

MUDA WALY AL-KHALIDI (1917-1961): PESANTREN, TARIQAH, AND POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN ACEH

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Abstract

This study explores the life and contributions of Muda Waly al-Khalidi (1917–1961), a prominent Acehese ulama who played a crucial role in shaping Islamic education, Sufi practices, and ulama politics of religious authority in Aceh. Muda Waly was instrumental in advancing the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) theological tradition and propagating the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya tariqa. He founded the Darussalam Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in Labuhanhaji, which became a significant center for Islamic learning in Aceh. His efforts also extended into politics through his involvement with Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), a traditionalist Islamic organization countering modernist influences. Using Foucault's genealogy approach, this study examines the intellectual and religious formation of Muda Waly, tracing his educational lineage in Sumatra and Mecca, his engagement in theological debates, and his role in shaping Aceh's religious landscape. I argue that the legacy of Muda Waly al-Khalidi represents an intricate process of knowledge formation and power relations in Aceh's religious landscape. His establishment of pesantren, propagation of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Sufi order, and resistance to modernist movements illustrate the genealogical development of religious authority. His contributions demonstrate how religious authority traditions are continuously reshaped through negotiation, appropriation, and resistance. Future studies could further explore how his epistemic legacy continues to evolve in response to emerging theological and political contestations in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Muda Waly; Islamic Education; Sufism; Religious Authority; Genealogy of Knowledge*

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Abstrak

Studi ini mengeksplorasi kehidupan dan kontribusi Muda Waly al-Khalidi (1917–1961), seorang ulama terkemuka dari Aceh yang memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk pendidikan Islam, praktik sufi, dan politik otoritas keagamaan di Aceh. Ulama di Aceh. Muda Waly berperan besar dalam memperkuat tradisi teologis Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) serta menyebarkan Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah. Ia mendirikan pesantren Darussalam di Labuhanhaji, yang menjadi pusat utama pembelajaran Islam di Aceh. Upayanya juga meluas ke bidang politik melalui keterlibatannya dalam Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), sebuah organisasi Islam tradisional yang menentang pengaruh modernisme Islam. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan genealogis Foucault, studi ini menganalisis pembentukan intelektual dan keagamaan Muda Waly, menelusuri silsilah pendidikannya di Sumatra dan Makkah, keterlibatannya dalam perdebatan teologis, serta perannya dalam membentuk lanskap keislaman di Aceh. Saya berpendapat bahwa warisan Muda Waly al-Khalidi merepresentasikan proses kompleks dalam pembentukan pengetahuan dan relasi kuasa dalam lanskap keagamaan Aceh. Pendirian pesantren, penyebaran Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah, serta perlawanan terhadap gerakan modernis menunjukkan perkembangan genealogis otoritas keagamaan. Kontribusinya menunjukkan bagaimana otoritas keagamaan tradisi keislaman terus mengalami negosiasi, adaptasi, dan resistensi. Studi-studi di masa depan dapat lebih lanjut meneliti bagaimana warisan epistemiknya terus berkembang dalam merespons berbagai kontestasi teologis dan politik yang muncul di Indonesia

Kata Kunci: *Muda Waly; Pendidikan Islam; Tasawuf; Otoritas Keagamaan; Genealogi Pengetahuan*

مستخلص

هذا البحث يستكشف حياة ومساهمات المودا والي الخالدي (1917-1961)، وهو أحد العلماء البارزين في آتشيه، الذي لعب دورًا محوريًا في تشكيل التعليم الإسلامي والممارسات الصوفية والسياسة الدينية في المنطقة. لقد كان المودا والي شخصية أساسية في تعزيز التقليد العقائدي لأهل السنة والجماعة (أشعري-ماتريدي) ونشر الطريقة النقشبندية الخالدية. أسس مدرسة دار السلام الإسلامية الداخلية (بيسانترين) (في لابوهانهاتجي، والتي أصبحت مركزًا مهمًا للتعليم الإسلامي في آتشيه. امتدت جهوده أيضًا إلى المجال السياسي من خلال مشاركته في جمعية "برتاريان تريبيا إسلامية"، (PERTI) وهي منظمة إسلامية تقليدية تسعى لمواجهة التأثيرات الحديثة. باستخدام منهجية جينيالوجيا فوكو، يفحص هذا البحث التكوين الفكري والديني للمودا والي، من خلال تتبع سلاسل تعليمه في سومطرة ومكة، ومشاركته في المناظرات العقائدية، ودوره في تشكيل المشهد الديني في آتشيه. يجادل هذا البحث بأن إرث المودا والي الخالدي يمثل عملية معقدة لتكوين المعرفة وعلاقات السلطة في المجال الديني في آتشيه. إن تأسيسه للمدرسة الدينية، ونشره للطريقة النقشبندية الخالدية، ومقاومته للتيارات الحديثة، تجسد التطور الجينيالوجي للسلطة الدينية. وتظهر مساهماته كيف يتم إعادة تشكيل السلطة الدينية باستمرار من خلال عمليات التفاوض والاستيعاب والمقاومة. يمكن أن تتناول الدراسات المستقبلية كيفية استمرار إرثه المعرفي في التطور استجابةً للتحديات العقائدية والسياسية الناشئة في إندونيسيا.

الكلمات الرئيسية: المودا والي؛ التعليم الإسلامي؛ التصوف؛ السلطة الدينية؛ جينيالوجيا المعرفة.

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A. Introduction

The theology of *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'ah* (Aswaja) has become the dominant theological framework in Indonesia and serves as the foundation for the concept of "Islam Nusantara," which has recently gained prominence. The presence of Aswaja has been reinforced by the significant role of ulama and the network of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) that disseminate this theology through their teaching and curricula.¹ In Aceh, Aswaja has even been formally adopted and promoted by the regional government, making it the sole theological doctrine that local Acehnese Muslims are expected to adhere to. The development of this theological tradition is closely linked to the contributions of Muda Waly al-Khalidi (1917–1961), a charismatic religious scholar from South Aceh region.²

Muda Waly was a pivotal figure not only in the advancement of Aswaja theology but also in the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, the promotion of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya *tariqa*, and the political engagement of ulama in Aceh, particularly in the post-independence era of Indonesia. Muda Waly was a pivotal figure not only in the advancement of Aswaja theology but also in the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, the promotion of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya *tariqah*, and the political engagement of ulama in Aceh, particularly in the post-independence era of Indonesia. Despite his significant influence, few scholars have provided a comprehensive account of his life and contributions. Michael Feener has acknowledged this gap in scholarship, stating, "The life and work of this figure have yet to attract the scholarly attention it deserves." Feener identified Muda Waly as a political opponent of the Islamic modernist movement led by the Acehnese Ulama Association (PUSA/Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh).³ Similarly, David Kloos noted that Muda Waly played a crucial role in introducing the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* to Aceh and was an influential figure in Acehnese politics during the revolutionary period (1945–1950) and the Darul Islam movement (1953–1961).⁴ Michael Feener has acknowledged this gap in scholarship, stating, "The life and work of this figure have yet to attract the scholarly attention it deserves." Feener identified Muda Waly as a political opponent of the Islamic modernist movement led by the

¹ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011).

² Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin, "Shaping Charisma: Muda Waly al-Khalidi and Saint-Making in Contemporary Indonesia," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 8, no. 2 (April 3, 2023): 171–89, doi:10.18326/MILLATI.V8I2.507.

³ R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

⁴ David Kloos, "The Saliency of Gender: Female Islamic Authority in Aceh, Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 40, no. 4 (2016): 527–44, doi:10.1080/10357823.2016.1225669.

