

**FROM MANDAILING LAND TO HARAMAYN:
Mandailing Ulama and the Religious Sciences in the Early 20th Century**

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Abstrak: Makkah dan Madinah, atau Haramayn, merupakan dua kota suci umat Islam yang menjadi pusat intelektual dan spiritual dunia Islam. Pada awal abad ke-20, para pelajar agama dari Nusantara datang ke sana untuk menunaikan ibadah haji sekaligus melanjutkan pelajaran mereka. Para peneliti telah mengungkap peran dan jaringan ulama Nusantara, meskipun tidak semua kelompok ulama berhasil mereka ungkap. Artikel ini mengkaji peran ulama Mandailing, khususnya mereka yang bermarga Nasution, dalam melestarikan ilmu-ilmu agama di Keresidenan Tapanuli pada awal abad ke-20. Mereka yang diteliti adalah Syekh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily (Nasution), Syekh Muhammad Ja'far Nasution, dan Syekh Musthafa Husein Nasution. Studi ini merupakan studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan sejarah. Model penelitian sejarah Kuntowijoyo dijadikan sebagai acuan dalam penulisan artikel ini, demikian juga pendapat al-Ghazâlî tentang klasifikasi ilmu akan menjadi teori utama untuk menganalisis topik penelitian. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa ulama-ulama Mandailing, khususnya ulama yang bermarga Nasution, secara aktif melestarikan ilmu-ilmu agama di Keresidenan Tapanuli setelah mereka mendalaminya di Masjidilharam, Makkah, Saudi Arabia, dimana mereka kemudian menjadi agen utama pengajaran ilmu-ilmu agama menurut tradisi Islam Sunni di daerah masing-masing. Hasil studi ini berimplikasi terhadap penguatan literatur dan teori tentang peran dan jaringan ulama Nusantara.

Kata Kunci: Ulama, Nusantara, Mandailing, Ilmu-Ilmu Agama

Abstract: Mecca and Medina, also known as Haramayn, are the two holy cities of Muslims and serve as the intellectual and spiritual centers of the Islamic world. At the beginning of the 20th century, religious students from the archipelago visited these cities to perform the pilgrimage and continued their studies. While researchers have uncovered the role and network of Indonesian ulama, not all ulama groups have been successfully uncovered. This article examines the role of the Mandailing ulama, particularly those with the surname Nasution, in preserving religious sciences in the Tapanuli Residency in the early 20th century. The ulama discussed in this study include Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily (Nasution), Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far Nasution, and Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution. This is a literature study with a historical approach. Kuntowijoyo's historical research model serves as a reference in writing this article, and al-Ghazâlî's opinion about the classification of knowledge is the main theory used to analyze research topics. This article argues that the Mandailing ulama, particularly those with the surname Nasution, actively preserved religious sciences in the Tapanuli Residency after studying at Masjidilharam in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. They later became the primary agents of teaching religious sciences according to the Sunni Islamic tradition in their respective areas. The results of this study have implications for the strengthening of literature and theory on the role and network of Indonesian ulama.

Keywords: Ulama, Archipelago, Mandailing, Religious Sciences

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, Mecca and Medina, or Haramayn in Saudi Arabia, remained the intellectual and spiritual centers of the Islamic world (Azra, 2002). Several ulama and students from various parts of the Islamic world came and settled in the two holy cities of Muslims with two main motivations, namely performing the pilgrimage and studying religious sciences (Burhanuddin & Baedowi, 2003: 74). Apart from the Masjidilharam, ulama and students held learning activities at two well-known madrasas there, namely the Madrasah Shaulatiyah and the Madrasah Dâr al-'Ulûm (Hayimasae, 2013: 110-128). Several ulama from the archipelago also became teachers there, including Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas, and Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani. On the other hand, many students from the archipelago visited the Holy Land specifically during the pilgrimage season, and eventually settled there to study with famous ulama there. They returned to the archipelago after studying religious sciences for a long time and became agents of social, intellectual, and even political change in the archipelago.

Researchers on Islam in the archipelago have produced several studies on the relationship between Haramayn and the archipelago. Azyumardi Azra succeeded in uncovering the network between Haramayn and Nusantara ulama in the 17th and 18th centuries (Azra, 2004), while Abdurrahman Ma'sud then examined the network in the following era (Mas'ud, 2006). Dzulkifli Amnan also researched a

similar matter, but focused on the preaching of Nusantara ulama in Haramayn from the 17th to the 20th centuries (Amnan, 2018). Likewise, Sumanto Al Qurtuby revealed the network between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia ulama, especially in the field of education (Al Qurtuby, 2019). While these researchers have uncovered the intellectual network between Haramayn ulama and the Nusantara ulama, they have yet to focus on the network between Haramayn ulama and Mandailing ulama, which is a strong indication that the role of the Mandailing ulama in various fields is still being neglected.

