



ULAMA AND AUTHORITY IN THE DELI KINGDOM: A Brief History of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum

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Abstract: This article examines the intellectual biography of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum as contained in his book entitled *Tanqīh al-Zunun 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn*. This study is essential as he was an influential scholar in East Sumatra in the early 20th century and was appointed Imam Paduka Tuan in the Sultanate of Deli. This study is literature research with a historical approach. This uses Max Weber's theory of authority to analyze the research topic. The data was analyzed using the interpretation method. Based on an analysis of his works, this study concludes that Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum considers it essential to solve socio-religious problems, and the approach to solving be based on discussion and collaborative problem-solving approaches. Based on Max Weber's theory of authority, Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum has two authorities: charismatic authority and rational-legal authority. The source of his charismatic authority was derived from his genealogy, education, and personality. Based on this authority, he gained rational-legal authority, where he became an Advisor to the Deli Sultanate with the title of Imam Paduka Tuan, and an advisor to Al Washliyah.

Keywords: ulama, authority, Deli Kingdom, Al Washliyah, East Sumatra, Archipelago

Article history: Received: May 31, 2023 | Revised: June 14, 2023 |
Accepted: June 14, 2023 | Available online: June 30, 2023

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Introduction

The discussion of Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah as a major Islamic organization would be incomplete without mentioning the role of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum Deli. This is supported by two main arguments. Firstly, his concrete involvement in the oversight and growth of the organization, mainly during his advisory role in the two years of Al Washiyah's post-crisis reorganization.¹ Secondly, he served as a direct teacher to M. Arsjad Th. Lubis (1908-1972), played a crucial role in the establishment of Al Washliyah on November 30, 1930. M. Arsjad Th. Lubis studied at Hasaniyah Madrasa for five years (1925-1930), where he was exposed to essential materials on comparative religion and works by Islamic scholars such as *Tafsîr Jalâlain*, *Fath al-Mubîn: Syarh 'alâ Matan al-Arba'in*, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, *Syarh Jam'û al-Jawâmi'*, and *Minhaj al-Thâlibîn*.²

This article aims to present the biography of Imam Paduka Tuan Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum. The biography was developed from his book entitled *Tanqîh al-Zunun 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn*. To ensure its accuracy, the author also cross-referenced historical documents about him, particularly the biography titled *Riwayat Penghidoepan Alfadil Toean Syekh Hasan Ma'sum* written by Matu Mona³, as well as the latest research by Ja'far,⁴ Muh. Rozali,⁵ Arwin Juli Rakhmadi,⁶ and Ahmad Fauzi Ilyas.⁷ Therefore, the repetition of information is unavoidable.⁸ In this case, the writer tends to agree with Kuntowijoyo,⁹ who argues that repetition need not always be seen as a negative but can be viewed as an affirmation of mutual trust.

For this reason, this article first introduces the biography of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum. It examines his relationship with the Deli Sultanate, mainly through his work entitled *Tanqîh al-Zunun 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn*. Then, this article ends with four main themes: (1) the importance of overcoming social problems, (2) the value of participating in discussions and collaborative problem-solving,

(3) the significance of writing and documenting the solutions as an ongoing academic contribution, and (4) the recognition that information stored may be challenging to access, the benefits of the effort will be felt in the future.

This study is a literature study with a historical approach. Kuntowijoyo's historical research is used to compose the discussion topic. The primary data source is *Tanqîh al-Zunûn 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn* by Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum. The secondary sources of this research are the results of experts' research related to the topic under discussion, specially all books and articles about the researched scientists. The data is analyzed using the content interpretation method. To uncover the sources of the ulama's authority, this study uses Max Weber's concept of authority theory. Weber divided authority into three categories: charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal authority.¹⁰