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NAJUNG KIM**

Acehnese Ulama Association (PUSA/Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh).⁵ Similarly, David Kloos noted that Muda Waly played a crucial role in introducing the Naqshbandiyya tariqah to Aceh and was an influential figure in Acehnese politics during the revolutionary period (1945–1950) and the Darul Islam movement (1953–1961).⁶ Meanwhile, Eka Srimulyani compared Muda Waly's role in the development of Islamic boarding schools in Aceh to that of Kyai H. Hasyim Asy'ari in Java.⁷ In recognition of his contributions to Islamic education, the Acehnese government formally honored Muda Waly with the title "Father of Education."⁸

Several scholars have explored specific aspects of Muda Waly's life and legacy. Martin van Bruinessen has examined his early life and the networks associated with the Naqshbandiyya tariqa in Aceh. Martin van Bruinessen has examined his early life and the networks associated with the Naqshbandiyya tariqah in Aceh.⁹ Sjamsuddin has written about Muda Waly's opposition to the Darul Islam movement in the 1950s.¹⁰ Additionally, a hagiographic account written by his eldest son details his early years and his pivotal role in developing Islamic boarding schools, the tariqah, and the political landscape in Aceh.¹¹ Most other academic works concerning his life and thought are based on the research of Muhibuddin. A comprehensive study of Muda Waly is essential for understanding contemporary Islam in Aceh. The prevailing theses on syati'atization,¹² religious authority,¹³ ulama politics,¹⁴ and Islamic social engineering¹⁵ in Aceh are largely derived from observations

⁵ R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

⁶ David Kloos, "The Salience of Gender: Female Islamic Authority in Aceh, Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 40, no. 4 (2016): 527–44, doi:10.1080/10357823.2016.1225669.

⁷ Eka Srimulyani, "Teungku Inong Dayah: Female Religious Leaders in Contemporary Aceh," in *Islam and the Limits of the State: Reconfigurations of Practice, Community, and Authority in Contemporary Aceh*, ed. R. Michael Feener, David Kloos, and Annemarie Samuels (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 149.

⁸ Musliadi, *Abuya Syaikh Muda Waly Al-Khalidy (1917-1961): Syaikhul Islam, Tokoh Pendidikan Dan Ulama 'Arif Billah* (Labuhanhaji: Pesantren Darussalam, 2013).

⁹ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsybandiyah Di Indonesia: Survey Historis, Geografis Dan Sosiologis* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).

¹⁰ Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *Pemberontakan Kaum Republik, Kasus Darul Islam Aceh* (Jakarta: Grafiti Pers, 1990).

¹¹ Muhibuddin Waly, *Ayah Kami Syaikhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Al-Waliyah Publishing, 1996).

¹² Muhammad Nur Ichwan, "The Politics of Syari'atization: Central Governmental and Regional Discourses of Syari'a Implementation in Aceh," in *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. M E Feener, R M and Cammack (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 193–215.

¹³ Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin and Eka Srimulyani, "The Contested Authorities: Institution and Agency in the Enforcement of Sharia Law in Aceh, Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 2 (2022), doi:10.30821/jcims.v5i2.10601; Daniel Andrew Birchok, "Women, Genealogical Inheritance and Sufi Authority: The Female Saints of Seunagan, Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 40, no. 4 (October 7, 2016): 583–99, doi:10.1080/10357823.2016.1224999.

¹⁴ Nirzalin, "Islamic Shari' a Politics and Teungku Dayah ' S Political Authority Crisis in Aceh," *Studi Pemerintahan* 3, no. 2 (2012): 211–34; Yogi Setya Permana, "Subnational Sectarianisation: Clientelism, Religious Authority, and Intra-Religious Rivalry in Aceh," *Religion, State and Society* 49, no. 2 (2021), doi:10.1080/09637494.2021.1881392.

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of contemporary sociological developments. However, I argue that these theses can be better understood by examining Muda Waly's role in shaping the Islamic landscape of Acehese society today. To this end, this article explores the early formation of Islamic boarding schools, the *tariqa*, and the political involvement of ulama, highlighting Muda Waly's significant influence in these domains.

This study seeks to analyze how Muda Waly's intellectual and religious character was shaped through his educational lineage and subsequent activities upon his return to Aceh. Employing Foucault's theory of genealogy,¹⁶ this article maps the formation of Muda Waly's religious and political thought, the factors that influenced its development, and the ways in which these ideas were institutionalized within the academic and religious structures he established in Aceh. The research is based on extensive literature reviews as well as interviews with individuals who had personal encounters with Muda Waly during his lifetime.

Muda Waly's contributions to the development of Islam in Aceh can be categorized into three main areas: the advancement of Islamic boarding school education, the proliferation of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya *tariqa*, and the active participation of ulama in practical politics through the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Association (PERTI). Muda Waly's contributions to the development of Islam in Aceh can be categorized into three main areas: the advancement of Islamic boarding school education, the proliferation of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya *tariqah*, and the active participation of ulama in practical politics through the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Association (PERTI). These roles positioned him as both an esteemed ulama and a *murshid* (spiritual guide) within the *tariqah*, as well as an influential political figure. His strategic influence facilitated the widespread dissemination of his ideas in Aceh, particularly his opposition to the Islamic puritanism that was emerging at the time. This puritanical movement, introduced by alumni of Sumatra Tawalib and the Muhammadiyah movement, began making inroads into Aceh as early as 1928.¹⁷

¹⁵ Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia*.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 21.

¹⁷ Muhammad Daud Remantan, "Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam Di Aceh (1914-1953)" (Disertasi, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1985).

B. Discussion

1. *Muda Waly and the Migration of Minang People to Aceh*

The historical development of Islam in Indonesia has been shaped by an enduring network of Islamic scholars (ulama) that spanned several centuries, linking the archipelago with the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁸ Between the 15th and 17th centuries, Aceh played a central role in this movement, earning its reputation as “The Veranda of Mecca.” However, by the late 19th century, due to internal conflicts within the Aceh Sultanate and its prolonged struggle against imperialism, this leading position gradually shifted to Minangkabau in West Sumatra. This transition is evident in the intellectual and ideological dynamics between Islamic modernists (*Kaum Mudo*) and traditionalists (*Kaum Tuo*) in Minangkabau from the late 19th to the early 20th century.¹⁹ The debates between these groups spread across Indonesia through scholarly genealogies, both at the individual and organizational levels. One notable scholar emerging from the West Sumatran intellectual lineage during this period was Muhammad Waly (1917–1961), more commonly known as Muda Waly of Labuhanhaji, South Aceh Regency.

Muda Waly was born in 1917 in Blang Poroh, Labuhanhaji. His birth name was Muhammad Waly. His father, Muhammad Salim bin Malin Palito,²⁰ was originally from Batu Sangkar, Minangkabau, and migrated to Labuhanhaji, following his uncle Abdul Karim (d. 1943), later known as Tuanku Peulumat.²¹ Abdul Karim had traveled to Labuhanhaji to propagate and teach Islam. Although little is known about Muhammad Salim’s early education and childhood, historical accounts suggest that he, too, arrived with the same mission -to serve as a teacher and preacher. He eventually settled in Labuhanhaji alongside his uncle and married Siti Janadat, the daughter of Nyak Ujud, the *keuchik* (village head) of Palak Gadang Village. From this marriage, he had several children, one of whom was Muhammad Waly.

Historically, Labuhanhaji had long been a crucial hub for trade and transportation in the early 20th century, owing to its strategic and bustling port. The name "Labuhanhaji" itself derives from two words: '*labuhan*' (port) and '*haji*' (pilgrimage), referring to its function as a transit point for Muslim pilgrims departing from Sumatra’s west coast. Since the 18th

¹⁸ Aryumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2005).

¹⁹ Taufik Abdullah, “Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau,” *Indonesia* 2 (October 1966): 1, doi:10.2307/3350753.

²⁰ Waly, *Ayah Kami Syekhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*.

²¹ Muhamaamd Umar, *Teungku Peulumat Lambang Kejujuran Dan Keikhlasan* (Banda Aceh: Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Aceh, 2006).