Studies on the Mandailing ulama have not been widely carried out. Professor Abbas Pulungan is a Mandailing person who pays serious attention to Islamic studies in Mandailing Land and has produced several important and interesting works (Pulungan, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2018, 2020b). In addition, Mhd. Syahnan, Asrul and Ja'far have researched the treasures of Mandailing ulama, and the results have been published in several reputable journals, including Scopus-indexed journals (Ja'far et al., 2022; Syahnan et al., 2019). Erawadi has examined the network of Mandailing-Angkola ulama with Malay Peninsula ulama (Erawadi, 2015) while Sehat Sulthoni Dalimunthe has studied the network of ulama of Kedah and Southern Tapanuli from 1990-1950 (Dalimunthe, 2019). Several Mandailing ulama from the Residency of East Sumatra, for example, Abdurrahman Sjihab Rangkuti, Ismail Banda Lubis, Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, and Ismail Abdul Wahab Harahap have also been investigated (Ja'far, 2020c, 2020b,

2020a, 2021). They are prominent ulama in Al Washliyah organization (Ja'far, 2012, 2019). However, many interesting aspects of other Mandailing ulama have not been studied, despite being fascinating to reveal. Research on the role of Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution in developing religious sciences has never been carried out. Therefore, this study can certainly contribute to enriching the information about the intellectual tradition of the Mandailing ulama.

There are at least two reasons why this study of the Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution was carried out. Firstly, the Mandailing ulama are a group of ulama who have been neglected due to the lack of research on them, despite their significant role in the progress of Muslims and the Indonesian state. Secondly, among all the Mandailing ulama, those with the surname Nasution hold a special position. They are numerous in quantity, and in terms of quality, the ulama discussed in this study, Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily (Nasution), have had a great influence on students and even other ulama in the Residency of East Sumatra and the Residency of Tapanuli. The majority of ulama in this region have a teacher-student relationship with them. These two reasons formed the basis for conducting this research. Theoretically, this study provides new insights and adds references to the role of ulama from the Mandailing ethnicity and opens up opportunities for further research on their movements and thoughts.

METHOD

This article specifically examines the role of the Mandailing ulama with the

surname Nasution in preserving religious sciences in the early 20th century in the Tapanuli Residency. In the Dutch East Indies government system, a residency referred to an administrative area. The residency was divided into seven Afdeelings, namely Afdeeling Batak Landen, based in Tarutung; Afdeeling Sibolga en Onstragen, based in Sibolga; Afdeeling Angkola en Sipirok, based in Padangsidimpuan; and Afdeeling Nias, based in Gunung Sitoli (Indonesia, 1978: 6-7). Currently, these four Afdeelings have been reorganized into several districts in North Sumatra Province.

This article presents a literature study with a historical approach. The data comprises primary and secondary sources. The primary sources in this study are the works produced by the Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution, while the secondary sources include various writings by experts in the fields of Islam, Mandailing, and ulama. The study utilizes Kuntowijoyo's historical research model, including intellectual history, which consists of five stages: topic selection, source collection, verification (historical criticism and the validation of sources), exegesis (analysis and synthesis), and history writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). The theory of al-Ghazâlî (d. 1111) regarding the classification of knowledge into *'ulûm al-syarî'ah* and *'ulûm al-'aqliyah* (Bakar, 1998) is used as an analytical tool in analyzing research topics. This study argues that the Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution constitute a group of ulama who provide exegesis of Islam according to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah and the

Shâfi‘iyah schools in Indonesia. By teaching various religious sciences, they have become agents of intellectual, social, and political change in the areas where they serve.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The Mandailing Ulama of Nasution Clan

Mandailing is one of the indigenous tribes in North Sumatra Province, and it consists of several clans, including Nasution, Siregar, Lubis, Hasibuan, Batubara, Daulay, and Harahap. According to Lubis, this ethnic group was slow to embrace Islam, and the religion only entered the Mandailing Land during the Padri War (1821-1838). The practice of Islam in Mandailing society prioritize *adat* (customary law) and *‘urf* (general practice) as a form of public benefit. One of the sayings of the Mandailing people is *ombar do adat dohot ugamo* (customs and religion) (Lubis, 2005).