Result and Discussion

His full name is Shaykh Hasanuddin bin Muhammad Ma'sum bin Abi Bakar al-Deli al-Sumatrawi. Titled Imam Paduka Tuan, he was born in Labuhan Deli, East Sumatra, on 17 Muharram 1301 H/1882 M. His father was a wealthy and devout scholar, known as Datuk and Syahbandar. From this pious paternal figure, the young Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum learned the fundamental principles of the Islamic religion and the life of the clergy in general. Despite his father's affluence, it is worth noting that at the age of ten, he embarked on a journey to Mecca, despite his *Sekolah Rakyat* (SR) teacher recommending that he pursue further education in Singapore to enhance his intellect. Undertaking the pilgrimage to the holy land was a significant achievement, as it is recorded in the chronicles of his son, Ahmad bin Hasan Ma'sum, on 14 Shawwal 1316 H.¹¹

Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum's charisma as an ulama was cultivated during his time in Mecca. There, he had the opportunity to study under renowned scholars known for their authority, including Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau, Shaykh Abdussalam Kampar, Shaykh Ahmad Khayyat, Shaykh Muhammad Ali bin Husain al-Maliki, Shaykh Saleh Bafadhal, Shaykh Muhammad Amin Ridwan, Shaykh Abdul Hamid Kudus, Shaykh Said Yamani, Shaykh Usman Tanjung Pura, Shaykh Abdul Karim ad-Dagistani, Shaykh Ahmad Fathani, and Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Shabir Mandailing.¹² Despite this, he remained humble and unassuming, not displaying his vast knowledge until his teacher, Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Shabir Mandailing, introduced him as “a shining star” to the Deli community.¹³

Those who have acquired knowledge from authoritative teachers play a crucial role in teaching and education. Several locations later served as the foundations for his scholarly endeavors. According to Rozali, data from an unpublished article written by Ahmad bin Hasan Ma'sum, Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum lived in several, such as places in Syamiyah area of Mecca, al-Mashun Mosque in Medan, Kesawan Mosque in Medan, Kampung Percut Mosque, Kampung Bandar Setia Mosque, and Bagan Deli Mosque.¹⁴ Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum held the position of state advisor, responsible for examining religious teachers and granting teaching licenses.¹⁵

The teaching and education provided by Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum have played a significant role among the people of North Sumatra, and even at a national level, as evident from the names of his students. AF. Ilyas listed the following individuals as followers in the intellectual struggle led by Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum:¹⁶ (1) Shaykh Muhammad Yunus, advisor to Al Washliyah and head of Maktab Islamiyah Tapanuli, (2) Shaykh H. Abdurrahman Syihab, Chairman of PB Al Washliyah, (3) Ustadz H. Baharuddin Thalib Lubis in Sibolga, (4) Shaykh M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, an ulama of Al Washliyah, (5) H. Abdurrauf, a student authorized to publish his works, (6) Shaykh H. Ilyas,

Qadi in Kampung Baru Medan, (7) H. Zainal Arifin Abbas, an ulama of Al-Ittihadiyah, (8) Shaykh Mahmud Ism'ail Lubis, (9) *al-Fadhil* Adnan Lubis, an ulama of Al Washliyah, (10) Shaykh Yusuf Ahmad Lubis, an ulama of Al Washliyah, (11) Shaykh Muhammad Arifin Isa, an ulama of Al Washliyah, (12) Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman bin Muhammad Thaib Deli, author of *Irsyâd al-Kamâl Radd 'alâ Ba'dhi mâ fi Fatḥ al-'Aql*, and (13) Shaykh Suhailuddin bin Nashr al-Dîn bin Shaykh Abd al-Wahab Rokan, author of *Miftâh al-Khairiyah fi at-Tharîqah al-Naqsyabandiyah*.