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century, Minangkabau migrants had traveled to Aceh via the west coast, passing through Pariaman, Natal, Sibolga, Singkil, Tapak Tuan, and Blangpidie before reaching Meulaboh, which is now part of West Aceh Regency. Upon arrival in Aceh, these Minangkabau migrants were referred to as "*Aneuk Jamee*" (literally meaning "guest") by the local population, signifying their status as newcomers. Labuhanhaji eventually became one of the primary settlements for these migrants.²²

Several theories attempt to explain the reasons behind the Minangkabau migration to Aceh. Sulaiman argues that this migration began as early as the 17th century, primarily for trade.²³ In contrast, Zainuddin proposes that Minangkabau migration to Aceh occurred around the early 19th century because of the Padri War, led by Tuanku Imam Bonjol (1805–1835).²⁴ Al-Fairusy synthesizes these two perspectives, dividing Minangkabau migration into two distinct phases. The first phase, spanning the 17th to 19th centuries, was motivated by trade and religious propagation (*dakwah*). The second phase, from the late 19th to early 20th century, was driven by the Padri War and later by the PRRI movement following Indonesia's independence.²⁵ Beyond these political and economic factors, Minangkabau society has long been recognized for its strong migratory tradition, particularly in pursuit of trade and education.

Minangkabau scholars and preachers continued their *dakwah* in Aceh well into the 20th century. During this period, numerous preachers from Minangkabau traveled to Aceh, particularly modernist scholars from Kaum Mudo, many of whom were graduates of the Sumatra Tawalib Islamic educational institution.²⁶ However, their efforts were not always met with acceptance. In South Aceh, their arrival was met with strong resistance from traditionalist *ulama*. This resistance was encapsulated in a local saying: "*Kupiah buntok chang beu abeh, baje puteh chang beu rata*" (Those wearing a skullcap and a white robe - symbolic of the Tawalib modernist group must be eliminated immediately).²⁷ Some traditionalists even referred to these modernist preachers as "Kaphé Padang" (infidels from Padang).²⁸ The term 'kaphé' literally means "infidel" or "pagan" and was originally used to describe Dutch colonial rulers. However, in this context, it carried the connotation of an

²² Abdul Manan, *Ritual Kalender Aneuk Jamee Di Aceh Selatan: Studi Etnografi Di Kecamatan Labuhanhaji Barat* (Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2014).

²³ Muhammad Isa Sulaiman, *Adat Dan Upacara Perkawinan Di Daerah Adat Istiadat Aneuk Jamee* (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1978).

²⁴ H. M. Zainuddin, *Tarich Aceh Dan Nusantara* (Medan: Pustaka Iskandar Muda, 1961), 211.

²⁵ Muhajir al-Fairusy, *Singkel: Sejarah, Etnisitas, Dan Dinamika Sosial* (Bali: Pustaka Larasan, 2016).

²⁶ Delian Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996).

²⁷ Abd. Ghofur, "Rakjat Atjeh Dengan Perkumpulan," *Sinar* (Banda Aceh, April 1940), 7–8.

²⁸ Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People, Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979).

“invader.”²⁹ Thus, labeling the modernist preachers as “*kaphé* Padang” implied that they were ideological invaders who needed to be resisted and expelled, much like colonial forces. Following the Acehese Sultan’s formal surrender to the Dutch in 1903, Aceh came under direct colonial administration. South Aceh was subsequently divided into three administrative regions: Tapaktuan, Bakongan, and Singkil. Labuhanhaji fell under the jurisdiction of Tapaktuan and was governed by an “Assistant Wedana” (*Ulee Balang*), who hailed from Blang Poroh—the same village where Muda Waly was born.

2. *Muda Waly’s Early Education*

Muda Waly began his formal education at the Dutch-established Volks-School, a primary school founded as part of the Dutch ethical policy. However, at the time, anti-Dutch sentiment was deeply ingrained in Acehese society, particularly concerning colonial education. The Dutch school was pejoratively referred to as *sikula kaphe* (“infidel school”) and mockingly called *sekolah desa* (“village school”), with the derisive nickname *sikula desya* (“school of sin”). Many parents believed that learning to write in Latin script would result in divine punishment, with hands being severed by Allah in the afterlife.³⁰ In response to such sentiments, several prominent figures in Aceh sought to develop formal religious education. In 1916, Tuanku Raja Keumala, a relative of the Sultan of Aceh, requested permission from the Dutch colonial administration to establish a religious school known as Madrasah al-Khairiyah, headquartered at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Kutaradja (now Banda Aceh).³¹ With certain conditions imposed, Governor Swart granted approval for its establishment. Over the following years, the school expanded across various regions in Aceh.

In Labuhanhaji, South Aceh, the school was led by Tengku Muhammad Ali, widely known as Abi Lampisang (d. 1960) from Aceh Besar. He was related to Abu Hasan Krueng Kalee (d. 1973), and both had studied at Dayah Yan in Kedah, Malaysia, in the early twentieth century. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Acehese migrated to Kedah due to security concerns in Aceh.³² Among them was a scholar, Tgk. Muhammad Arsyad Ie Leubeue from Pidie, better known as Teungku di Balee. Around the 1890s, he migrated to Malaysia with two companions, Tengku Umar and Muhammad Saleh,

²⁹ David Kloos, “A Crazy State,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 170, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 25–65, doi:10.1163/22134379-17001003.

³⁰ Munawiyah, “Birokrasi Kolonial Di Aceh 1903-1942” (Thesis, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2002), 167.

³¹ Ali Hasjmy, *Bunga Ramai Revolusi Dari Tanah Aceh* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1978).

³² Bustami Abubakar, “Sejarah Dan Pola Migrasi Masyarakat Aceh Ke Yan, Kedah,” *Jurnal Adabiya* 17, no. 33 (2015): 70–87.

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and later established an educational institution called Madrasah al-Irsyadiyah al-Diniyah. Over time, many young Acehnese traveled to Yan to pursue Islamic studies, including Tuan Guru Haji Musa (Teungku Lam Surau), Sheikh Umar bin 'Auf (Teungku Umar di Yan), and Tengku Bidau al-Hafidz, as well as Hasan Krueng Kalee and his contemporaries.³³

Upon returning to Aceh, Hasan Krueng Kalee founded a *dayah* (traditional Islamic boarding school) in Siem, Aceh Besar, while Abi Lampisang was entrusted by Tuanku Raja Keumala with the task of developing Jamiatul Khairiyah in Labuhanhaji. He was also assigned to counter the influence of the "*salek buta*" group, a Sufi order with an unclear spiritual lineage.³⁴ Muda Waly studied at Jamiatul Khairiyah for four years before discontinuing his studies when the school was closed following Abi Lampisang's return to Aceh Besar at the request of Abu Hasan Krueng Kalee. Abi Lampisang was recalled assisting in the rapidly expanding educational institution in Aceh Besar.³⁵

Following the closure of Jamiatul Khairiyah in Labuhanhaji, Muda Waly continued his education at the Bustanul Huda Islamic boarding school, led by an esteemed scholar from Aceh Besar, Sheikh Mahmud, known as Sheikh Mud. He was a close associate of Abi Lampisang and Hasan Krueng Kalee and had deliberately traveled to South Aceh to establish a boarding school as part of his missionary efforts. Notably, Abi Lampisang and Sheikh Mahmud had previously studied together with Hasan Krueng Kalee in Yan, Negeri Kedah, two decades earlier. At Bustanul Huda, Muhammad Waly matured alongside many peers, including Adnan Mahmud (d. 2011) from Sawang and Jailani Musa (d. 1983) from Kluet Utara, South Aceh. Both later became his students and collaborators in advancing *dayah* education and the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Sufi order.

Additionally, Muda Waly pursued studies at Jamiatul Mutaalimin in Susoh, approximately 25 km from Labuhanhaji. This institution, affiliated with Muhammadiyah, was led by Said Usman Quraish, a graduate of Sumatra Thawalib. However, reliable information regarding Said Usman's background, the duration of Muda Waly's studies at the institution, or his impressions of the experience remains scarce. Furthermore, the school itself did not endure for long, as it was later integrated into a government-administered institution

³³ Z. D. Rashid, "Sejarah Sekolah Pondok Di Kedah," in *Sejarah Negeri Kedah Darul Aman, Alor Setar* (Kedah, 1996).