What does the Mandailing ulama mean? The term ‘ulama’ comes from the Arabic word *ulamâ’*, which is the plural form of the term *‘alim*, meaning a person who knows. In general, the word ‘ulama’ refers to scholars who know almost all branches of knowledge, although this word later means more for people who have deep knowledge in the field of Islamic religious sciences. Those who are experts in Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh* are called *faqih*, experts in exegesis are called *mufasssir*, experts in hadith are called *muhaddits*, and experts in Kalam are called *mutakallim*. Azyumardi Azra revealed that, in simple terms, ulama means ‘a person who knows, or a person who has knowledge’ (Azra, 2002). Broadly speaking, there is no specification of knowledge that must be

known and owned by people who are considered to be ulama. Along with the development of Islamic sciences, Azra stated that the definition of ulama has been reduced to ‘people who know the field of fiqh’ (Azra, 2002). According to Azra, the ulama are the inheritors of the Prophets and serve as a continuation, custodians, and guardians of religious teachings. The ulama, he said, are the guardians of the faith. Therefore, the role of the ulama is to prevent religion from deviating, distorting, and being misunderstood by both internal and external circles of Islam (Azra, 2005).

The Mandailing people, according to Abbas Pulungan, also have a specific definition of a distinguished ulama. In his research, Abbas revealed that within the Mandailing community, ‘ulama must have studied in the Middle East, have their own madrasas (schools), and teach and give recitations to the general public.’ This definition is different from the view of the Angkola people who interpret the ulama as ‘only a madrasa teacher, or religious leaders who teach to certain groups such as the parent group...’ (Pulungan, 2008: 101-102). However, from these two definitions, the Mandailing people interpret the ulama as individuals who have acquired qualified religious knowledge by studying under ulama (whether in the Middle East or in certain areas), teach religion to the people (students and the community), and have their own madrasas, or who also teach at madrasas and recite the Qur’an.

How many Mandailing ulama are there? In 1983, the Indonesian Ulama Council of North Sumatra Province published a book entitled *Sejarah Ulama-*

ulama Terkemuka di Sumatera Utara, which mentioned as many as 46 prominent ulama from North Sumatra Province, with the majority of them being of Mandailing ethnicity (Utara, 1983). Three of the ulama mentioned in this book have the surname Nasution, namely Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution, Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far bin Abdul Qadir al-Mandily Nasution, and Sheikh Abubakar Ya'cub Nasution. The first

two ulama mentioned are discussed in this article. In 2004, the Indonesian Ulama Council of South Tapanuli Regency recorded the number of ulama from the Mandailing ethnicity in the 20th century, showing that there are 35 ulama with the surname Nasution out of 86 Mandailing ulama. Here are the names of the ulama who have the surname Nasution:

Table 1: The Names of the ulama who have the surname Nasution

No.	Name	Born	Passed Away
1	Sheikh Abd. Rahim Nasution	1836	?
2	Sheikh Abd. Qadir al-Mandily	1862	?
3	Sheikh Abd. Jabbar Nasution	?	?
4	Sheikh Abd. Rahman Jabbar Nasution	1900	1957
5	Sheikh Abubakar Ya'cub Nasution	1915	1982
6	K.H. Ahmad Nasution	1915	1990
7	Sheikh Abdullah Nasution	1915	1978
8	Sheikh Abd. Wahab Mandily	1929	1999
9	Sheikh Djasin Idris Nasution	1900	1972
10	Haji Hassan Nasution	1750	1833
11	Haji Hasan Basri Nasution	1847	1950
12	Sheikh Hasan Nasution	1864	1917
13	Sheikh Husin Nasution	1866	1932
14	Sheikh Harun Nasution	1867	1952
15	H. Hasan Nasution	1886	1956
16	Sheikh Harun Nasution	?	1937
17	Sheikh Hasan Nasution	1914	1990
18	H. Ilyas Nasution	1919	1988
19	Sheikh Mhd. Yunus Nasution	1834	1909
20	Sheikh Mhd. Yusuf Nasution	1860	1920
21	Sheikh Mhd. Nur Nasution	1872	1942
22	Sheikh Mhd. Said Nasution	1880	1952
23	Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution	1886	1955
24	Sheikh Musthafa Nasution	1891	1966
25	Sheikh Mhd. Ja'far Nasution	1896	1958
26	Sheikh Mahmud Syihabuddin Nasution	1905	1996
27	H. Mhd. Yunan Nasution	1913	?
28	Sheikh Mhd. Ya'cub Nasution	1914	1984
29	Sheikh Ma'sum Nasution	1918	1974