The biography of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum mentioned above is accompanied by a collection of his written works. The following is a compilation of paper titles compiled by AF. Ilyas:¹⁷ (1) *Al-Quthufât al-Saniyah li Man'i ba'dh mâ fi al-Fawâid al-Aliyah al-Talaffuzh bi al-Niyah*, (2) *Samir al-Shibyan li Ma'rifah Furudh al-A'yân*, (3) *Sharim al-Mumayyiz 'an al-Tala'ub bi Kalam al-'Aziz*, (4) *Natijah Abadiyah*, (5) *Al-Maqalah al-Nâfi'ah fi ma Yata'allaq bi Qabliyah al-Jum'ah*, (6) *Targib al-Mustaqim Bagi Mendirikan Jum'at atas Kata al-Syâfi'i yang Qadim*, (7) *Fatḥ al-Wadud Pada Menyatakan Keadaan Niat Sembahyang Zat Wajib al-Wujud*, (8) *Hidâyah al-Ikhwân*, (9) *Durar al-Bayân Syarh Hidâyah al-Ikhwân Pada Mengetahui Aqâid al-Imân*, (10) *Is'af al-Muridîn Dengan Menerangkan Rabithah al-Shufiyîn*, (11) *Ittihaf al-Ikhwân*, and (12) *Tazkir al-Muridîn Suluk Thariqah al-Muhtadin* and (13) *Tanqîh al-Zunûn 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn*.

Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum stated that the writing background of *Tanqîh al-Zunûn 'an Masâ'il al-Maimûn* was based on negotiations and discussions on issues that developed in mainstream society when he was Imam Paduka Tuan during the Deli Sultanate, under the rule of Sultan Makmun al-Rasyid from 1873 to 1924 AD. During that time, the community was engaged in a debate concerning the opinions of Shaykh Muhammad al-Khayyath's students at Sungai Rampah Bedagai regarding the abandonment of blind adherence (Taqlid) to scholars and their works. According to their viewpoint,

everyone should directly refer to the Quran and Hadith in deriving religious laws. They argued that the scholars and their writings did not fully embody the truth because scholars, being human, are fallible and prone to sin, including their writings. For them, “... *jika berbetulan hukum-hukum mereka itu dengan Alquran sekalipun dan begitu pulalah kitab-kitab karangan mereka itu, hanyalah yang wajib dipercaya akan dia ialah kitab-kitab yang diturunkan Allah ta’ala kepada nabi-nabi saja... ulama-ulama itu tiada ia ma’shum (terangkat tabi’at maksiat) hanyalah yang Ma’sum itu segala Nabi-nabi saja dan tiap-tiap yang tidak ia ma’shum itu mungkin ia tersalah.*¹⁸

Such opinions evolve and grow to the point where they result in harsh criticism of practices that have become traditions in the wider community. The work notes seven criticisms that reflect a lack of trust in scholars, namely: the obligation to believe in scholars; the obligation to believe in the books of scholars; the law of *tahlil* marriage (Cina Buta); standing in Barzanji ceremonies, and reading the Quran without understanding the language; studying twenty of Allah’s attributes; *talqîn mayat*; and making prayer requests. These seven criticisms are then elaborated in 38 discussions, with the conclusion that the general public is obligated to believe in scholars and their books, as they are experts who understand God’s law from the Quran and Hadith through valid *ijtihad* lineage. The *tahlil* (Cina Buta) marriage law is valid and *makruh*. Standing during Barzanji is *Sunnah*. Reading the Quran without understanding the language is also *Sunnah*, with the condition of faith. Studying the twenty attributes of Allah is *fardhu ‘ain* to confirm *i’tiqad* and *fardhu kifayah* if one wants to go beyond that. *Talqîn mayat* is *Sunnah*, just as making prayer intentions is *Sunnah*.¹⁹