³⁴ Mutiara Fahmi Razali, *Teungku Haji Muhammad Hasan Krueng Kalee (1886-1973) Ulama Besar Dan Guru Umat* (Aceh Besar: Yayasan Darul Ihsan Tgk. H. Hasan Krueng Kalee, 2010), 68–69.

³⁵ Mutiara Fahmi Razali, "Teungku Haji Muhammad Hasan Krueng Kalee: Dari Tarekat al-Haddadiyah Hingga Fatwa Syahid Memebela Kemerdekaan," in *Ensiklopedi Pemikiran Ulama Aceh*, ed. Tim Penulis IAIN Ar-Raniry (Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2004).

following Indonesia's independence in 1945. Muhibuddin briefly mentioned this matter, though without much clarity. He wrote:

"Teungku Hafaz was a scholar from Minangkabau. Almost all his living expenses while spreading his da'wah in Susoh were funded by Haji Tjik Ahmad, a wealthy philanthropist from Susoh. It was said that Ustaz Labai Dien, one of my father's teachers, was a student of Teungku Hafaz. Likewise, Saiyid Uthman Quraisyi, the founder of the Lam Kuta madrasa in Susoh, later succeeded by Sayid Salih, was also a student of Teungku Hafaz."³⁶

3. *Muda Waly and Modernist Islam Movement in West Sumatera*

At that time, most children in Aceh who wished to continue their education had to migrate to other cities, a practice known in Acehnese as *meudagang*. Unlike *merantau*, which refers to migration for work or livelihood, *meudagang* specifically denotes traveling to another city for educational purposes.³⁷ At the age of 15, Muda Waly embarked on a *meudagang* journey to Aceh Besar to further his religious education. One of the most renowned *dayah* at the time was the institution led by Hasan Krueng Kalee in Siem, Aceh Besar. Muda Waly had long been familiar with this *dayah*, particularly through his teachers, Abi Lampisang and Sheikh Mahmud. Based on their recommendations and guidance, he traveled with a friend, Teungku Salim, to Aceh Besar to study under Teungku Hasan Krueng Kalee.

However, Muda Waly's time at the *dayah* of Krueng Kalee was brief, and he soon transferred to another institution. According to Muhibuddin Waly, his father did not remain there for long because much of what was taught at the *dayah* had already been covered in his previous studies.³⁸ This was likely since two of his former teachers had previously been classmates of Hasan Krueng Kalee. Recognizing his potential, Krueng Kalee recommended that Muda Waly continue his studies at the *dayah* led by Ahmad Hasballah, also known as Hasballah Indrapuri (d. 1959), which was also located in Aceh Besar.³⁹ Hasballah Indrapuri had been a classmate of Krueng Kalee when they both studied in Mecca and later settled in Yan, Kedah. A scholar specializing in *qira'at* (the recitation of the Qur'an), Hasballah had

³⁶ Waly, *Ayah Kami Syeikhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*, 94.

³⁷ James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Multia Zahara, "Tradisi Meugure Pada Dayah Perempuan Di Aceh" (Magister Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry, 2014).

³⁸ Waly, *Ayah Kami Syeikhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*.

³⁹ Ali Hasjmy, *Ulama Aceh Mujahid Kemerdekaan Dan Pembangun Tamaddun Bangsa* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1997).

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studied under his father, Umar di Yan, one of the founders of Dayah Yan in Kedah, Malaysia. During his time in Mecca, Hasballah became associated with Wahhabi teachings.⁴⁰

In 1922, while residing in Yan, Hasballah was summoned by Teuku Raja Keumala and several prominent ulama to return to Aceh and revive the Islamic boarding school at the Indrapuri Mosque, which had been closed for decades due to the war against the Dutch. During the second and third decades of the twentieth century, Aceh experienced a flourishing of modern Islamic education, influenced by the transmission of ideas from Sumatra Thawalib alumni and the modern educational movements in the Arab world. Responding to this trend, Hasballah reformed the educational system at the Indrapuri Islamic boarding school by establishing Madrasah Hasbiyah, which included Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary level) and Madrasah Tsanawiyah (secondary level). Additionally, he founded *Madrasah lil-Ummahat* as an integrated program with Dayah Indrapuri.⁴¹ Unlike the traditional *dayah* curriculum in Aceh, which focused primarily on Islamic sciences, Hasballah incorporated general subjects into the curriculum. According to Muhibuddin Waly, his father did not study directly under Hasballah Indrapuri but would have attended his lectures and sermons. He wrote:

“I have never heard that my father studied the kitab (Islamic classical texts) directly with Teungku Sheikh Hasballah Indrapuri. However, he must have heard the advice and lectures of Teungku Sheikh. No matter how busy a *dayah* leader may be, delivering guidance, instructions, and spiritual advice remains an essential duty.”⁴²

In the tradition of Islamic boarding schools, many students do not study directly with the head teacher but still regard them as their mentors, a practice known as *beureukat guree* (seeking the teacher’s blessings). Muda Waly spent nearly two years at the *dayah*, gradually adapting to its educational model and the modernist ideas introduced by Hasballah. His openness to these ideas became evident when he accepted Hasballah’s recommendation to apply for a scholarship to study at Al-Azhar University in Egypt⁴³ through the Atjehsche Studie Fonds,⁴⁴ an educational fund led at the time by Teuku Hasan Glumpang Payong,⁴⁵ who

⁴⁰ Baiquni, “Teungku Haji Ahmad Hasballah Indrapuri: Sebuah Biografi Singkat Ulama Reformis Dan Pejuang,” *Kalam: Jurnal Agama Dan Sosial Humaniora* 4, no. 2 (2016).

⁴¹ Sabri, *Biografi Ulama-Ulama Aceh Abad XX Jilid 1* (Banda Aceh: Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Aceh, 2003), 39.

⁴² Waly, *Ayah Kami Syekhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*, 71.

⁴³ Said Abubakar, *Berjuang Untuk Daerah: 70 Tahun H. Said Abubakar* (Banda Aceh: Yayasan Nagasakti, 1995), 117.

⁴⁴ Atjehsche Studie Fonds aims to provide educational assistance to Acehnese children who want to continue their education. This organization was recognized by the Netherlands according to Gouvernements Besluit dated February 1, 1929, No. 25. The organization itself was founded on May 28, 1928. The initial management consisted of Tuanku Mahmud (Chairman), Teuku Hasan Dik (Vice-Chair), HM Bintang (treasurer), supported by several commissioners, such as Teuku Nyak Arif, Teuku Ismail, Teuku Zainal Abidin, and Tengku Abdussalam. They collected money from membership dues and hold a night market. In the early stages, they

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also served as the Chairman of Muhammadiyah Aceh. As a preliminary step, Muda Waly traveled to Padang, West Sumatra, along with other scholarship recipients, including Muzakir Walad (d. 1978), who would later serve as the Governor of Aceh for two terms (1968–1973 and 1973–1978). Their stay in Padang was intended as a preparatory phase before their departure to Egypt for further studies.

4. *Kaum Tuo vs Kaum Mudo*

Muda Waly's preparatory studies for Al-Azhar University took place at the Normal Islamic School in Padang. This institution was established in 1931 by the Association of Islamic Teachers (PGAI) under the leadership of Mahmud Yunus, a distinguished figure in Indonesian Islamic education who had graduated from Darul 'Ulum in Cairo, Egypt.⁴⁶ The school, known in Arabic as Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyah, was designed to train prospective religious teachers for Islamic diniyah schools. Admission was restricted to students who had completed seven years of Islamic secondary education. The institution implemented a modern Dutch educational system, which was unfamiliar to the broader society at the time.⁴⁷

Normal Islam provided religious instruction akin to that of traditional Islamic boarding schools while also incorporating subjects relevant to contemporary social developments, such as mathematics, natural sciences, and English. One of Mahmud Yunus's educational reforms included teaching Arabic using a module he had developed while studying in Makkah. As a result, graduates of the Normal Islamic School acquired proficiency in active Arabic, in contrast to the passive Arabic skills typically found among students from traditional Islamic boarding schools.⁴⁸ Additionally, Mahmud Yunus introduced a dress code requiring students to wear trousers and ties, mirroring Dutch educational institutions. This approach, however, was not well received by Muda Waly, as it was perceived to be inconsistent with the spirit and

succeeded in sending four Acehnese students to Java to continue their education: Two people at the Opziener school, one at the medical school in Surabaya (NIAS), and one died.