30	H. Mhd. Siddik Nasution	1925	1982
31	Sheikh Sulaiman Nasution	1808	1888
32	Sheikh Syhabuddin Nasution	1830	1913
33	Tuanku Kali Sutan Nasution	1740	1849
34	Ustaz Umardin Nasution	1904	1971
35	Sheikh Zainuddin Nasution	1872	1937

The Mandailing people have recognized some individuals as ulama due to their education in Mecca, founding of madrasas, and teaching in their respective areas. Some Mandailing ulama in East Sumatra Residency established the Al Washliyah organization (Syahnan et al., 2021; Syahnan & Ja'far, 2021), while others joined the Al-Ittihadiyah organization (H. Nasution & Rasyidin, 2019; Rasyidin, 2018; Siddik & Ja'far, 2017; Soiman, 2018). In Tapanuli Residency, Mandailing ulama joined Nahdlatul Ulama (Pulungan, 2018; Syahnan, 2019). However, there are limited oral and written sources about them, which makes their biographies unknown. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on their respective biographies. Their year of birth and death is also unknown, as some Mandailing people did not mention their surname when migrating to the Residency of East Sumatra, which was the territory of several Malay sultanates. Marga, or surname, is the identity of people from Tapanuli, which was often associated with Christians at that time.

In 2015, Ja'far published a book titled *Tradisi Intelektual Al Washliyah: Biografi Ulama Kharismatik dan Tradisi Keulamaan*, in which he revealed several biographies of Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution. These ulama include Sheikh Bahrun Saleh Nasution, Sheikh Mahmud

Syhabuddin Nasution, Sheikh Hamdan Abbas Nasution, Ustaz Lahmuddin Nasution, and Ustaz Muslim Nasution. They are associated with the Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah organization and have become charismatic figures within it (Ja'far, 2015).

Although they may not be referred to as ulama, there are still many Mandailing individuals with the Nasution surname who hold professorships in Islamic Religious Studies and have achieved significant expertise in religious sciences. Among them are Professor Harun Nasution, Professor Ilhamuddin Nasution, Professor Hasan Bakti Nasution, Professor Hasyimsyah Nasution, Professor M. Yasir Nasution, Professor Khoiruddin Nasution, Professor Hasan Asari Nasution, and Professor Mhd. Syahnan Nasution. While they are often referred to as Muslim ulama, they can also be considered ulama in the broader sense, as they possess a deep understanding of their field. The Mandailing ethnicity has a strong interest in religious issues and is known for its large number of Muslim ulama and intellectuals. However, there is no precise data on the number of ulama from this ethnic group.

This article aims to shed light on the lives of several Mandailing ulama with the Nasution surname in the Tapanuli Residency. Not all of their biographies have been documented, and only a few have been briefly described in literature. Therefore, this

article will focus on Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin Shabir al-Mandily, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far ‘Abd al-Qadir Nasution, and Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution. These individuals were chosen for their influence on the Muslim community and for their contributions to the field of religious sciences through monumental works and educational institutions. Moreover, written data about them were readily available. The article will examine their role in preserving religious sciences.

The Role of the Mandailing Ulama from Nasution Clan in Preserving the Religious Sciences

Imam al-Ghazâlî divides knowledge into two types: *‘ulûm al-syarî‘ah* (religious sciences) and *‘ulûm al-‘aqliyah* (rational sciences) (Bakar, 1998: 1998: 207-209). The first type of knowledge is further divided into two categories: (a) knowledge of basic principles (*al-ushûl*), which includes knowledge of divine oneness, prophets and companions of the prophet, eschatology, and sources of religious sciences (Qur’an and hadith). This category is further divided into two subcategories: practical sciences (linguistics) and supplementary sciences (Qur’anic sciences, hadith sciences, jurisprudential sciences (*ushûl al-fiqh*), and biographies of the Prophet, companions, and famous people); and (b) knowledge of branches (*furû‘*), which includes knowledge of human obligations to God (*‘ibâdah*), human obligations to society (*mu‘âmalah* and *jinâyah*), and human obligations to his soul (*akhlâq*). The second type of science, *‘ulûm al-‘aqliyah*, is divided into four types: metaphysics, mathematics, physics, and logic. The first type of knowledge is usually

referred to as religious sciences, while the second type of knowledge is typically known as general sciences (philosophy and science).

