufik Abdullah, "Masa Awal Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau: Cuplikan dari Arsip Belanda," in Kenang-Kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka, edited by Yayasan Nurul Islam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1978), 130.

[207] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (New Jersey: ABLEX Publishing Corporation, 1979), 245-268.

[208] Alfian, "Hamka dan Ayahnya," in Kenang-Kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka, edited by Yayasan Nurul Islam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1978), 125-130.

interpretation. Continued scholarly use of Ayahku demonstrates its importance[209][210],[211] but citation alone is not independent confirmation of its contents.

Historiographical Positioning and Novelty

The article's contribution is clearest when distinguished from its immediate points of reference. Ikbal examines Muhammadiyah's spread through Hamka's account, while Djamal situates Haji Rasul within the wider development of Minangkabau reform. This article connects those institutional concerns to a comparison of public biography and autobiographical memory. Amir and Rahman's later study provides a further discussion of reformist ideas, but the version cited was published after the evidentiary horizon and is not used to establish a research gap existing before it. The contribution rests on the questions and comparison pursued here, rather than on an unqualified claim to be the first study of Hamka's position as son and biographer.

The contribution is accordingly twofold. Empirically, it reconstructs Haji Rasul's reformist career—from Mecca through the tarekat dispute, the Belasting crisis, *Al-Munir*, Sumatera Thawalib, Muhammadiyah, Guru Ordonansi, and exile—as a coherent chronological account grounded in *Ayahku* alongside corroborating scholarship, addressing the gap left by studies using *Ayahku* only as backdrop. Historiographically, it argues that the memoir's subjectivity is itself evidence of a historical process: how reformist identity was transmitted, contested, and remembered across a family and generation. Comparison through the concept of identification draws attention to this dimension of remembered inheritance while preserving the distinction between textual interpretation and demonstrated psychological causation.

Conclusion

This article set out to answer two questions: who Haji Rasul was and what role he played in Minangkabau Islam, and how he is represented in Hamka's *Ayahku*, together with that memoir's own historiographical dimensions. On the first question, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah—Haji Rasul—emerges as one of the most consequential figures in early twentieth-century Minangkabau Islamic reform: educated from childhood in the *surau* tradition and for seven years under Syekh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi in Mecca, he returned to challenge tarekat practice, the *kenduri* customs surrounding his own father's death, and popular recourse to sorcery during the Belasting unrest, before institutionalizing reform through the journal *Al-Munir* and the Sumatera Thawalib school network, introducing Muhammadiyah to

[209] A. Mansur Suryanegara, "Prof. Dr. Hamka Sejarawan dan Pelaku Sejarah," in Kenang-Kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka, edited by Yayasan Nurul Islam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1978), 136.

[210] A. Mansur Suryanegara, "Prof. Dr. Hamka Sejarawan dan Pelaku Sejarah," in Kenang-Kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka, edited by Yayasan Nurul Islam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1978), 135-137.

[211] Taufik Abdullah, "Masa Awal Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau: Cuplikan dari Arsip Belanda," in Kenang-Kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka, edited by Yayasan Nurul Islam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1978), 131-132.

Minangkabau, organizing collective resistance to the Guru Ordonansi, and, in Hamka's account of a 1943 gathering in Japanese-occupied Bandung, refusing the *Sei Keirei* bow. Considered together, these episodes place him among the network of early twentieth-century reformers whose ideas, refracted through Minangkabau's specific social and religious conditions, gave the region's Islamic reform movement its distinctive institutional and intellectual character.

Ayahku represents Haji Rasul chiefly through public episodes of religious judgment, educational leadership, and resistance to colonial intervention. *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* adds a domestic perspective marked by discipline, fear, disagreement, and later intellectual companionship. Reading the works together suggests that Hamka's remembrance of his father includes both distance and inheritance. Erikson's identification helps describe that relationship as a narrative pattern, but does not prove how Hamka's personality developed or whether all tensions were resolved. Historiographically, *the value of Ayahku* lies in its combination of testimony, reconstruction, and an identifiable authorial position. Its recognition by Abdullah, Alfian, and Suryanegara supports critical engagement with the work, while its individual claims remain open to verification. The passage of testimony from family memory into printed biography is therefore part of the historical subject, not a reason to dispense with source criticism.

Ayahku can thus be read both as a source for Haji Rasul's reformist career and as evidence of how that career was remembered. Keeping these functions distinct makes it possible to examine institutional change alongside the selective transmission of religious authority across generations. The analysis does not require a choice between dismissing familial subjectivity and accepting the memoir as transparent fact. It requires attention to the edition consulted, the provenance of each account, and the difference between a reported event and its later narrative meaning.

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