⁴⁵ Ismail Suny, ed., *Bunga Rampai Tentang Aceh* (Jakarta: Bhratara Karya Aksara, 1980).

⁴⁶ Sulaiman Ibrahim, *Pendidikan Dan Tafsir, Kiprah Mahmud Yunus Dalam Pembaruan Islam* (Jakarta: LEKEAS, 2011); Saiful Amin Ghofur, *Profil Para Mufasssir Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Insan Madani, 2008).

⁴⁷ Aryumardi Azra, "Genealogy of Indonesian Islamic Education: Roles in The Modernization of Muslim Society," *Heritage Nusantara International Journal of Literature and Heritage* 4, no. 1 (2015); Syeh Hawib Hamzah, "Pemikiran Mahmud Yunus Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Dinamika Ilmu* 14, no. 1 (2014), doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/di.v14i1.18>.

⁴⁸ Eka Srimulyani, "The Idea of Mahmud Yunus to Reform Arabic Teaching," *Jurnal Ilmiah Didaktika*. XII, no. 1 (2011): 1–17.

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traditions of the ulama.⁴⁹ Consequently, he withdrew from the school after just three months, rendering his initial plan to pursue further Islamic studies at al-Azhar unattainable.

Following his departure from the Normal Islamic School, Muda Waly struggled to find a suitable educational institution and considered returning to Aceh. However, due to his strong ties with Muhammadiyah figures in Aceh, he was accommodated by Ismail Jakob, a prominent Muhammadiyah leader who was also studying at Sumatra Thawalib.⁵⁰ Ismail Jakob, renowned for his translation of Al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin* into Malay, provided Muda Waly with guidance and support, enabling him to remain in Padang for several weeks while exploring educational opportunities. During this period, he became acquainted with the ongoing theological debates between the *kaum tuo* and *kaum mudo*, which were particularly intense in Padang at the time.⁵¹ Muda Waly aligned himself with the *kaum tuo*, firmly opposing the religious innovations advocated by the *kaum mudo*. His active participation in Islamic discussions at various surau (prayer and learning centers) and his articulate defense of traditional religious views quickly earned him a reputation as an erudite scholar, and he became known as Teungku Muda Waly.

Through his new social network, Muda Waly encountered Khatib Ali (d. 1936), a leading *kaum tuo* scholar renowned for his expertise in Islamic sciences. He found Khatib Ali's teachings highly compatible with his own intellectual and spiritual inclinations, marking a transformative period in his life. Khatib Ali managed a well-known surau in Parak Gadang called Madrasah al-Irsyadiyah, inspired by Madrasah al-Irsyadiyah asy-Syurkati in Jakarta, which he had visited during an Islamic Union conference in 1913.⁵² The institution specialized in Islamic education, and Muda Waly distinguished himself as a quick learner and an outstanding student. Two years later, Khatib Ali arranged his marriage to Rasimah Yahya (d. 1983), one of his granddaughters. Despite his young age, Muda Waly was soon recognized as a prominent *kaum tuo* scholar, firmly advocating the *aqidah* (creed) of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah.

While studying and teaching at Khatib Ali's surau, Muda Waly further expanded his network among *kaum tuo* scholars in Padang. He formed connections with leading figures such as Sulaiman Rasuli (d. 1970) and Muhammad Jamil Jaho (d. 1945), both of whom,

⁴⁹ Waly, *Ayah Kami Syeikhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*.

⁵⁰ Burhanuddin Daja, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Kasus Sumatera Thawalib* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990).

⁵¹ Sanusi Latif, "Gerakan Kaum Tua Di Minangkabau" (Ph.D Thesis, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1988).

⁵² Delian Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942*.

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alongside Khatib Ali, had founded the Islamic Tarbiyah Association (PERTI) in 1928.⁵³ He later married Rabi'ah Jamil Jaho (d. 1983), the daughter of Muhammad Jamil Jaho, who was known for her intelligence and active participation in PERTI. Her leadership was later demonstrated when she became the first female representative from the PERTI Party in the Provisional People's Consultative Council (MPRS) in 1955. Following this marriage, Muda Waly co-founded an Islamic boarding school in Lubuk Alung with Syaikh Labai Sati from Malalo (d. 1973), where they began accepting students and imparting Islamic teachings. His close friendship with Labai Sati continued until his eventual return to Aceh.⁵⁴

The *kaum tuo* movement staunchly adhered to traditional Islamic orthodoxy and resisted various reformist efforts led by *kaum mudo* scholars in early 20th-century Padang. One of the most contentious disputes centered on the rejection of *tariqah* by *kaum mudo* scholars, including Haji Rasul (d. 1945), who wrote a book criticizing *tariqah* practices as incompatible with Islamic teachings. In response, Khatib Ali and his peers published *Burhanul Haq*, refuting Haji Rasul's claims and accusing him of adhering to Wahhabism, ultimately dismissing his religious authority. The *kaum tuo* movement gained political traction when Sirajuddin Abbas (d. 1980) was elected chairman of PERTI in 1935 during a congress in Candung, Bukittinggi. Abbas, a vocal scholar and politician, leveraged his position to form alliances with influential organizations of the time, including the communist movement,⁵⁵ and openly supported Indonesian independence, an association later denied by his followers. Under his leadership, PERTI formalized its objectives, emphasizing the advancement of religious education, the defense of Islam, the protection of Islamic scholars and educators, and the reinforcement of traditional customs (*adat*).⁵⁶

According to the writings of Muhibuddin Waly, Muda Waly played a crucial role within PERTI from the time he joined. This led Sirajuddin Abbas to include him among the scholars endorsing PERTI as a defender of the Shafi'i school of thought in Indonesia.⁵⁷ However, his name does not appear in major research publications on PERTI or discussions on the *kaum tuo*–*kaum mudo* debates in Padang in the late 1930s. This absence may be attributed to his relatively brief involvement in the organization or the fact that he did not hold a prominent position within PERTI at the time. Nevertheless, Muda Waly was instrumental in

⁵³ Delian Noer.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Ali ibn Abdul Muthalib, *Burhanul Haq* (Padang, 1971).

⁵⁵ Delian Noer, *Partai Islam Di Pentas Nasional 1945-1965* (Jakarta: Grafiti Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ Karel A. Steenbrik, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Moderen* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1974), 64.

⁵⁷ Sirajuddin Abbas, *Keagungan Mazhab Syafi'i* (Jakarta: Pusataka Tarbiyah, 2006), 376.

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introducing PERTI to Aceh and became its first official member in the region after the organization declared itself a political party in 1945.⁵⁸

A year after his marriage, Muda Waly traveled to Mecca with his second wife, Rabi'ah Jamil Jaho, to perform the Hajj. During his stay, he met several prominent scholars from the Nusantara, including Shaykh Yasin al-Padani (d. 1990), renowned for transmitting *sanad* (chains of narration) in various Islamic disciplines.⁵⁹ Although there is no direct evidence of his formal studies under Shaykh Yasin, the two were contemporaries, having both been born in 1917. Muda Waly also met Shaykh Ali al-Maliki, the director of Madrasah *Dar al Ulum al Jawiyah* and a prominent Maliki mufti in Saudi Arabia.⁶⁰ Given the prevalence of Nusantara scholars in Mecca at the time, it is likely that Muda Waly benefited from their knowledge, albeit for a short period, as he remained in Mecca only for a few months. Although he initially intended to continue his studies in Egypt, he ultimately decided to return to Indonesia, as he was accompanied by his wife, who could not return to West Sumatra alone. Muda Waly's return from Mecca marked the final phase of his religious education. He dedicated himself to teaching at the Islamic boarding school he had established prior to his pilgrimage. His scholarly journey culminated in his formal initiation into a tariqah upon the recommendation of Labai Sati Malalo, his close friend and mentor in Minangkabau.