Based on the division of knowledge according to Imam al-Ghazâlî, Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution focused on preserving the first type of knowledge, namely *‘ulûm al-syarî‘ah* or religious sciences. One such ulama was Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin Shabir al-Mandily, who had studied and taught for a long time in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He bore the surname Nasution and is believed to have been born in 1862 in Huta Siantar, a village in Panyabungan District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province. According to the book *Sejarah Ulama-ulama Terkemuka di Sumatera Utara*, he had lived in Mecca since he was 14 years old, where he intensely studied religion. He went to the Holy Land with Haji Muhammad Syarief, Head of the Huta Siantar Curia at that time.

During the pilgrimage season, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin Shabir al-Mandily served as an assistant to Hajj Muhammad Syarif. However, after the season ended, he chose to remain in Mecca instead of returning to Huta Siantar. While in Mecca, he stayed at the home of Haji Musa, who also hailed from Huta Siantar, and continued to study religion. He eventually married Khadijah, Haji Musa’s daughter, and had several children, including Muhammad Ja’far (d. 1958), who later became a prominent ulama in the Tapanuli Residency. According to Muhammad Husni Ginting, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir resided in the Azyad area of Mecca. However, he and his family were unfortunately victims of a severe flood in

Makkah, which claimed the lives of two of his daughters. His wife, daughter, and son survived, and they returned to Mandailing for a period of time. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir then returned to Mecca, where he remained until his death in 1352 Hijri/1933 AD. He was buried in the Ma’la Cemetery in Mecca (Ginting, 2009). His son, Muhammad Ja’far, was asked by the Muslims in Huta Siantar to serve in the Mandailing Land, to which he agreed. Muhammad Ja’far went on to become a highly influential ulama in the region.

There is not much information available about Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily, especially regarding his teachers. However, it is important to distinguish him from Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin ‘Abd al-Muthalib al-Mandily (d. 1965), a Mandailing ulama who was active in Malaysia. According to Muhammad Husni Ginting, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin Shabir was a student of Sheikh Sayyid Bakri Syatha’ and Sheikh ‘Abd al-Karim Daghistani, both of whom were prominent ulama in the Shâfi’i school of Haramayn (Ginting, 2009). During his time in Mecca, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir bin Shabir taught and became a mentor to many religious students from the archipelago. Erawadi mentions that Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily was known as a “teacher of teachers” (*Syaikh al-Syuyukh*) who led the Madrasah Dâr al-‘Ulûm al-Diniyah in Mecca. Many of his students came from the Malay Muslim world, particularly from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand (Erawadi, 2015). He is known to have written a book entitled *Fatḥ al-Rahmân fî ‘Aqâ'id al-Îmân*, which discusses the issue of monotheism according

to the Asy‘ariyah school, especially the problem of the attribute of twenty (Al-Mandili, n.d.). This book shows that he made significant contributions to the development of the field of *ushûl al-dîn*. The use of the Jawi script in writing the book also indicates that it was intended for religious students and Muslims from Southeast Asia, who until the early 20th century were accustomed to reading books written in Jawi.

Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily’s students later became ulama who were highly regarded as references for people in Southeast Asia. Among them were Sheikh Hasan Ma’sum (Mona, 1936.), Sheikh Muhammad Yunus (Ja’far, 2015), Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution, Sheikh Abdul Halim Khatib, Sheikh Ali Hasan ad-Dary, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far ‘Abd al-Qadir Nasution (Ja’far et al., 2022), Sheikh Junaid Thola Rangkuti, Sheikh Abdurrahim Perak, Sheikh al-Habib Abdullah Perak, Sheikh Muhammad Ali Kuala Kangsar, Sheikh Uthman Tegal, Sheikh Daud bin Mahmud al-Jawi, Sheikh Zainuddin al-Palembani, Sheikh Muhammad Husein al-Palembani, Sheikh Muhsin al-Musawa al-Makki, and Sheikh Saleh bin Muhammad Idris al-Kelantani al-Makki (Erawadi, 2015). As an ulama, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily helped to preserve the traditions of the Shâfi’i school of thought. His position as *Syekh al-Syuyukh* placed him as a highly influential Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution. He was an international-class Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution, considering his active participation in Mecca, which was the

intellectual and religious center of the Islamic world in the early 20th century.

Despite having lived in Mecca for a long time, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily still managed to visit his homeland in the Residency of Tapanuli, including the Residency of East Sumatra. According to Matu Mona, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily visited Medan in 1925 and stayed at the house of Sheikh Muhammad Ya’cub Nasution. During his visit, a friendly meeting was held, which was attended by many ulama and teachers in Medan and its surroundings, including Sheikh Hasan Ma’sum. At the meeting, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily made an important statement that the Sultanate of Deli had fallen. Although the sultanate already had a pious ulama in the form of Sheikh Hasan Ma’sum, the Muslims were not yet aware of it (Mona, 1936).

Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far Nasution (d. 1958) was the son and student of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily, and his chain of knowledge traced back to Sheikh Sayyid Bakri Syatha’ and Sheikh ‘Abd al-Karim Daghistani, two prominent ulama in the Shâfi’i school of thought. Born in Mecca in 1819, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far was fortunate to be raised in the intellectual and religious center of the Islamic world, where his father taught several Sunni Islamic students in Masjidilharam. Under his father’s guidance and that of other ulama, including Sheikh Ahmad Fasya al-Mishry, an Egyptian ulama, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far studied religious sciences (*‘ulûm al-syarî’ah*) within the scope of *ushûl al-dîn* and *furû’ al-dîn*, and memorized the Qur’an. According to Muhammad Shurbainy

Nasution, his teachers included Sheikh Ahmad al-Baghdady, Sheikh Abdullah Sanggura, Sheikh Ibrahim Fida Mishri, Sheikh Abdurrahman Dahhan, Sheikh Ahmad Nadirin, Sheikh Ahmad Qoai, Sheikh Isa Rawwas, and Sheikh Salim Shafi (M. S. Nasution, 2022a, 2022c, 2022b). After many years of study, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far mastered the sciences of Islamic theology, exegesis, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic, and became a Qur’anic memorizer.

Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far Nasution returned to Medan, East Sumatra at the age of 22 and worked as a religion teacher in the area for about a year. A year earlier, the Muslim community of Panyabungan had requested permission from Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily to allow their son to become a religious teacher in their town. This was due to the passing of Sheikh Hasan, their previous religious teacher, leaving the Muslim community without a role model. Their request was granted, and Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far Nasution left Medan for Panyabungan to become a religion teacher at Huta Siantar.

After moving to Huta Siantar in Panyabungan, Sheikh Muhammad Ja’far Nasution taught Islam and religious sciences (*‘ulûm al-syarî’ah*) in both the scope of *ushûl al-dîn* and *furû’ al-dîn*. He mainly taught Arabic-language books in the fields of Islamic theology, fiqh, and sufism, as well as *tahfizh* (memorization) of the Qur’an. He taught religious studies at his own home, the Huta Siantar mosque, and in other villages. He taught books in Arabic and Jawi script in the fields of fiqh, Islamic theology, exegesis, hadith, and Arabic (*nahwu* and *sharaf*). He

also helped purify the diversity of the Mandailing Muslim community by eradicating traditions and customs that contained elements of superstition and heresy. As an alumnus of the Masjidilharam, his fatwa became a reference and was followed by the Muslim community in Panyabungan. After performing the pilgrimage in 1926, he began teaching a special class dedicated to studying and memorizing the Qur'an (*tahfizh*). Under his guidance, his students excelled in memorizing the Qur'an, with 29 becoming proficient memorizers, including two blind students. His students later continued the tradition of Qur'anic memorization, with some becoming national and international reciters and even trusted members of the Council of Judges in the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) in North Sumatra Province. Furthermore, he built the Raya Panyabungan Mosque as the center of Islamic civilization and established Madrasah Mardiyah Islamiyah in 1935 to teach and preserve religious sciences according to Sunni Islamic tradition. He also wrote works, including *Imdadat al-Ikhwan* (which reviews legal issues with pictures or photos), *Syair Terjemah Berzanji*, and *Syair Mi'raj Nabi Shallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam*. Because of his piety and righteousness, the Mandailing people believed that he had *karamah* (miracles). Later, he joined the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); and in 1948, along with Sheikh Mustafa Husein Nasution and Haji Fakhrudin Arif, he signed an edict containing a fatwa stating that "it is obligatory for every Muslim who is a convert to defend the independence from Dutch aggression" (Ja'far et al., 2022;

Syahnan, 2019; Syahnan et al., 2019). He continued to be an ulama who taught religious sciences and became the backbone of the Muslim community in Panyabungan until his death on December 3, 1958. Thousands of Muslim people attended his funeral, and almost all of the grand mosques in the Residency of East Sumatra performed prayers for him.