What is interesting about the document written by Shaykh Hasan Ma’sum is that it emphatically stated, ‘So this condition is the one that was ordered by the Sultanate of Deli in the kingdom

to make it famous so that common people practice these laws' ...' This statement proves that his position as Imam Paduka Tuan in the Sultanate of Deli was not just a religious symbol - or perhaps a political plea for the current circumstances - but represented the concern of the then authorities for the development of religion in society. Furthermore, after Sultan Makmun al-Rasyid, the reign of Sultan Amaluddin Sani Perkasa (in office from 1924-1945) continued to maintain the position of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum and laid it down in the Decree (official letter) of the appointment of Tengku Besar of the Deli Kingdom, Sultan Amaluddin Sani Perkasa:²⁰

Bahkan Duli Baginda tiada pula lengah ataupun lalai berusaha memajukan ikhwal agama dalam Negeri Deli dan daerah rantau jajahan takluknya. Sehingga Duli Baginda mengangkat seorang ulama yaitu yang dihormati Tuan Shaykh Hassan Ma'sum, sebagai Shaykh Islam Kerajaan Negeri Deli dengan gelaran Imam Paduka Tuan. Dengan keadaan demikian, terbuktilah kemajuan agama, sehingga tiap-tiap sembahyang Jum'at, kedadjidjid dalam Medan penuh sesak sehingga melimpah ke halamannya. Untuk menjaga kesenangan orang-orang yang datang bersembahyang, serta untuk kemolekan masjid itu senantiasanya Duli Baginda mensiasati kebersihannya dengan mengadakan Ketua Mesjid, begitu juga Istana Maimun. Sehingga menambah kemolekan kedua tempat itu dengan bertambah banyak orang-orang yang datang menyaksikan keadaannya.

Conclusion

This study has briefly reviewed Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum's biography and his position in the Sultanate of Deli. He was the teacher of famous scholars in North Sumatra such as Ismail Banda, Abdurrahman Sjihab, M. Arsjad Th. Lubis, and Yusuf Ahmad Lubis. Based on Max Weber's theory of authority, this study also yields two conclusions. First, Sheikh Hasan Ma'sum derives the source of his charismatic authority from genealogy, education, and personality. He was a

student of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, a famous and influential scholar at the Masjidilharam. Additionally, he studied Islamic religious sciences in Mecca and Medina for decades. As a sufi, he also possessed the warak and zuhud. He followed the Naqsyabandiah and Khalwatiyah orders. Second, the source of his rational-legal authority was obtained through his genealogy, education, and personality. He held prestigious positions in the Sultanate of Deli and the Al Washliyah organization. In the Sultanate of Deli, he was trusted by the Sultan of Deli to serve as an Advisor to the Assembly of Density. Within the Al Washliyah organization, his students bestowed upon him the position of Advisor.

In addition, the study also puts forward four arguments. Firstly, social problems should be the main factor driving organizations to seek solutions that arise from within society itself. Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah has made significant contributions in various fields, particularly in education, da'wah, and social charity. Reflecting on the life of Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum can serve as a crucial indicator that problem-solving does not always have to rely on bottom-up reporting to stakeholders; it can also involve top-down awareness by officials regarding issues that are widely feared by the community. As for the second point, gathering together and engaging in discussions to solve social problems should become a tradition. In the documents examined for this article, Shaykh Hasan as for the second point, gathering together and engaging in discussions to solve social problems should become a tradition. In the documents examined for this article, Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum not only restricts himself to addressing the Sultanate regarding the issues at hand but also initiates dialogues with the disciples of Shaykh Muhammad Al-Khayyath. Each discussion is transcribed using a letter code, with (*jim*) representing Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum's statements and (*mim*) indicating the sentences from the representative of the summoned party. This section is quite extensive, spanning five

pages out of the 88-page manuscript. Thirdly, the practice of maintaining written documentation must be upheld, as exemplified by Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum. Especially in the digital age, which offers convenience in this regard, there should no longer be a shortage of valuable archives that narrate the story of an organization's development, even when leadership changes occur or fail to meet the organization's expectations. Documentation activities like these are also essential for future scientific contributions. Fourthly, lastly, the commitment and perseverance of every member of the organization to maintain records and documentation should be taken seriously. Shaykh Hasan Ma'sum, as Imam Paduka Tuan, demonstrated this commitment, even though he was not the sole attendee at the gathering. This level of persistence must be upheld to facilitate the future development of academics.