5. Genealogy in the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Tariqa

Both of Muda Waly's fathers-in-law were prominent figures within the Naqshbandiyya Tariqa in Minangkabau at the time. Both of Muda Waly's fathers-in-law were prominent figures within the Naqshbandiyya *tariqah* in Minangkabau at the time. Khatib Ali Padang was not only a *murshid* but also a steadfast defender of the Naqshbandiyya tradition. While in Mecca, he even contested the views of his own teacher, Muhammad Khatib al-Minangkawi, who argued that certain aspects of the *tariqah* were not entirely aligned with Islamic teachings. However, Khatib Ali did not exclusively focus on the Naqshbandiyya, and some of his students who were appointed as caliphs did not achieve significant prominence in the future.⁶¹ He passed away in 1936, just a year after Muda Waly married his daughter. Consequently, Muda Waly had little opportunity to study directly under him or formally pledge allegiance (*bai'a*) to him within the Naqshbandiyya tradition. Meanwhile, Shaykh

⁵⁸ Delian Noer, *Partai Islam Di Pentas Nasional 1945-1965*.

⁵⁹ M. Khairul Mustaghfirin, "Transmisi Dan Kontribusi Jaringan Sanad Syaikh Muhammad Yasin Padang," Laporan Penelitian (Jakarta, 2020).

⁶⁰ Majalah, "Mengenal Syaikh Muhammad Ali Al-Maliki," *Majalah Al-Kisah*, November 2008.

⁶¹ Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsybandiyah Di Indonesia: Survey Historis, Geografis Dan Sosiologis*.

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Jamil Jaho, though having pledged allegiance to the tariqa, was not officially recognized as a murshid. This led Muda Waly to seek further spiritual guidance elsewhere, eventually traveling east of Padang, where he received initiation into the tariqa from Abdul Ghani of Kampar.

Shaykh Abdul Ghani is believed by his followers to have lived for over a century, though no concrete evidence supports this claim. He studied Islamic sciences at several renowned surau in Minangkabau during the 19th century before continuing his education in the Haramayn, where he resided for 18 years before returning home in 1905. In Mecca, he studied under several teachers, but his Naqshbandiyya lineage suggests that he did not receive direct transmission from Sulaiman al-Zuhdi, who at the time served as murshid to many Indonesian scholars. Instead, he was initiated into the *tariqah* by a scholar named Shaykh Yusuf al-Qudsi. Shaykh Yusuf, in turn, had received the tariqa from Shaykh Usman al-Fauzi, a close associate of Sulaiman al-Zuhdi in Jabal Abu Qubays, who facilitated connections between Indonesian scholars and their teachers in Mecca. However, little information is available regarding Shaykh Yusuf al-Qudsi. A student thesis from the Islamic University of Riau posits that Abdul Ghani received the tariqa from a figure referred to as Shaykh Yusuf Zahidi, who, according to the thesis, had acquired the *tariqah* lineage from South Tapanuli in Tapung Village, North Sumatra. As Shaykh Yusuf advanced in age, he eventually transferred his spiritual authority to his nephew, Abdul Ghani, appointing him as his successor.⁶²

It is most likely that Muda Waly met Abdul Ghani in 1939, shortly before returning to Aceh. He underwent a 40-day *suluk* (spiritual retreat) under Abdul Ghani's guidance, after which he was formally recognized as a *murshid* and granted permission to propagate the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya *tariqah* Tariqa. According to the genealogy documented by Jamaluddin Waly, Muda Waly's *sanad* (spiritual chain) in the *tariqah* traces directly back to Abdul Ghani al-Kampari. Following his appointment as murshid, Muda Waly returned to Lubuk Bagulung, Padang, where he established the Bustanul Muhaqqiqin Islamic boarding school. The institution quickly gained prominence, attracting students from across the region, including some from Aceh who traveled specifically to study under him. However, its development was abruptly halted by the rising political tensions between the Dutch and Japanese colonial powers in the late 1930s. As the situation deteriorated, Muda Waly decided

⁶² Rahmad Hidayat, "Mursyid Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Dalam Pembinaan Nilai-Nilai Keagamaan Terhadap Jamaa'ah Di Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Saran Kabun Kabupaten Rokan Hulu" (Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim, 2020), 56.

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to close the school and return to Aceh. Despite its brief existence of only two years, the school produced several graduates who would later become influential ulama in West Sumatra.

6. *Pesantren and Politics of Ulama*

Muda Waly returned to Aceh at the end of 1939, having been formally recognized as a *murshid* in the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya tariqahTariqa. His initial plan was to continue overseeing his Islamic boarding school in Padang, which was flourishing at the time. However, the deteriorating security situation forced him to abandon this plan. By 1939, Japan had begun expanding its influence in the region, prompting the Dutch to launch anti-Japanese propaganda campaigns. Although the Japanese occupation of Padang and its surrounding areas did not commence until 1942, the political instability had already created an atmosphere of uncertainty, compelling Muda Waly to leave. He embarked on a merchant ship that regularly traveled between Labuhanhaji and Padang, making stops at several ports along the way. One such port was Bakongan (now part of South Aceh Regency), where he disembarked briefly to visit an old friend, Adnan Mahmud. At the time, Adnan had established the Ashabul Yamin Islamic boarding school, and during their meeting, Muda Waly initiated him into the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Tariqa, making him his first disciple in the tariqa.

Upon arriving in Labuhanhaji, Muda Waly began coordinating with several of his former colleagues to implement a series of plans. His priority was to establish an Islamic boarding school in Labuhanhaji. At the time, an Islamic institution already existed in the area, led by his father, Muhammad Salim. Muda Waly sought to expand and transform this institution into a more comprehensive educational center. His second objective was to further develop the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Tariqa in Aceh. His second objective was to further develop the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya tariqa in Aceh. At that time, the tariqa was still relatively new to the Acehnese religious landscape, where the Syattariyah tariqa had long been dominant.⁶³ The Syattariyah had multiple genealogical branches, including the Haddadiyah lineage, which had been propagated by Hasan Krueng Kalee, one of Muda Waly's teachers from Siem, Aceh Besar. Lastly, Muda Waly aimed to promote a broader religious movement through PERTI, the organization he had been involved with in Padang. Recognizing the potential of PERTI as a platform for religious and educational reform, he sought to integrate his efforts in the tariqa and Islamic education with the organizational network he had cultivated in West Sumatra.

⁶³ Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin, "Di Bawah Payung Habib: Sejarah, Ritual, Dan Politik Tarekat Syattariyah Di Pantai Barat Aceh," *Jurnal Substantia* 19, no. 1 (2017).

7. *The Development of Darussalam Islamic Boarding School*

Muda Waly chose to establish an Islamic boarding school in Blang Poroh Village, where his parents resided. Initially, he conducted teachings at home, given the unstable conditions under Japanese occupation. Later, he began delivering lectures at a *deyah* (a communal space for prayer, gatherings, and discussions) in the village. His teachings attracted members of the surrounding communities as well as several ulama from southern Aceh. Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, this educational initiative rapidly evolved into a formal Islamic boarding school. The development of the institution was supported by Teuku Usman Pawoh, a maternal relative who served as an assistant to the local district leader and was also a *uleebalang* (local aristocrat).