Another student of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily was Sheikh Mustafa Husein Nasution. He was born in Tanah Batu (*Tano Bato*) in 1886, the son of Hajj Husein and Hajjah Halimah. After he turned seven years old, he studied at the Volk School in Kayu Laut. Five years later, from 1897 to 1900, he studied religious sciences (*'ulûm al-syarî'ah*) from Sheikh Abdul Hamid in the village of Hutapungkut. Sheikh Abdul Hamid had studied with Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau at the Masjidilharam in Mecca. Encouraged by his teacher, Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution decided to further his studies in Mecca, both in *ushûl al-dîn* and *furû' al-dîn*. In the month of Rajab 1319 Hijriah (1900 AD), at the age of 16, he left Mandailing Land for Mecca. While in Mecca, he stayed at the house of Sheikh Syahbuddin, an ulama from Mompang Julu, Panyabungan, and then with the family of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily. He studied Islamic sciences at the Masjidilharam with Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily, Sheikh Ahmad Sumbawa, Sheikh Saleh Bafadhilil, Sheikh 'Ali Mâliki, Sheikh 'Umar Bajuned, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, Sheikh Abd al-Rahman, Sheikh Umar Sato, and Sheikh Muhammad Amin Mardin. From these ulama, he studied Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, Arabic, fiqh and

ushul fiqh, Islamic theology, astronomy (*'ilm al-falaq*), and sufism. He continued his religious studies at the Masjidilharam in Mecca for 12 years, and then returned to Mandailing Land in 1912.

While in Mandailing Land, Sheikh Mustafa Husein Nasution began to actively teach religious sciences (*'ulûm al-syarî'ah*) both at home, in mosques, and in madrasas. At the request of the Muslim community there, he built a madrasa which later became the Musthafawiyah Islamic boarding school or Pesantren Musthafawiyah, where he taught religious studies to several students. As an alumnus of the Masjidilharam, he taught various religious sciences using the *kitab kuning* (yellow books). His teaching method involved reading the contents of the book, translating the Arabic text, and explaining its meaning. He also taught religious sciences by reading, translating, and explaining certain books in the mosque after the Maghrib prayer until the Isha prayer (Rasyidin, 2017). The books he taught were written by prominent ulama in the Shâfi'iyah and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah schools (Salamuddin, 2014, 2019). Some of his students continued their education in Mecca and became ulama themselves, including Sheikh Abdul Halim Khatib, Sheikh Haji Abdullah Kayu Laut, Sheikh Haji Mukhtar Siddiq, Sheikh Haji Muhammad Ilyas, Haji Abdurrahim Saiman, Sheikh Haji Ali Hasan Ahmad, and Sheikh Haji Ja'far Abdul Wahab. Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution was the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the Tapanuli Residency, became a member of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Council (*Pengurus Besar NU*) in Jakarta, and called

on all his students and followers to support the NU Party. He was even elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly in the 1955 general election.

The Pesantren Musthafawiyah, founded by Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution, has been actively preserving the Sunni Islamic tradition in Mandailing Land since its inception. The works of prominent ulama in various branches of religious sciences are still being taught to students at the pesantren. These include *Matan Ghâyah wa al-Taqrîb, Hâsyiah al-Bajûrî, Syarqâwî 'ala Syarh al-Tahrîr, Lathâ'if al-Isyârah, Syarah al-Luma' fi Ushûl al-Fiqh, al-Asyâh wa al-Nazhâ'ir, al-'Aqâ'id al-Dîniyah, Fath al-Majîd, Syarah Kifâyat al-'Awâm, al-Hushûn al-Hamidiyah li al-Muhâfazhah 'ala al-'Aqâ'id al-Islâmiyah, Hâsyiah al-Dusûqy, Washâyâ al-Abâ'i li al-Abnâ'i, Syarah Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, Minhâj al-Âbidîn, Ihyâ' 'Ulûm al-Dîn, Matan al-Jurumiyah, Syarh Mukhtasar Jiddan, al-Kawâkib al-Durriyah, Khudhari Syarh Matan Alfiyah, Majmu' al-Sharf, Tafsi'r Jalâlain, Hâsyiyah al-Shâwi 'ala Tafsi'r Jalâlain, Matan al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyah, Mawâ'izh al-'Ushfûriyah, Hâsyiyah 'ala Mukhtashar Ibn Abi Jamrah li al-Bukhârî, Subul al-Salâm, dan Khulâshah Nûr al-Yaqîn fi Sîrah Sayyid al-Mursalîn* (Pulungan, 2020a). Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution did not write works like his teachers and colleagues, but the Pesantren Musthafawiyah has managed to become the most influential pesantren in the Mandailing Land to date and has contributed to the preservation of religious sciences according to the Sunni Islamic tradition. Sheikh Musthafa Husein passed

away on November 16, 1955 (Pulungan, 2012). He made a major contribution to strengthening the NU organization in the Tapanuli Residency. His students and the students of Pesantren Musthafawiyah became supporters of the NU organization, even some of them becoming core administrators.