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¹ Tim Penulis MUI, *Sejarah Ulama-Ulama Terkemuka Di Sumatera Utara* (Medan: Institut Agama Islam Negeri al-Jamiah Sumatera Utara-MUI Sumatera Utara, 1975), 16.

² Ahmad Fauzi Ilyas, *Warisan Intelektual Ulama Nusantara: Tokoh, Karya Dan Pemikiran*, ed. Radinal Mukhtar Harahap (Medan: Rawda Publishing, 2018), 468.

³ Matu Mona, *Riwayat Penghidoepan Alfadil Toean Sjih Hasan Ma'soem (Biografi Sedjak Ketjil Sampai Wafatnja)* (Medan: Typ. Sjarikat Tapanoeli, n.d.).

⁴ Ja'far Ja'far, 'Tarekat Dan Gerakan Sosial Keagamaan Shaykh Hasan Maksu', *TEOSOFI: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2015): 269-93.

⁵ Muhammad Rozali, 'Kontribusi Syaikh Hasan Maksu Dalam Bidang Pendidikan Di Sumatera Utara', *JUSPI: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam* 1, no. 2 (2017): 277-87.

⁶ Arwin Juli Rakhmadi Butar-Butar, 'Kajian Ilmu Falak Di Indonesia: Kontribusi Syaikh Hasan Maksu Dalam Bidang Ilmu Falak', *Dalam Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 1, no. 1 (2017).

⁷ Ilyas, *Warisan Intelektual Ulama Nusantara: Tokoh, Karya Dan Pemikiran*.

⁸ Radinal Mukhtar Harahap, 'Hukum Islam Masa Kesultanan Deli', *Jurisprudensi: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah, Perundang-Undangan, Dan Ekonomi Islam* 12, no. 1 (2020): 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.32505/jurisprudensi.v12i1.1535>.

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¹⁰ Allan Kenneth, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World* (Thousand Oaks-California: Sage Publication, Inc., 2005), 169-70; Soekanto Soerjono, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 2005), 280-85.

¹¹ Ilyas, *Warisan Intelektual Ulama Nusantara: Tokoh, Karya Dan Pemikiran*, 312.

¹² Ilyas, 313.

¹³ Mona, *Riwayat Penghidoepan Alfadil Toean Sjih Hasan Ma'soem (Biografi Sedjak Ketjil Sampai Wafatnja)*, 20.

¹⁴ Rozali, 'Kontribusi Syaikh Hasan Maksu Dalam Bidang Pendidikan Di Sumatera Utara', 281.

¹⁵ Chadijah Hasanuddin, *Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah 1930-1942: Api Dalam Sekam Di Sumatera Timur* (Bandung: Pustaka, 1988), 7-8.

¹⁶ Ilyas, *Warisan Intelektual Ulama Nusantara: Tokoh, Karya Dan Pemikiran*, 318.

¹⁷ Ilyas, 238.

¹⁸ Hasanuddin bin Muhammad Maksum, *Tanqîh Az-Zunûn ‘an Masâ’il al-Maimûn: Pada Menyatakan Wajib Percaya Dengan Ulama Dan Katanya Dan Hukum Nikah Tahlil Dan Berdiri Barzanji Dan Membaca al-Qur’an Dengan Tiada Tahu Bahasanya Dan Mengaji Sifat Dua Puluh Dan Talqin Dan Melafazkan Niat Pada Sembahyang* (Medan: Syarikat Tapanuli, 1352), 3.

¹⁹ Maksum, 5.

²⁰ Muhammad Takari, *Sejarah Kesultanan Deli Dan Peradaban Masyarakatnya* (Medan: USU Press, 2012), 96.