In terms of pedagogical approach, Muda Waly appeared to have drawn inspiration from the educational models at the Hasballah Indrapuri Boarding School and Normal Islam, where he had studied. At Darussalam, students no longer sat on the floor but were provided with chairs and desks, while teachers utilized blackboards for instruction.⁶⁴ This classroom-based learning system, which Muda Waly pioneered, was later adopted by his students in their respective institutions. At the time, this method was revolutionary, as traditional Islamic boarding schools in Aceh typically had students sit on the floor without the use of desks, chairs, or blackboards. Additionally, Muda Waly introduced the *mujadalah* (debate) technique within his *dayah*. Debates took place among students as well as between students and teachers, serving as an extracurricular activity held at night to train students in defending their arguments with evidence. This approach challenged the conventional educational paradigm in Aceh, which positioned the teacher as an unquestionable authority figure. One of Muda Waly's students, Teungku Ali, reflected on this transformative learning environment:

"In every lecture, we were required to ask questions. If you failed to ask a question, you could not attend the next session. This model no longer exists today. Teachers had to be well-prepared for questioning. I once asked Abu Muda Waly a question, and he told me, 'If you ask a question that the teacher cannot answer, I will raise your grade.' This motivated me to study diligently before each lecture. Every time I attended a session, I was almost certain I had understood the subject fully (*haqqul yaqin*). I once complained to him, 'With such a method, who can teach?' He replied, 'A lecture is meant for acquiring knowledge, so you must truly understand the subject. A teacher should never mislead students. Whenever a teacher presents something, their sources (*naqal*) must be clear. It is like holding a seminar—when reading a paper, you must state its basis and references.' That was Abuya Muda Waly's approach to teaching."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Musliadi, *Abuya Syaikh Muda Waly Al-Khalidy (1917-1961): Syaikhul Islam, Tokoh Pendidikan Dan Ulama 'Arif Billah*; Dicky Wiryanto, *Pendidikan Tasawuf Abuya Syaikh Haji Muda Waly Al-Khalidy, (Konsep Dan Genealogy Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Di Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2021).

⁶⁵ Interview with Bapak Ali, March 2015.

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At the time, questioning or criticizing a teacher was deemed disrespectful and disobedient (*teumerka* in Acehnese). Muda Waly's approach may have been influenced by the educational traditions of West Sumatra, where he had studied, and where debates between *kaum tuo* and *kaum mudo* on various religious issues were common. A similar intellectual climate existed in southern Aceh, where reformist religious thought was gaining ground, necessitating the use of debate as a strategic tool for engagement.

The influence of debate can also be seen in Muda Waly's critiques of modernist Islam, which was rapidly expanding in southern Aceh at the time. One prominent figure of the Sumatra Tawalib Islamic school in Padang, West Sumatra, Jalaluddin Thaib, traveled to Aceh in the early 20th century and established a similar institution in Tapaktuan, a town with a large Padang migrant population. However, the institution did not thrive and remained relatively marginal. When Muhammadiyah arrived in Aceh in 1926, many Tawalib followers joined the movement due to their shared religious perspectives and reformist zeal. Muhammadiyah's affiliation with a well-established national organization contributed to its growing popularity, including in Labuhanhaji, where Muda Waly had founded his Islamic boarding school.

In response to Muhammadiyah, Muda Waly employed strategies reminiscent of those used in Padang during his studies there. Firstly, he equated Muhammadiyah with Wahhabism, labeling its teachings as heretical and therefore impermissible for Muslims to follow. To distinguish themselves from Muhammadiyah, Muda Waly and his followers identified as adherents of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. This ideological stance was reinforced through theatrical performances at the boarding school, where students assumed roles representing Muhammadiyah and *Ahlussunnah*. They engaged in debates using arguments commonly invoked in the *kaum tuo* versus *kaum mudo* disputes in Padang. Predictably, the students portraying Muhammadiyah members always lost the debates.

Stories of these debates between Muda Waly's students and Muhammadiyah followers spread rapidly across Aceh's Islamic boarding school circles, invariably depicting Muda Waly and his students as the victors. However, within the Muhammadiyah community, a different version of events emerged. A Muhammadiyah leader in Peukan, a village near Darussalam, claimed that many of the widely circulated debate stories were exaggerated or entirely fabricated, with Muda Waly often not attending the debates or sending representatives. Another Muhammadiyah figure recounted an event in Manggeng:

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"Back then, Muhammadiyah was represented by a scholar from Banda Aceh. The debate was held in a mosque, with a large audience in attendance. Muda Waly invited his guest to present his argument first, which he did for nearly an hour. Then, Muda Waly stood up and asked, 'If our parents pass away and there is no repast (*kenduri*), is it not the same as the death of a pig?' The visitor hesitantly answered, 'Yes.' With that, Muda Waly stepped down, and the debate was considered concluded. That was how he won, not by presenting arguments, but through rhetorical maneuvering."⁶⁶

Thus, the debates were less about substantive theological discussion and more about rhetorical tactics and audience engagement. The format of these debates in Aceh differed from those in Padang, where scholars engaged in written discourse through published books and journals.

By the 1950s, the number of students enrolling at Darussalam in Labuhanhaji had increased significantly. This surge was influenced by two key factors. Firstly, the political turmoil in Aceh, particularly the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion led by Daud Beureueh in 1953, had destabilized many areas.⁶⁷ In some northern coastal regions, the DI movement was supported by reformist ulama affiliated with PUSA, while traditionalist *dayah* ulama often faced threats from DI forces. As a result, many *dayah* ulama chose to send their students to Labuhanhaji, which remained a relatively safe and stable environment for Islamic education. Following the decline of the DI movement after the Lamteh Agreement in 1959, Darussalam alumni began spreading across Aceh. Many of Muda Waly's most influential students had extensive educational backgrounds before joining Darussalam. For instance, Abdul Aziz from Samalanga, who later played a crucial role in establishing the MUDI Mesra Samalanga Islamic boarding school, had studied at several *dayah* in Bireuen and Aceh Besar before attending Darussalam. Similarly, Tgk. Adnan Bakongan and Jailani Musa from Kluet Utara had studied together at a *dayah* led by Tgk. Mahmud in Blangpidie and later at Abu Hasan Krueng Kalee in Aceh Besar before continuing their studies under Muda Waly.⁶⁸ Additionally, many students used Darussalam as only a *peunutoeh* (final stage) in their Islamic education, allowing them to claim alumni status from this prestigious institution. As a result, Darussalam became a central hub in shaping the landscape of traditional Islamic education in Aceh during this period.

⁶⁶ Interview with Bapak Kubeh, 2015.

⁶⁷ Sjamsuddin, *Pemberontakan Kaum Republik, Kasus Darul Islam Aceh*; C. van Djik, *Darul Islam: Sebuah Pemberontakan* (Jakarta: Grafiti Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin and Aida Hayani, "Otoritas Spritual Di Era Syariat Jaringan Dan Kontestasi Tarekat Dalam Masyarakat Aceh Kontemporer," *Kodifikasia* 14, no. 1 (June 26, 2020): 1, doi:10.21154/kodifikasia.v14i1.1892.

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8. *PERTI's Politics in Aceh*

In addition to his contributions to Islamic education through boarding schools, Muda Waly played a pivotal role in political movements. While in Padang, he became closely associated with prominent figures behind the establishment and development of PERTI. This organization emerged as a response from the *kaum tuo* in Minangkabau to the Islamic reformist movement spearheaded by the *kaum mudo*, who were predominantly graduates of Middle Eastern institutions. The *kaum mudo* disseminated their ideas through various media, including magazines and books. Consequently, one of the leading *kaum tuo* figures, Sheikh Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli, convened a meeting in Candung, Bukittinggi, on May 5, 1928. The meeting, attended by influential *kaum tuo* ulama such as Sheikh Abbas al-Qadhi, Sheikh Muhammad Djamil Djaho, Sheikh Wahid ash-Shahily, and others, led to the formation of Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (MTI).⁶⁹

Two years later, another gathering of ulama resulted in the establishment of the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PTI), uniting seven educational institutions under its banner. The organization gained official recognition from the Dutch East Indies government and acquired legal status. In 1935, a subsequent meeting in Candung, Bukittinggi, saw the election of H. Siradjudin Abbas as chairman of the PTI Executive Board. It was during this period that the organization's Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association were drafted and ratified at a conference held from February 11 to 16, 1938, in Bukittinggi. At this event, the organization officially adopted the name PERTI.⁷⁰

Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, PERTI transitioned into a political party. In the 1955 general election, it secured four seats in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR-RI) and seven seats in the Constituent Assembly. After President Soekarno dissolved both institutions, PERTI was allocated two seats in the newly formed DPR-GR. Two of PERTI's prominent figures served as ministers during the Orde Lama (Old Order) period: Sirajuddin Abbas as Minister of State Safety and Rusli Abdul Wahid as Minister of State for General Affairs and West Irian. During the party consolidation initiated by the Suharto government, PERTI merged into the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan

⁶⁹ Alaidin Koto, *Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah: Sejarah, Paham Keagamaan Dan Pemikiran Politik 1945-1970* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2021), 128–35.