One of Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution's best students was Sheikh Haji Abdullah Kayu Laut (d. 1978). He also had the surname Nasution. Under the guidance of Sheikh Musthafa Husein, he studied many yellow books at Pesantren Musthafawiyah. After that, he went to Mecca, where he studied at the Madrasah Shaulatiah and learned religious sciences under the guidance of the ulama there. Upon completing his studies at this well-known madrasa, he became a religion teacher at Pesantren Mustafawiyah until the end of his life. He lived in the village of Kayu Laut and was also the best student and successor of Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution, which made him a follower of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Mandailing Land. One of his sons, Professor Mhd. Syahnan (Nasution), is currently serving as a professor in the field of Philosophy of Islamic Law at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN-SU) in Medan. Sheikh Haji Abdullah Kayu Laut migrated to Mecca to study various religious sciences, while his youngest son, Professor Mhd. Syahnan, also migrated, but moved from the village of Kayu Laut to the city of Medan, where he received scholarships from three well-known universities in the West: the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London; the Institute of

Islamic Studies at McGill University; and the Georgetown Law Center and Washington College of Law at American University. Sheikh Abdullah Kayu Laut is believed to have had a miracle (*karamah*). He, along with other students of Sheikh Musthafa Husein, succeeded in preserving religious sciences according to the Sunni Islamic tradition in the Mandailing Land.

Mandailing ulama have actively participated in preserving religious sciences. Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily became one of the influential ulama in the Masjidilharam in Mecca, and several students from Southeast Asia who later became influential ulama studied religion with him. Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far Nasution was successful in producing Quranic memorizers who were influential in the following era. Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution was also successful in coaching his students to become influential ulama and in building a leading pesantren that remains influential to this day. However, in the current era, the first two ulama are less well-known to the public, and their work has never been reprinted. The influence of Sheikh Musthafa Husein can be seen today because his students have successfully developed his pesantren into influential Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the Mandailing ulama with the Nasution surname in the Tapanuli Residency actively preserved religious sciences (*'ulûm al-syarî'ah*), both *ushûl* (basic) and *furû'* (branches). The three ulama discussed in this article, Sheikh 'Abd

al-Qadir al-Mandily, Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far, and Sheikh Musthafa Husein, all surnamed Nasution, played a significant role in preserving religious sciences according to the Sunni Islamic tradition, particularly the Shâfi'i school in Islamic law, and the Asy'ariyah school in Islamic theology. Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily, who migrated from the Mandailing Land to the Holy Land of Mecca to study at Masjidilharam, taught Arabic books at Masjidilharam and wrote a book entitled *Fath al-Rahmân fi 'Aqâ'id al-Îmân*. The existence of this Jawi script shows that it contributed to the preservation of religious sciences, especially within the scope of *ushûl al-dîn*. On the other hand, Sheikh Muhammad Ja'far, the son of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mandily, was born in the Holy Land of Mecca and studied various religious sciences at Masjidilharam. He returned to his father's village in Mandailing Land to strengthen Sunni Islamic traditions there. He opened recitations, founded madrasas and mosques where he taught religious studies and wrote books on Islamic law and literature. Three of his works, titled *Imdadat al-Ikhwân*, *Syair Terjemah Berzanji*, and *Syair Mi'raj Nabi Shallallâhu 'alaihi wa Sallâm* show that he contributed to the preservation of religious sciences, particularly within the scope of *furû' al-dîn*. Finally, Sheikh Musthafa Husein, also surnamed Nasution, migrated from Mandailing Land to the Holy Land of Mecca, and then dedicated his knowledge to Mandailing Muslim community, where he established a madrasa that later became known as Pesantren Musthafawiyah. It was at this pesantren that he succeeded in

preserving the Sunni Islamic tradition by teaching Arabic-language books in various branches of religious sciences, both related to *ushûl al-dîn* and *furû' al-dîn*; and also succeeded in training several potential students who later became ulama who also contributed to preserving religious sciences within the scope of *ushûl al-dîn* as well as within the scope of *furû' al-dîn* according to Sunni Islamic tradition. There are several Mandailing ulama with the surname Nasution, and some of them have studied in the Holy Land of Mecca. All of these ulama play a role in preserving religious sciences (*'ulûm al-syarî'ah*) in the Mandailing Land. However, the majority of ulamas from the Mandailing ethnicity, especially those with the surname Nasution, have been neglected, in the sense that no researchers have studied them. Research on their history, roles, movements, and thoughts is very interesting to conduct and contributes to strengthening the literature on ulama in the archipelago.

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