⁷⁰ Zahra Nur Alfiyah et al., "The History and Development of the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI)," *Tarikhuna: Journal of History and History Education* 6, no. 2 (November 30, 2024): 284–96, doi:10.15548/THJE.V6I2.10167.

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Pembangunan or PPP). However, following internal conflicts in the 1971 general election, it eventually reverted to its origins as a religious organization.⁷¹

Muda Waly, who had been in West Sumatra during PERTI's formative years, developed close ties with the *kaum tuo* ulama involved in the organization. Upon his return to Aceh in 1939, he reintroduced PERTI to the region and emerged as its key figure. From the inception of his Islamic institution in Labuhanhaji, he identified his *dayah* as part of Dayah PERTI. The organization rapidly expanded across Aceh, particularly among *dayah* ulama. As a result, most Islamic boarding schools in Aceh affiliated themselves with PERTI, distinguishing them from their counterparts in Java and other regions, which were more closely associated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). It is regrettable that, thus far, no scholars have addressed this issue, leading many researchers to assume that *dayah* in Aceh are affiliated with NU, likesimilar to pesantren in Java.

PERTI's growth in Aceh was also fueled by opposition to PUSA. Founded on May 5, 1939, in North Aceh and chaired by Muhammad Daud Beureueh, PUSA was aligned with modernist Islamic thought and had close ideological ties to Muhammadiyah. Many Muhammadiyah leaders in Aceh became active members of PUSA. Initially, PUSA focused solely on religious and educational activities, but with its modernist orientation, it significantly influenced Islamic teachings in Aceh. In response, through PERTI, Sheikh Muda Waly led a campaign promoting traditional Islam, specifically *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*.

PERTI played a crucial role in countering the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion, which was led by Muhammad Daud Beureueh on September 21, 1953. According to Nazaruddin, PUSA's political adversaries, particularly PERTI-affiliated ulama, formed the primary opposition to DI.⁷² Daud Beureueh, a former Military Governor of Aceh, Langkat, and the Karo region, mobilized armed personnel, including a company of Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) soldiers who defected from their posts in Karo and Sidikalang under the leadership of Lieutenant Ibrahim Saleh. The rebellion did not arise spontaneously but was preceded by combat training, propaganda efforts, and clandestine meetings planning the uprising.⁷³ A key grievance was the central government's decision to designate Aceh as a Level I Region within North Sumatra, a move perceived as unjust given Aceh's historical

⁷¹ Rusli Rusli and Fachri Muhtadi, "Sejarah Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) Dalam Mengembangkan Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau Pada Awal Abad XX," *Tarikhuna: Journal of History and History Education* 3, no. 1 (May 31, 2021): 74–83, doi:10.15548/THJE.V3I1.2946. Rusli Rusli and Fachri Muhtadi, "Sejarah Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) Dalam Mengembangkan Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau Pada Awal Abad XX," *Tarikhuna: Journal of History and History Education* 3, no. 1 (May 31, 2021): 74–83, doi:10.15548/THJE.V3I1.2946.

⁷² Sjamsuddin, *Pemberontakan Kaum Republik, Kasus Darul Islam Aceh*.

⁷³ Djik, *Darul Islam: Sebuah Pemberontakan*.

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significance and contributions to Indonesia's founding. The rebellion, which began on Aceh's eastern coast, quickly spread across the province.

Muda Waly was among the ulama who firmly opposed the Darul Islam movement, alongside Hasan Krueng Kalee and Habib Muda Seunagan.⁷⁴ He issued a fatwa declaring participation in and support for DI as *haram* (forbidden), categorizing it as an act of rebellion (*bughah*) against a legitimate government.⁷⁵ When the DI movement infiltrated South Aceh, he established Organisasi Pagar Desa (OPD), a civil society organization comprising local communities and dayah students dedicated to resisting the rebellion. To strengthen this resistance, he wrote to President Soekarno requesting weapons, but his request was denied.

In 1957, as negotiations between Daud Beureueh and the government led to a temporary de-escalation of the DI movement, Soekarno invited Sheikh Muda Waly to Jakarta. He was received as a state guest alongside other Acehnese ulama who opposed DI, including Sheikh Hasan Krueng Kalee from Aceh Besar and Habib Muda Seunagan from West Aceh. The criteria for Soekarno's selection of ulama remain unclear, but given that all three were opponents of DI, it is likely that he prioritized ulama who supported his administration over those with greater influence in Aceh at the time.

By 1955, PERTI had also become politically active in Aceh by participating in general elections. As a religious organization, PERTI Aceh was led by Muda Waly, while its political branch was chaired by Muhammad Hasan Krueng Kalee. Hasan, a senior figure with strong influence and ties to the ruling authorities, played a key role in PERTI's political expansion, particularly in West and South Aceh. However, Muda Waly did not live to witness PERTI's peak political influence. His health began to deteriorate in 1959, and in 1961, he passed away at his Islamic boarding school in Darussalam, Labuhanhaji, South Aceh. Tens of thousands of followers attended his funeral, escorting him to his final resting place within the boarding school complex. Over time, the burial site became known as *Kubah Abuya*.

C. Conclusion

The legacy of Muda Waly al-Khalidi can be understood as an intricate process of knowledge formation and power relations within the religious landscape of Aceh. His contributions to Islamic education, Sufi spirituality, and ulama politics exemplify how discursive formations emerge, consolidate, and challenge dominant epistemic structures.

⁷⁴ Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin, *Abu Habib Muda Seunagan, Republikan Sejati Dari Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2015).

⁷⁵ Waly, *Ayah Kami Syekhul Islam Abuya Muhammad Waly Al-Khalidy, Bapak Pendidikan Aceh*.

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Muda Waly's establishment of pesantren, propagation of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya Sufi order, and resistance to modernist reformist movements illustrate the genealogical development of religious authority and legitimacy in Aceh. His intellectual and institutional projects did not emerge in isolation but were shaped by complex historical contingencies and discursive struggles. His alignment with traditionalist Sunni Islam and its Sufi practices can be seen as a response to the rising influence of Islamic modernism and puritanism. His pedagogical innovations and engagement in political activism demonstrate the fluidity of knowledge-power dynamics, where religious traditions are continuously reshaped through negotiation, appropriation, and resistance.

Muda Waly's role in shaping the Islamic epistemic order in Aceh underscores the interconnectedness between knowledge, institutions, and authority. His reinterpretation and institutionalization of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya tariqa serve as a form of epistemic continuity and transformation, reinforcing the embedded structures of traditionalist Islam while simultaneously responding to contemporary ideological challenges. In this sense, his legacy is not merely about the preservation of tradition but about the continuous reconfiguration of Islamic discourse within specific socio-historical contexts. I argue that the genealogy of Muda Waly's intellectual and spiritual influence reveals the contingent and constructed nature of religious knowledge. His contributions serve as a case study of how power and knowledge intersect in the formation of Islamic authority in Aceh. Future studies could further explore how his epistemic legacy continues to evolve in response to emerging theological and political contestations in Indonesia.

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